

as artisans and engineers.

ArcelorMittal SA (and I am sure the other companies mentioned) contributes significantly through various initiatives which last year included spending more than R150m on training, despite it being a loss-making year for the company.

In partnership with the Department of Basic Education we have established science centres in Sebokeng, Saldanha and Madadeni, providing maths and science tuition to more than a 1,000 learners. We also have 940 apprentices in training, 67 technicians at universities of technology, and over 102 engineering students at university.

We select previously disadvantaged students with potential — from the science centres or elsewhere — for uni-

versity studies or for training institutions with Merseta accreditation. In addition, we sponsor 16% of all apprentices who obtain Merseta qualifications per annum, providing resources to the nation as well as to the business.

Although we require about 50 additional engineers and technicians per annum in terms of the six-year workforce forecast, the pipeline is deliberately overstocked to cover contingencies and help alleviate the dire national and sector shortage of engineers and technicians.

We also have two-year internships for graduates, provide an artisan-to-technician conversion programme in partnership with the Vaal University of Technology, with 99 artisans, run a teacher in-service programme and

work closely with FET colleges.

We have built a school using steel technology in Mamelodi and a second is being completed in Mthatha.

ArcelorMittal SA and many others in industry take the issue of skills, and the shortage thereof, quite seriously. In fact, the collective contribution by corporate SA to this country's critical development needs is very significant.

**Themba Nkosi**

GM, Corporate Affairs, ArcelorMittal SA

## Mittal pulls its weight

SIR — I refer to “We’re all in the same (leaky) boat” (Letters, August 29), where ArcelorMittal SA is mentioned as one of the companies that should take an active role in creating skills such