

## Business integrity – the CESA way

The CESA conference held on 8 October '09 in Midrand explored the theme of 'Business Integrity - The CESA Way...' focusing on the Business Integrity Management Systems (BIMS) and Government Procurement Integrity Management Systems (GPIMS) and how we can unite to fight corruption by forging partnerships with government.

In his welcoming address, outgoing President of CESA, Felix Fongqqa stated that he looks forward to the rollout of the Construction Industry Charter that will result in industry organisations working closer together. A major focus for CESA this year is to add its weight to the efforts to reduce the propensity for crime and corruption that is undermining the construction industry.

### The world looks to engineers for leadership and innovation

Minister Trevor Manuel, keynote speaker at CESA's Business Integrity conference, identified three challenges to the engineering industry:

*First:* He referred to the National Treasury Provincial Budget and Expenditure Review document detailing the variants in the costs of building schools and roads between the provinces and posed the question "Who asks and who watches and where are consulting engineers in these issues?"

*Second:* Skills shortage which is also an international challenge. He raised the issue of skills as an ethical challenge because, "If engineering firms continue recruiting from each other by merely offering higher salaries then we are doomed not to realise the opportunity for rapid expansion in engineering in order to better the lives of our people".

*Third:* The environment – this is an area in which engineers need to actively engage and see it as a great opportunity. A proposal for engagement in the form of the Presidency Green Paper on National Strategic Planning has been created and he encouraged CESA to mobilise its resources to be heard on this issue.



*Felix Fongqqa, Trevor Manuel and Graham Pirie.*

### Transparency is key

Renko Campen, past chairman and current advisor from international consulting engineering organisation DHV (The Netherlands) provided the conference with an international perspective on integrity. He stated that integrity is our main asset and one way of defining integrity is to ask oneself – 'Would I want to see it in the headlines tomorrow morning?' He stated that there are a number of organisations worldwide taking care of corruption and went on to list them. Out of 180 countries ranked in the 2009 corruption Perception Index, Denmark is the least corrupt, with South Africa coming tie with Italy and Greece in position No 54 and Somalia ranked at No108. No country is corruption free and there is a definite connection between culture and corruption, the more corrupt a country the less confidence there is in the government.

### Zero Tolerance not Zero Defect

"SSI Engineers and Environmental Consultants have implemented a zero tolerance," stated Pieter van Niekerk, COO at SSI, and "that as far as Africa is concerned there is not a 'one fit all' solution. Implementing this type of policy requires openness; honesty; transparency; reflection and having to make some difficult decisions."

### Professionals are considered 'above reasonable men' and must act as such

The Programme Manager for Procurement and Delivery at the CIDB, Inba Thumbiran, stated that the CIDB has the mandate to reform procurement in South Africa and that the CIDB Code of Conduct for parties engaged in construction procurement presented the framework for procurement for the public sector and was included in their Standards for Uniformity.

### Ethics is not part of a process but the framework within which business is conducted

Nazir Alli, CEO of SANRAL presented a paper on the ethical issues in Engineering Practice in which he asked if CESA has the courage of its conviction as well as the relevance of the organisation around ethics and fraud. He requested CESA to look at performance indicators in the fight against corruption.

### Corruption is wrong and undermines values

The final presentation detailing CESA's approach to Business Integrity was presented by incoming President of CESA Zulch Lötter. Lötter stated that corruption must never be condoned or accepted and introduced CESA's Business Integrity Task Team (BITT) responsible for producing CESA's Business Integrity Guideline that is being included in the organisation's Code of Conduct.

Lunch at the conference was sponsored by BST Global one of CESA's partners who supply business management software for engineering companies worldwide.

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