

Gearing up for Top Women in Business and Government 2005

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The annual Top Women in Business and Government publication for 2005 is nearing its print date and this year's edition promises to bring you all the top gender empowerment companies, and their top female leaders of the year.



South Africa's benchmark business-to-business gender empowerment directory, sponsored once again by Sentech and the Department of Land Affairs, as well as new sponsor, Edcon, looks at gender empowerment from grassroots through to the boardroom. Supported by leading women such as Minister of Public Work Stella Sigcau; Businesswoman Wendy Lucas-Bull and Transnet Group CE Maria Ramos, Top Women in Business and Government seeks to identify South Africa's winning companies at the head of gender empowerment.

Says Maria Ramos, "Personally I'm glad to see initiatives such as Top Women in Business and Government receiving such high acclaim and tribute being paid to women who are going places and determined to succeed in the business world".

On the agenda of the 2005 edition is Corporate Social Investment, grassroots skills development, comparative analysis of local and international policy trends where we investigate those companies and government departments, both locally and abroad, that have successfully implemented gender equity policies and how these have benefited their existing business structures and practices, and interviews with key women across the public and private sectors i.e. Minister of Education Naledi Pandor; Johnnic CEO Christine Ramon; BWA Businesswoman of the Year 2004 and newly appointed Deloitte Chairperson Futhi Mtoba and Mail and Guardian Editor Ferial Haffajee to name only a few. Top Women in Business and Government 2005 will take an in depth look at the value of networking for women, the movers and shakers over the past two years, skills training and the tertiary education of women in traditionally male industries - why the figures are low and how we are working on improving them with a special focus on hands-on CSI and grassroots development programmes across the board.

Further, Top Women in Business and Government is in the process of finalising the details for its prestigious Awards Gala to be held later this year. Watch this space for updates on the Awards categories, nominees and judges, and how YOU can secure tickets to this not-to-be-missed glamorous annual event.

Top Women in Business and Government would like to take this opportunity to thank its sponsors who are an integral part of the publication. Sentech and the Department of Land Affairs have elected to sponsor our progressive and dynamic publication for the second year in a row, demonstrating even further their commitment to the gender empowerment initiative.

This year we also welcome our newest sponsor, Edcon. Edcon's proven commitment to black economic empowerment (BEE) and gender empowerment makes ours a natural partnership as we move forward in the promotion of women in South African business and industry.

For more information on how your company can be listed as one of South Africa's top gender empowerment companies in the only gender empowerment publication of its kind, Top Women in Business and Government, alongside the likes of Umgeni Water, the Beeld, Deloitte & Touche, Metropolitan Holdings, Eyesizwe Coal, Telkom SA, Randwater, Edcon, the Department of Land Affairs, Sentech, Johnnic, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, Ericsson, Ernst & Young and many others, email

More about our sponsors

Sentech

Sentech is Africa's leader in broadband signal and multimedia distribution and is an independent and fully commercial state-owned enterprise. The company's signal distribution network forms the backbone of broadcasting in South Africa and Sentech has become a force in the telecommunications and multimedia environment, offering a range of high-end services such as business communication solutions, data and multicasting to corporates, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), small office home offices (SOHOs), residential customers, organisations in Africa and telecommunications operators globally. As an empowered organisation fully representative of the nation it serves. Sentech looks on corporate Social Investment as a vital means of assisting communities in need while simultaneously reinforcing its own strategic mission. The focus of corporate social investment programmes tends to fall on educational and technological initiatives with the potential to uplift previously disadvantaged groups. Sentech believes technology is a development tool and by creating access to technology, aims to help redress previous inequalities and imbalances. Sentech puts this proposition to work in much of what it does within its social investment programme. Sentech has partnered with SMEs for the distribution of its broadband services and will be creating more indirect employment in the value added services that have been created with the extension of its services into Internet Service Provision and broadband services. Sentech's philosophical outlook is based on embracing the spirit of the New Economic programme for Africa development (NEPAD) and through its current operations, Sentech is poised to play a significant role in linking the African continent into the global ICT revolution, by connecting under-resourced African ICT operators and providing affordable services to the continent. For more information on Sentech's infrastructure, products and services please visit www.sentech.co.za

Edcon

As part of the retail sector, Edcon is one of South Africa's largest retailers of clothing, footwear and textiles (CFT). Edcon has the three leading retail brands in the country (Edgars, Jet and Sales House). It has over 640 stores and more than 14 000 employees and most South Africans will visit an Edcon store more than a couple of times a year.

Edcon is committed to achieving commercial success in ways that honour ethical values, show respect for people as well as the natural environment. In the same way Edcon recognises the need to foster the transformation of women as the central influencers within their communities. Of its 14 131 employees (excluding casuals), 71% are women, with women comprising 24% of senior management and 60% of management. Edcon is actively identifying, nurturing and developing passionate people who can lead the way and believe that their most precious asset during the transformation process must be people who possess values of leadership, integrity, accountability, stakeholder participation, learning and innovation. Edcon supports the gender empowerment initiative as an important vehicle to recognise women who are providing leadership and inspiration to others in the community. The empowerment of women in its fullest expression is about each woman deciding what works best for her life, career, family or a combination of the two occurring simultaneously or consecutively. Women must be given the necessary social, legal, economic and financial supports in order to do make those decisions. However empowerment is not something that is simply bestowed on women. Edcon believes that the only way women, and specifically black women, can begin to experience empowerment on all levels - spiritual, emotional, financial and political - is to truly understand that as individuals they really can make a difference. www.edcon.co.za

The Department of Land Affairs

The Department of Land Affairs upholds the provisions of the Constitution that outlaws discrimination against women. This includes, in the land reform programmes, removing legal restrictions on a woman's access to land, promoting women's active participation in decision-making, and the registration of land assets in the names of beneficiary household members, not solely in the name of the household head. The DoLA's redistribution flagship programme is the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development sub-programme (LRAD). Its strategic objectives include expanding opportunities for women and young people who stay in rural areas. LRAD gives women security against poverty and provides them with independent economic status. By ensuring that women participate fully in asset redistribution and agrarian reform, the sub-programme helps government meet its international commitments, for example in terms of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1996). Under the LRAD sub-programme women acquire land individually, rather than as members of households. They participate on an equal footing with men in all aspects of implementation of the LRAD sub-programme. Women-only projects are encouraged, and a third of the transferred land resources have accrued to women. The DoLA established the Land Reform Gender Policy and Implementation Unit in 1996. This was done in compliance with the White Paper on the South African Land Policy and the Constitutional commitment to gender equity and equality. The brief of the unit is to ensure that gender issues are at the core of all land reform programmes. For information on the initiatives of the Department of Land Affairs please visit <http://land.pww.gov.za/>

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