

Nigerian brewery opened in Onitsha

Brewing giant SABMiller has opened a new brewery in Onitsha, South Eastern Nigeria - the company's first 'greenfield' brewery to be built in that country.

Nigerian president Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan attended the opening ceremony on Thursday and commissioned the new brewery, the company said in a statement.

Work began on the Onitsha site in 2011 following an investment of over \$100-million, making it the largest single investment in Anambra State for almost 20 years.

The communities in Onitsha and surrounding towns stand to benefit significantly through the creation of employment and through indirect commercially-related activities and support services.

Immediate direct job creation sees 180 local people employed, with that number increasing to approximately 450 as production volumes grow. Local raw materials such as sorghum and maize will be used where possible supporting the local economy and the Government's efforts to eradicate poverty and create jobs SABMiller said.

The new brewery has an annual capacity of up to 500 000 hectolitres. The initial brands include Hero Lager, Trophy Lager, Grand Lager and non-alcoholic malt beverages Grand Malt and Beta Malt.

Mark Bowman, managing director of SABMiller Africa, said: "Over the past five years we have invested over \$1-billion in Africa. Today's opening is an indication of our commitment to increase our capacity further and to consolidate our position on the continent while contributing positively to the local communities in which we operate."

The Onitsha brewery brings SABMiller's total number of sites in Nigeria to four, having first entered the market in 2009 through its strategic alliance with Castel. Nigeria is Africa's second largest beer market and is growing at around 6% a year. However, average per capita consumption is still relatively low at around 10 litres per year which compares to an average of around 60 litres in Africa's largest beer market, South Africa.