

ILLOVO PLAYS KEY ROLE IN MALAWI COVID-19 INITIATIVE

27 July 2020: In a ground breaking initiative in Malawi, the Blantyre-based Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Trust (MLW) has commissioned a custom-built oxygen plant at the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital (QECH) in Blantyre which will be used primarily for the ongoing treatment of locally-based COVID-19 patients, as well as other medical requirements and procedures. The MLW has operated in Malawi over the past 25-years with a proud record of significant impacts in the prevention and treatment of malaria, pneumonia, childhood diarrhoea, HIV and Tuberculosis in the country.

The commissioning of the new plant in late June was made possible through the ready support of the MLW project by Group Managing Director, Gavin Dalgleish, who welcomed the opportunity during the COVID lockdown period in South Africa to fly a group of Intaka-Tech engineers from Cape Town to Blantyre by making available the company's King Air aircraft. At this time, all commercial passenger flights into and out of South Africa had been cancelled and there was no other way of this team getting into Malawi.

Based on the original request from Silke Schroedter, Illovo Sugar Malawi's pilot based in Limbe, and with Gavin not hesitating to support this important project, Illovo quickly swung into gear in order to make sure the company met its commitment. Without reservation, Illovo's two company pilots, Gray Bowden and Ben Bucher agreed to take part in the mission, knowing full well that across the flights to Malawi and back, they faced a mountain of government restrictions put in place by both countries to help protect their own citizens – and other hurdles, including the potential of being quarantined on both sides of the "border".



Gray Bowden (left) and Ben Bucher – leaving on their first flight to Cape Town to pick up the engineers



Ready to depart: From left are Blessing Muzambeta, Alain Mbongo, Safwaan Rylands, Gerald Jacobs and Nazeem Rylands from the Intaka-Tech engineering team

Fully supported by our local Group travel office manager, Colleen Jackson, and the MLW team in Malawi, the logistics of the trip began to come together, with a few early significant wins having been achieved, such as the Malawi Ministry of Health agreeing to a quarantine waiver for the engineers, on the basis that the team had received negative COVID test results prior to departure from South Africa, as well as on arrival in Malawi.



An AB Sugar company

For our pilots, the trip was an in and out journey – returning directly to South Africa after refueling and then being quarantined once having returned to Durban. Once the oxygen plant had been fully commissioned, Gray and Ben made the same trip again in late June – but this time, encountering fewer hurdles and delivering the team of technicians safely back to Cape Town.

Speaking about the role of Illovo employees in the success of this venture, Gavin says that he was extremely proud of the team's response. "We are blessed with employees whose every reflex is to do the right thing and help out where we are able to. Operating where we do, we are very conscious that a successful business on this continent evolves alongside its host markets – we are proud to play our part," said Gavin.

On behalf of the Malawi-Liverpool Wellcome Trust, Professor Henry Mwandumba, Deputy Director of MLW said "The emergence of the COVID-19 global pandemic has defined the biggest health crisis of our time. The pandemic has presented huge challenges world over for governments and health systems who are putting in efforts to save lives. MLW has been part of the COVID-19 response in Malawi and has supported the Malawi Government by providing clinical and public health resources. The oxygen plant at QECH is one of MLW's immediate and significant responses to COVID-19 and has been driven by the overall mission of MLW which is to protect and save lives of Malawians.

"We are grateful to the Illovo Sugar Group for supporting MLW to deliver on its vision. In time of great need, Illovo mobilized its resources with speed to support MLW and the Malawi Government in a vital project that will save many lives. We have already witnessed the positive impact the oxygen plant has had in the fight against COVID-19 at QECH. Commercial partners of Illovo's caliber are rare, so I wish to express my deep gratitude to Illovo on behalf of MLW and the people Malawi," said Professor Mwandumba.

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About Illovo Sugar Africa

Illovo Sugar Africa (Pty) Ltd is a Pan-African consumer centric agri-business with roots in growing and making sugar and related products. It is Africa's largest sugar producer and has extensive agricultural operations in six southern African countries – eSwatini, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia - manufacturing sugar and downstream products from cane supplied by its own agricultural operations and independent growers. The group is a wholly owned subsidiary of Associated British Foods plc (ABF), a diversified international food, ingredients and retail group operating in more than 50 countries. Illovo Sugar Africa employs more than 12 000 people in permanent positions across the group with a further 18 000 people employed on a temporary basis. In a recent independent socio-economic study, the company is estimated to support at least 71 443 jobs across the group and for each of Illovo's 29 663 direct employees, at least 1.4 additional jobs are estimated to be supported through grower communities and wider multiplier effects throughout the economy. Illovo has a proud history of significant contribution to local economies in which it operates and its positive social impact across this region on rural communities is substantial. Illovo's total economic impact, including direct, indirect and induced impacts, was estimated at R 23.8 billion in 2016/17