

Massive engine will help get mandate up to speed

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2 Dec 2014

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's (NMMU) mandate to become the education engine room behind skills development aimed at growing South Africa's maritime industry took on an 11-ton, practical dimension on 1 December 2014, when the institution received a Wärtsilä medium-speed ship engine.



Image: www.wartsila.com

The R6.1-million ship power plant stood considerably taller than NMMU vice-chancellor, Professor Derrick Swartz.

He was on hand to receive it at the university's Second Avenue campus.

Its delivery signifies the first project of its kind on the African continent.

The Finland-developed engine, known as the 8L20, is an eight-cylinder power plant which is not only a dual fuel engine, meaning it can operate on two different types of fuel, it can also run on natural gas and serve as an electric power plant, thereby running other electrical systems on a ship. It marks the strengthening of relations and cooperation between the university and the Wärtsilä company, and its purpose is to train mechanical engineers towards a career in marine mechanics and engineering.

The hand-over, attended by Wärtsilä's South Africa-based business development partner Greg Davids, comes soon after the African Domain Conference hosted by NMMU and in the wake of the launch of the South African International Maritime Institute (Saimi).

Saimi, the launch of which was spearheaded by the South African Maritime Safety Authority, is to drive the country's bid to develop and grow its vastly underdeveloped maritime industry and ultimately establish it as a global leader.

Swartz hailed the receipt of the engine, and said the university's proximity to the sea was one of its strongest attributes and would assist it to play a significant and leading role in the development of the industry nationally.

Davids echoed NMMU's future role in developing the industry and said that the engine - which represented one of the world's most technologically advanced and most widely used in the shipping industry - would greatly assist students to gain valuable learning and experience in marine engineering.

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