

### Zircon Marine

Sustainability Report

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INTRODUCTION Chief Executive Officer's Message

#### **CEO's Message**



Acting responsibly is a balance between economic, environmental and social objectives. At Zircon marine, we are proud that our economic success as a company has been supported largely by our people, ambition and sustainable practices. In pursuit of our vision to be the number one internationally recognised marine services company in West Africa, we recognise and appreciate the importance of a sustainable model of business and corporate governance. Accordingly, we are constantly working to understand and respond adequately to the expectations, needs and concerns of those who influence and are influenced by our business activities.

Last year, over 3,800 migrants and refugees died crossing the Mediterranean Sea, which according to international migration organisations, makes 2016 the deadliest year on record for migrants and refugees trying to reach Europe from Africa and the Middle East. Refugees mostly travel by boats operated by smugglers with no compulsion to comply with basic maritime safety procedures. But it is not merely the failure to observe safety procedures that has precipitated one of the more distressing tragedies of our time. It is the fact that many of those crossing that sea were merely seeking to escape conflict and poverty.

The business of tackling unemployment and poverty, or of 'creating' employable citizens' is not for governments alone. Beyond the traditional wealth creation role of contributing to Gross National Product, more and more businesses need to orientate their operations to contributing to improving workforce capacity. It is not enough to be an employer of labour or to train a couple of staff on a semi-regular basis. All employees, and potential employees, need to be more competitive in the skills they can offer and companies need to realise, and act on, their social responsibility to contribute to human capital development on a national scale.

Zircon Marine is contributing to the development of a skilled national workforce by adopting inclusive business practices which marry business development with maximizing social impact and empowering people to seek financial independence through employment. Besides providing continuous professional training for staff career advancement and employee engagement, we have committed to supporting women and youth empowerment initiatives as a way of building value for our communities and other stakeholders. In industries like ours, where opposition from local communities presents a significant risk of disrupted operations, it is too easy to undertake technical training and capacity building as CSR initiatives simply to improve relations with host communities. However there is a much greater value beyond risk mitigation. Improving workforce capacity and capability would improve the quality of goods and services we produce which would in turn lead to increased GNP and eventually to an improved economy, for everyone. This is why women development and education, in particular the education of the girl-child, are some of the objectives of the Innocent Okoye Foundation, founded by Zircon in memory of our late founder, Ikechukwu Okoye.

At Zircon, we take a serious interest in the skills development aspect of national development because it is in our interest to do so. And because at the end of the day, sustainability goes beyond a series of CSR initiatives, it is about a systematic sharing of value with all our stakeholders. For Zircon, sustainability is not merely a word, it is an attitude; because success is not only measured by what we do but how we do it. This is why we are committed to supporting, implementing and upholding the ten (10) business principles of the UN global compact on Human rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption in our everyday business operations.

Finally, we recognize the importance of transparency and communication and we will endeavour to provide annual progress reports detailing the current and future policies, actions and measures we adopt to continually integrate the Global Compact in our business strategy, culture and daily operations. Adopting a formal regular reporting process is one way of formalising our sustainability model. And is just one more way in which we are a first mover in Nigeria's maritime industry. I hope our efforts will encourage others in the maritime industry as well as other sectors, indigenous firms in particular, to do the same.

Oluseyi Ajibola

MD/CEO ZIRCON MARINE LTD June 2017

# WORKING TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE MODEL

### **WORKING TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE MODEL**

Zircon Marine supports and is a proud participant in the UN Global Compact which sets out ten principles for responsible business covering human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Every day, every year, we strive to enact these principles across all areas of our business. Thus, our sustainability model focuses on working conditions of our employees as much as the external environmental impact of our business.

We have taken out time to formally identify our stakeholder groups (clients, employees, shareholders, host communities etc) and review our approach to how we engage with them on issues of concern to ensure that on all topics we are responding appropriately, but most importantly, that we are acting fairly, transparently and accountably.

While it has been argued that sustainability is less about charity and more about securing competitive advantage, we have founded the Innocent Okoye Foundation (IOF), a non-governmental philanthropic organisation, in honour of our late founder IK Okoye, who was passionate about improving lives. Through the Foundation we are involved in a number of 'charitable' initiatives to empower people and promote balanced development.





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# LABOUR & HUMAN RIGHTS

### **LABOUR & HUMAN RIGHTS**

At Zircon, we recognise that attracting and retaining the right talent is fundamental to building a profitable and sustainable business that will outlast challenging economic conditions. Our people, and their attitude and skills, are key to our very distinctive, delivery focused culture. By living our values, they set us apart from our competitors, allow us attract and retain clients and enable us to earn differential margins. That is why we are constantly striving to create the right environment and establish the right conditions to attract the kinds of employees we require. Additionally, we have implemented several strategies to tackle any form of discrimination. As an example, we emphasise the repercussions of harassment or any form of bullying in our Employee Handbook and the disciplinary policy, which can lead to suspension or termination, a practice which aligns with the UN Global Impact 6th principle. Also we have a dedicated human resource management complaints platform where employees can report issues of discrimination or harassment.





Since our establishment, Zircon has been and remains an equal opportunity employer, in recognition of the dignity of labour and in line with Principle 6 of the UN Global Compact which requires business to eliminate discrimination in employment. Accordingly in recruiting we do not discriminate based on religion, gender and ethnicity. This allows us implement diversity in our recruitment processes by evaluating candidates based on merit and competency, and thereby focusing on employing the best candidates. We have several female employees occupying technical and managerial roles, including senior management positions, as well as on the Board of Directors.

As an organisation we have focused on creating a suitable environment where all employees are free from all forms of discrimination or harassment and are treated equally in employment as in recruitment. All judgments relating to remuneration, working conditions and training are based on relevant objective criteria. Zircon Marine makes it a priority to obey all laws with regards to employment in Nigeria. We do not simply hire, we are invested in the development of the people we employ. We have put structures in place to help employees stay engaged and thrive in their respective roles, while supporting them to take on increased responsibility in line with an agreed career progression plan. These structures include a robust performance appraisal system which sets challenging but achievable targets, valorises honest feedback from employees and supervisors and fairly rewards performance. It also involves a training component which assesses the job training needs (technical, function-specific, leadership, and core competency) of individual employees and addresses them through mentorship, secondments and external training, including profession specific certifications. Additionally, we have developed and are now implementing a system to assess employee satisfaction to further improve our retention rate.

Finally, at Zircon Marine we believe in the value of all individuals and their rights as contained in the Universal declaration of Human rights. We conduct all our business activities in a manner which promotes trust, respect, dignity and value of each individual whilst making maximum efforts to ensure human rights are upheld in every activity. We also focus on dealing fairly with all our employees and clients, striving by all means possible to provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment for everyone. Zircon's code of conduct clearly sets out our expectations of everyone who works for us and with us, requiring them to demonstrate respect for fundamental human rights.

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### ANTI-CORRUPTION

#### **ANTI-CORRUPTION**

In order to achieve our business ambitions, it is important for us as a corporate entity to be seen as an ethical company. We therefore strive to instil the highest ethical and legal standards amongst our employees, and also track compliance by screening our business practices against applicable local and international laws relating to corruption, bribery and anti-competitive behaviour such as the Corrupt Practices and Other Offences Act of Nigeria and the UN Convention Against Corruption. We utilise our anti-corruption policy as an ethical set of criteria to govern our behaviour and our interactions with stakeholders. This is how we implement the UNGC Principle 10 on anti-corruption.

Zircon Marine operates a zero tolerance policy on bribery, collusion, extortion, fraud and other forms of improper and unethical conduct for corporate or personal gains. In line with the UN global compact, no Zircon Marine employee or representative shall give or offer unjustified benefits to any public or private sector employees, nor shall employees solicit or receive such benefits. We have established disciplinary measures for defaulting employees which may result in outright dismissal. Furthermore, Zircon Marine would not knowingly engage in business relations with any company who has a track record of corrupt practices and would blacklist clients and partner companies that are found to engage in unethical practices.

Finally, we have maintained an excellent internal check and balance system managed by the finance, administrative and HR departments, with records showing exactly where funds are allocated to and how they are managed by the different divisions or individuals. We review previous and ongoing transactions to ensure that there are no indiscretions and have implemented an annual external financial audit in order to detect corruption or distrustful transactions.



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## ENVIRONMENT

#### **ENVIRONMENT**

At Zircon, part of our vision relates to improving the marine environment by protecting it. As we pursue expansion and a more profitable business, we are conscious of the need to reduce to the barest minimum the impact our operations may have on the environment. Accordingly we have implemented various policy measures to ensure safe and effective operations. These include ensuring all equipment is in good working order and adequate instructions are given to employees and contractors on all aspects of their work, specifically those hazardous to Health and Environment, and ensuring constant monitoring and reporting on HSE performance. By implementing all these policies, we are able to support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges which aligns with Principle 7 of the UNGC.



Additionally, Zircon Marine complies with existing laws and regulations on protection of the marine environment, for example, the Environmental Guidelines and Standards for the Petroleum Industry in Nigeria (EGASPIN)[ Issued in 2002 and revised in 2013] which establishes the guidelines on environmental and pollution management and their enforcement based on the petroleum industry laws and regulations. We also support and are aligned with the efforts of agencies like the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) to control and prevent pollution in the marine environment.

We keep employees updated on best practice in this area by training them on preventing pollution and the importance of regular inspections. Furthermore, our anti-corruption policy spells out penalties for involvement in any corrupt practices aimed at perverting inspections. These efforts have been made in furtherance of implementing Principle 8, which involves undertaking initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility. We have also taken actions to implement Principle 9 of the UNGC aimed at encouraging the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies, by not running the engines of our generators and marine assets 24/7 and by ensuring regular servicing of our engines in order to reduce emissions. Overall, we ensure we meet and surpass national legislation and best practices in all our activities.

The marine environment is the source of the foremost global resource – the oceans, which provide our rain water, drinking water, a lot of our food and even the oxygen we breathe. They are also essential as transportation routes. In recognition of the importance of our oceans and waterways, Zircon marine has adopted operational strategies to reduce pollution and waste and mitigate spills and leaks. These include proper training of crew and other employees, regular inspections and the use of navigational aids and on board equipment. Regarding waste management specifically, we are sensitising employees to reduce the use of disposable consumer products, and adopting measures around safer waste transportation and better waste disposal at all our facilities. We are also happy to support education and promotional programs around marine litter and support beach clean-up efforts.

Modern shipping by its very nature, results in high emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG). Beyond simple mitigation tactics like speed reduction, hull cleaning and optimal routing, we are working on adopting more technical strategies like water flow optimisation, waste heat reduction, efficiency lighting and engine retrofits. We are also acting deliberately to reduce our carbon footprint by investing

in energy saving low-carbon infrastructure. We are contributing to cutting carbon emissions in practical ways, like reducing our dependence on generators (which emit very high levels[ A 2012 estimate put the number of generators in use in Nigeria at 9 million, with a total carbon dioxide emission of 29 million metric tons annually.]) by paying more to access power from embedded grids and supporting our grid supply with inverters and increasingly the installation of solar panels. Additionally we are currently looking into the acquisition of vessels with more modern technology which make them more fuel efficient and therefore lower emissions and are less harmful to the environment.

However we recognise that there is still a lot more that needs to be done. As much as Zircon marine can achieve unilaterally, yet a lot more can be achieved when efforts are replicated across board - nowhere is the power of collective action in the marine industry more important than with regards to environmental sustainability. We are therefore using the medium of this report as a collective call to action for like-minded forward thinking actors in the industry to come together to forge a collective strategy to protecting and sustaining our marine environment.



# SAFETY

### **SAFETY**

Protecting the health and safety of employees, our clients and host communities is one of the main strengths of our corporate citizenship and we are committed to providing them a healthy and safe environment in which to work and live in line with prevailing regulations. We are proud to report that we have not had any safety incident in the past year. Our safety policy, adheres to global safety standards, and is rooted in three key pillars - Training/ Equipment/ Compliance.



**Training** - At Zircon, safety begins with staff. All our personnel, not just our engineers, are required to attend specialized training programs adapted to their work descriptions and responsibilities, as well as generalised training sessions. Trainings are not a one-off sessions but a on a rolling (continuous) basis with refresher courses built into the schedule to ensure that at all times, employees are up to date and comply with the best standards in occupational health and safety. Trainings range from understanding general health risks and basic first aid to advanced certification in Health Safety and Environment (HSE) Management. We have evolved to a point where we are now considering offering training to others in the marine industry, as well as the oil and gas industry which we service. Not only do we want to have skilled people working for us, but investing in educating others is in line with our commitment to broader skills building for our communities and the general public.

**Compliance** – Zircon engineers have been trained to adhere to safety procedures and safe working conditions at all times. Safety rules and best practices in doing heavy work or operating machines are predominantly displayed at all work sites. Internal safety audits are conducted regularly to assess employee compliance with best practices and additional established measures. Our commitment to excellence is demonstrated in our membership of the British Safety Council which provides health and safety training and advice and also administers a full suite of health and safety qualifications.

**Equipment** – Modern and reliable equipment is fundamental to our successful operations. Our equipment are fully insured, certified and serviced regularly to ensure they constantly operate at full capacity. We have specially selected all of our equipment – fenders, hoses, ropes, and support crafts – to ensure they are suited to the operations for which they are required, and hired by our customers. For example, our fenders and cargo hoses, specially obtained from Yokohama and Goodyear, meet ISO standards and have been pressure tested to ensure durability. Besides having trained personnel handling and maintaining our equipment, detailed logging procedures ensure that faulty or malfunctioning equipment are registered for repair or replacement before even a deleterious event takes place.

In the last year, we have developed and documented a standard operating procedure regarding equipment maintenance and safety which is administered by a dedicated Maintenance officer. It functions as a comprehensive safety framework for our equipment and applies to all staff and contractors. It involves:

- Obtaining timely certifications of equipment and carrying out routine inspections to ensure availability and operational functionality
- Ensuring preventive maintenance cycles are observed by personnel on board and monitoring contractors to ensure maintenance work is effectively and promptly conducted
- Maintenance of an inventory record of equipment (vessels, fender, hoses) and scheduling repairs
- The provision of daily reports to the Maintenance Coordinator on the status of equipment and communicating maintenance requests with a view to resolving them punctually

We apply these same standards and our framework in ensuring the best for those clients which we assist with the procurement and maintenance of marine equipment; in this way we have contributed to improving safety standards and ensuring compliance with global benchmarks across the marine industry in Nigeria and West Africa. We continue to comply with the Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) published recommended standards for marine operations since we work primarily with the oil and gas industry.

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## ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

### **ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION**

As a responsible corporate citizen, we take pride in our economic contribution to society in the countries in which we operate. Our contribution is the overall economic value (gross revenue, financial income etc) engendered as a result of our operations and activities - operating costs, the revenue we generate for government, the employment opportunities we create and wages we pay.

Employment - We now employ over 50 people directly, thereby supporting some 50 plus homes, and actively support their savings towards retirement by enrolling them in a pension scheme. But we also create employment for a much larger number of people indirectly, for example through our network of suppliers. Going even further, we are currently reviewing our CSR initiatives and overarching strategy to explore how our employees can integrate our sustainability values in the communities in which they live - a sort of community engagement and giving back - with incentives for 'bestparticipating' employees. The aim is to get all our employees actively volunteering or in other ways participating in our CSR initiatives.

Taxes - One of the most important civic duties Nigerians owe their government is the prompt payment of their taxes. This is equally true for corporate citizens. At Zircon marine, we understand that being a socially responsible company extends to the prompt payment of all fairly assessed tax levies. Zircon pays both direct taxes - company income tax and personal income tax via employee remunerations - and indirect taxes - VAT and import duties on the machinery and equipment which we bring into the country. In this way, our total tax contribution, in terms of both taxes borne[ Owing to the number and nature of the items we import (heavy machinery, specialized equipment), Import duties constitute the largest share of our taxes borne.] and those collected on behalf of government, annually runs into millions of Naira. But our tax contribution to the government purse actually goes beyond the prompt payment of our allotted taxes; it extends to the tax remittance of every supplier or subcontractor we engage and every client firm we service satisfactorily. That is why valid tax returns constitute part of the due diligence requirements for our suppliers and contractors.



<sup>3</sup>Owing to the number and nature of the items we import (heavy machinery, specialized equipment), Import duties constitute the largest share of our taxes borne.

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CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & INTERNAL CONTROLS

### **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & INTERNAL CONTROLS**



Proper corporate governance is one of the fundamentals of a sustainable business model. Our corporate governance structure is designed to ensure efficiency and transparency in the way we operate and contributes to our sustainability as a business.

Our Board of Directors, responsible for overseeing Zircon's business and management, is made up of competent and savvy business leaders from various backgrounds, but all with several years of experience and track records of excellence in running the affairs of established companies, which have been brought to bear in directing the affairs of Zircon. Moreover we have undertaken regular briefings and specific trainings for Board members to improve knowledge and keep them abreast of local and international developments in the marine and oil and gas industries to enhance the leadership they provide.

In compliance with extant laws[Corporate Affairs and Allied Matters Act, 1990.] regarding our corporate affairs, the Board meets at least once a quarter and it features two independent non-executive directors. We have put in place a rigorous but transparent board appointment process as well as a clear succession policy to diminish risks associated by unplanned or unforeseen departures. We are also strictly compliant on issues of financial accounting and reporting (auditing, disclosures, preparation of financial statements, filing of annual returns) and engage external auditors to review our accounts and financial statements.

To ensure that the interests of all stakeholders are protected, our Board reviews and is responsible for approving our corporate social responsibility strategy and planned initiatives, just as it is the responsibility of our management team to develop the strategy and drive and oversee its implementation.

The day to day running of the company is carried out by the Management Team which consists of the Managing Director and

Chief Executive Officer, the Company Secretary and the Head of Operations. Our Human Resources department is responsible for the transparent management of our Board and employee remuneration processes. The remuneration of Board members in particular is determined based on recommendations by the Human Resources department which assesses the average remuneration ceiling for Directors in comparable institutions. In the same way employee compensation levels are determined based on comparisons with those of other leading companies in the industry and naturally, on Zircon's performance from year to year.

Finally, to ensure good corporate governance is thoroughly embedded in our corporate culture and internal controls are respected and complied with, we always ensure all decisions, policies and programs issued or adopted at management level are properly cascaded to every last employee. Accordingly we have established a Code of Conduct and Business Practice that sets out the ethical standards all our employees and business partners are required to meet. In line with Principle 10 of the UN Global Compact, we have also developed an anti-corruption manual outlining the company policies and procedures that must be adhered to regarding certain activities or situations that present a compliance risk. These manuals apply to all directors and employees of the company, and also to our business partners, suppliers and other representatives. CSR INITIATIVES AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

### **CSR INITIATIVES AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT**

Our key CSR initiatives are channelled through the IK Okoye Foundation, a non-governmental charitable organisation established by Zircon in honour of our late founder, IK Okoye, a philanthropist passionate about improving lives. Under the umbrella of the IK Okoye Foundation, our efforts are focused on three principal categories

- Arts and Culture
- Sports
- Education

The empowerment of women and the promotion of long-term sustainable (and balanced) development are overarching themes that run through our efforts under these three categories.

#### **Arts & Culture**

Zircon Marine Art Energy - Our primary platform for the development of arts and culture is the Zircon Marine Art Energy exhibition, an annual event aimed at positioning Africa, and Nigeria in particular, as a destination for trade and investment by showcasing the continent's finest art work. We have leveraged the International Petroleum Week organised by the Energy Institute in the United Kingdom to promote the event, and when it was first launched in 2013 it immediately became one of the most attended events at the IP week.

**Impact:** The event has served as a platform to celebrate talented artists, including unknowns who have thereby received a boost to their career. It has also helped promote links between the energy sector and the visual arts, supported by the affiliation with the Energy Institute. Most importantly it serves to showcase Nigeria as a trade and investment destination, as the exhibition receives visitors from Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Based on feedback from stakeholders, we are currently exploring institutionalising a framework promoting one young and upcoming (unknown) artist every year by instituting an award for such new talent and using the Exhibition as one of several fora to showcase and promote the artist's work.







This year, we sponsored Modupeola Fadugba, a Togo-born Nigerian multi-disciplinary artist, to the second edition of the Dakar Biennale de l'Art Africain Contemporain, or Dak'Art which took place in Senegal in May 2016. The Dak'Art Biennale is a major contemporary art exhibition created and promoted by the Senegalese government and which has taken place in Dakar every other year since 1989.

Fadugba's work focuses a lot on education, which resonates with our strategic focus and put her on our radar leading to her participation alongside three other artists at the Art Energy exhibition in 2015 in London. The previous year she had won the Outstanding Production Prize at the National Art Competition for an installation called "The People's Algorithm" which features a human-scale board game inside a giant Rubik-like cube. In line with the competition's theme of "Interventions" the installation presents as an intervention into Nigeria's education and unemployment challenges, employing play as a strategy to demystify complex issues.

Our support contributed to Fadugba obtaining a residency at the Cite Internationale des Arts in Paris as part of the program of the

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Institut Francais, and this ultimately led to her participation in the first exhibition of Africa in France known as the 'The Institut Francais du Nigeria'. This exhibition has contributed greatly to launching a journey for her artwork in Paris. She had since had a solo exhibition of her work "Prayers, Players & Swimmers" in the Gallery of the Cité Internationale des Arts from March 28 to April 3, 2017, curated by Katherine Finerty. The People's Algorithm has gone on to receive international recognition and critical acclaim. Besides being awarded the Grand Prize of the Minister of Communication at the Dakar Biennale, it is currently featured in the ongoing exhibition Afrique Capitales: Cape Of Good Hope Here We Come at the Gare Saint Sauveur, Lille, France, which runs until September 2017.

Lights, Camera, Africa! – We also support Lights, Camera, Africa!, an annual film festival staged by The Life House that aims to promote





a cultural renaissance through film, literature and performing arts. In partnership with the African Film Festival New York, it is committed to exposing African and global audiences to good quality independent African cinema as a way of encouraging discourse about African issues and experiences. In 2015, we committed to a fiveyear sponsorship because we

support the festival's objective of providing a nurturing environment for creative expression.

The 2016 edition, themed 'Music Makes the People' was held in Lagos at the end of September and dedicated to celebrating music



in film as an art form.

**Impact:** Life House's film program, to which the Festival is attached, has been credited with ensuring that quality films by



African filmmakers are also enjoyed by African audiences that may ordinarily not have the opportunity of viewing them. Recognition and appreciation of the program has grown to a point where it has received the support of nonprofits to develop a film appreciation and education agenda.



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#### Sports

IK Okoye was a consummate sportsman who excelled in squash, snooker and card and board games like chess and scrabble.



**Emperor's Cup** – We committed to a five year renewable sponsorship of an annual cue sports competition at the Ikoyi Club in Lagos, which has expanded from snooker to include pool and billiards. The competition runs for a period of about two weeks, with three winners in the three categories usually announced on the last day. Zircon Marine provides donations on behalf of the winners to secondary schools attended by Mr. Okoye - King's College and Federal Government College, Ijanikin, both in Lagos. This year's competition took place from 16th May to 1st June 2017, with finals played on Saturday 2nd June.

**Secondary schools snooker** – The Foundation supports the promotion of snooker, and sports more broadly, at selected secondary schools in Lagos through the donation and maintenance of snooker tables and other sports accessories, and also conducting periodic sports clinics.

Impact: The initiative has been constructive in strengthening

the relationship between education and sport, notably through inculcating in the student's skills and values like leadership, teamwork and strategic decision making. We are currently working on expanding the initiative to include more schools in more geographic regions as well as specific programs, such as snooker academies, for young Nigerians from disadvantaged areas.

#### **Education CSR**



Our CSR efforts around education are geared towards supporting the education of the girl-child in Nigeria and women empowerment. We were able to combine both goals in our most recent initiative which sponsored the publishing of a book, 'Pride of Nigeria', by Constance Omawumi Kola-Lawal, a specialist in business and HSE who has written a children's book series on safety and environment. We have donated 500 Zircon Marine branded copies of the book to at least seven schools in the Apapa area of Lagos state including Army Children's school, Baptist Primary School, Muslim Nursery and Primary school and Corona.



**Impact:** Promoting a reading culture in young people while also instilling in them values like cultural pride.



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