Beat: Business

After 100 years of Holcim´s operation

Enterprise committed to sustainability

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USPA NEWS - Representatives of Holcim´s cement plant in Colombia ““located in BoyacÃ¡ state-, presented the sustainable development inform about the enterprise´s management during 2012. The aspects Holcim points out are sustainable environmental principles that they consider as important business strategies.

Holcim enterprise ““created in Switzerland- celebrated 100 years in 2012 with almost 80.000 employees around the world. Iin Colombia, it has been present for more than 55 years in which it has taken an important position due to the product quality as well as its values: passion, strength, good performance, and responsibility towards the communities and environment around its plants. Nowadays, Holcim Colombia has about 1000 employees, and non-qualified workers come from local communities in which the company develops its regional activities.

According to representatives in Colombia, Holcim´s operations follow rules from Switzerland, but they keep local management, giving strength to local hardware dealers, keeping control on costs and they do not overdo local environmental laws.

Alfredo Estrada, engineer and director of Holcim´s Cement Plant located in Nobsa (a small municipality of BoyacÃ¡) has confirmed that this plant works with excellent capacity and it produces around one million 800 thousand tons of cement.

Engineer Estrada also says that this is the first cement plant in Colombia which has obtained different certificates related to environmental management and confirms that Holcim keeps on preserving sustainable development since many years ago.

“We have had a special incursion with hydric footprint, by means of an agreement with Suizagua ““a proposal of the Colombian-Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in alliance with public and private companies for monitoring and reduction of their water footprint-. The idea is to find where we shall work in based on that footprint, in order to diminish water consumption and to improve its quality.“

From the beginning of this project Estrada says that they have established that energy consumption ““that in the company is taken from coal and electric energy- has an important impact on water, so they have taken the decision of reduce its consumption.

“About electric energy we can say proudly that we have reduced consumption 10%. Two years ago, we consumed 95 kW in making one cement ton, but last month we reached 85%. We will not stop, so this year we approached Mining and Energy Colombian Ministry to find some other alternatives to become more efficient in electrical energy use."

Thermic energy is also important for them, and the company will continue co-processing, which means using the manufacturing process to recycle, re-use or treat waste while manufacturing cement in a single combined operation. Last year, in BoyacÃ¡, there were 12 tons co-processed and it is said that the plant has much more capacity. “We would establish continuous connection with autonomous corporations in charge of environment ““such as CorpoboyacÃ¡- so that, garbage dumps will not be overused but we could make campaigns to classify waste that can be recycled or co-processed.“

It is well-known that this kind of enterprise produces gross emissions in their influence area. According to Estrada, on October 2012 it was installed a pozzolan cover in Nobsa´s plant which has given positive results in terms of noise and cementitious materials diminishing. They have passed from 613 kg CO_2/t cementitious materials in 2010, to 567 in 2011, and 543 in 2012 (in Nobsa´s plant). Besides they are giving another use to the cover: rain water collector; water is gathered in an artificial lake inside the plant and finally employed for equipment cool, watering and some other purposes.

During inform presentation it was also confirmed that mining processes are also done keeping in mind environment, and that the areas

where materials for making cement are extracted the company has a closing plan for delivering quarries and open-cut mines in better conditions.

Turnover: In Colombia, Holcim has one cement plant located in BoyacÃ¡; the company has 10 quality certifications; it produces 4 types of cement and 20 types of concrete; it has paid more than 22 million dollars in taxes.

Also, Holcim has sown 18.420 trees in their mines; it has recovered 7.3 hectares in Colombia; it has recycled 80% of water in its aggregate plants and it has invested more than in its corporate social responsibility program, in BoyacÃ¡.

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