**NEWS ARTICLE**

Zutari’s 90-year journey of making an impact and building Africa

**23 January 2023:** Leading consulting engineering and infrastructure advisory firm [Zutari](http://www.zutari.com) celebrated its 90th anniversary during special client and alumni events in Tshwane and Cape Town in November last year. These events also had displays of engineering technology used in the past, as well as new technology drastically transforming engineering design. It showcased artefacts going as far back as 1930s, which reflected technological advances over time.

“The story of Zutari is in many ways also the story of the engineering industry in South Africa and beyond,” says CEO **Teddy Daka**. In addition to this, Zutari also held an internal event for employees to join in the celebrations and share their stories. “It is important for us to acknowledge our staff, both current and retired, for their role and contribution to our ongoing success. Thanks to their tireless efforts and accumulated expertise and experience, we can deliver on our value proposition to our clients.”

Zutari is one of the oldest companies in the industry on the continent. It was formerly known as Aurecon, created by the merger of Africon, Connell Wagner and Ninham Shand in 2009. The latter can trace its history in Africa back to 1932 – operating for nine decades.

In October 2019, the owners of Aurecon Africa took the bold step of demerging from the global business, headquartered in Melbourne, Australia. The process subsequently culminated in Zutari, a portmanteau name derived from Swahili for ‘invent’ and ‘nectar’, namely *mzulia* and *nectari*.

“Of course, back then no one could have predicted that the beginning of 2020 would see the back then no one could have predicted that the beginning of 2020 would see the emergence of a global pandemic, with Covid-19 having a devastating impact on both a macro-economic and a community level,” says Deputy Chief Executive **Dr. Gustav Rohde**.

However, management already saw the winds of change push back against globalisation as early as September 2019. “We could see the market changing and so decided to demerge from the global company to be proudly African. The fact that we are a private, management-owned company with African owners makes our commitment real – we have a vested interest in our clients’ success,” says Dr. Rohde.

This was the culmination of the well-planned journey towards establishing Zutari, which is committed to Africa and its future. Commenting on the latest milestone, Daka reflects on how rare it is for a company to survive for so long. Anecdotal evidence points to the fact that only about 0.5% of all companies endure for 100 years.

Daka himself has been involved with the legacy companies of Zutari since 2005 in several non-executive roles, joining full-time at the beginning of 2021 as co-CEO. “What attracted me was the firm’s tenacity in creating engineered solutions based on shared value for business, communities, and environments.”

Over the last 90 years, the company has demonstrated strong resilience and impressive agility to constantly reinvent itself. “With very different challenges facing the engineering industry today, the opportunity to be part of yet another transformation was too tempting for me to pass over,” says Daka. “I understand the importance of infrastructure development as a catalyst for growth and positive change.”

Looking back at Zutari’s rich history, Dr. Rohde notes it is a legacy it continues to build upon. “Today we continue to serve our clients in 35 countries across the African continent and the Middle East. We are truly rooted. Few can rival our local capacity and understanding. Building on solid foundations, clients trust us to shape locally relevant solutions through our extensive footprint.”

Daka says that transformation continues to be an essential part of the Zutari story. “We know our markets are constantly changing, and we know the needs of our clients are constantly changing – which is why we cannot afford not continuously to evolve and grow.” This has resulted in an increased focus on advisory services.

In the past, the focus was mainly on the engineering design and construction of assets. “We now see better results when we, the designer of infrastructure, also advises clients how to plan, operate, optimise and repurpose their assets. As an engineering and advisory firm, we believe the full impact of infrastructure can only be realised if we plan, design, deliver and manage infrastructure in ways that maximise its current and future value,” says Daka.

Zutari’s technical eminence, accrued over decades, is now complemented by digital technology to help it solve problems where human capability alone is insufficient. “What took days, now takes moments. We are passionate about the new, the modern, the smart,” says Daka. “Today we integrate technical and creative thinking. Our approach to solution-making allows us to explore problems deeper and to imagine the impact in bolder and more imaginative ways.”

Daka adds: “Our long-term aim is to build sustainable value for all our stakeholders. This means our clients, staff, shareholders, and the societies we impact through the projects we deliver and the social investments we provide. We know the best social and environmental performance needs to be underpinned by strong financial performance.

“True sustainability requires the three to be integrally linked. So, while we always consider the impact of projects on the environment and communities, we also consciously deliver outcomes that help clients stay and thrive in business,” he concludes.

**Pull quote**

“The story of Zutari is in many ways also the story of the engineering industry in South Africa and beyond.” – **Teddy Daka**, CEO, Zutari

**Social media**

***Twitter***

Zutari celebrated its 90th anniversary at a special event at its Tshwane head office in November last year. #EngineeredImpact

***Ends***

**Notes to the Editor**To download hi-res images for this news article, please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the Zutari link to view the company’s press office.

**About Zutari**

As an engineering and advisory firm, we believe infrastructure has unparalleled potential to create enduring impact. Never more relevant, this potential can be realised only if we plan, design, deliver and manage infrastructure in ways that maximise its value. Our work in water, transport, energy, resources, and built-environment infrastructure does just this – helping to nurture thriving communities, growing economies, and healthy environments.

At Zutari we understand that radical impact doesn’t just happen; it requires more of us to connect differently, work smarter, and stay rooted.

**We connect differently**. Our broad collective of in-house experts connects across traditional disciplines to provide integrated results. We collaborate with clients, partners, and end-users, leaning into diverse perspectives to create superior solutions - together.

**We work smarter**. Our people lead the industry. We draw from deep technical skills, accrued over decades, and embrace the transformative power of digital technology to find simpler, better, and more innovative ways to deliver value.

**We stay rooted**. Few can rival our local capacity and understanding. Building on solid foundations, now 90 years in the making, we are trusted to shape locally relevant solutions through our extensive footprint in Africa and the Middle East.

At Zutari our people connect differently, work smarter, and stay rooted. Working in this way, we reliably deliver impact through infrastructure, making the world a better place – one project at a time.

**Zutari Contact**

Charmaine Achour

Senior Consultant: Digital Communications

Email: charmaine.achour@zutari.com

Webb Meko

Chief Clients Officer

Email: webb.meko@zutari.com

Tel: (012) 427 2000

Web: <https://www.zutari.com>

**Media Contact**

Rachel Mekgwe

Senior Account Executive

NGAGE Public Relations

Phone: (011) 867 7763

Fax: 086 512 3352

Cell: 074 212 1422

Email: rachel@ngage.co.za

Web: [www.ngage.co.za](http://www.ngage.co.za/)

Browse the **NGAGE Media Zone** for more client news articles and photographs at <http://media.ngage.co.za>