



SAACE INAUGURATES FIRST AFRICAN PRESIDENT

The South African Association of Consulting Engineers (SAACE) recently inaugurated its first African consulting engineer to the Presidency of the Association. Webster Ndodana takes up the role at a time when the construction sector is in the midst of major transformation with the expected implementation of the Construction Charter set for 2006.

Says Graham Pirie, CEO of the Association: "The draft charter is expected to be finalised in the next few months and will likely be legislated early next year. We could not have had the able assistance of Webster at a better time. Together, Webster and I will be encouraging our members to begin working towards the targets outlined in the Charter with urgency and I believe that he will play a key role in gaining the confidence and widespread support of our member firms."

Webster Ndodana will be ably supported by his key office bearers – Mrs Althea Povey, immediate Past President; Cecil Rose, First Vice President and Felix Fongoqa, Second Vice President.

Born in Queenstown in the Eastern Cape – Webster graduated with a BSc at the University of Fort Hare, with majors in Mathematics and Physics. He worked for the Eastern Cape Province for a number of years before taking up engineering and qualifying with a BSc in Civil Engineering at the University of the Witwatersrand. He is a professional engineer registered with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA),

a member of the South African Institute of Civil Engineering (SAICE) and a member of the South African Black Technical Allied Career Organisation (SABTACO).

He was employed by a number of consulting firms until mid 1994, when he began his own private practice. After starting off fairly small, the firm, now known as Ndodana Consulting Engineers (NCE), has grown to be a middle size firm, with offices in Johannesburg, Pretoria, East London, Port Elizabeth and Tzaneen. Webster is currently managing director and majority shareholder of the firm.

His commitment to the Association of Consulting Engineers started in 1998 when he held the position of branch chairman of the Gauteng South branch. Since that time, he has also been a member of the executive committee and council. Further, he has served on various of the Association committee structures including two years on the membership and constitutional affairs committee (2000/1- 2002/3), after which he served a term as chairman of the communications and marketing committee (2003/4). He has most recently been chairman of both the finance and staff committee and the disciplinary committee (2004/5) and has served as vice-president to the previous two presidents – Althea Povey and Craig Clarke.

Webster enjoys music and watching good games of local and international soccer, rugby and cricket – not surprising since the Eastern Cape schools, and particularly those in Queenstown, are known for their passion for both rugby and cricket. He is married to Mandisa and they have three children, an elder daughter and a younger boy and girl, being twins.

PAST PRESIDENT POVEY POINTS OUT WHY CHARTER INCLUSION OF WOMEN IS IMPORTANT

Following the Construction Conference, outgoing president of the SAACE, Althea Povey, has added her voice to that of Nhlanhla Mjoli-Mncube, managing director of Mjoli Development, who addressed delegates giving a gender perspective on the Construction Charter.

Ms Mjoli's impassioned speech highlighted that women traditionally have always been

the builders of homes, roads and crèches and as the primary users have defined the needs. She also said that the fact that women are not visible in construction is an issue which must be addressed by the Construction Charter. Her plea to delegates was to note in the Charter that it requires the use of all competent people and highlighted that brains and intelligence are not exclusive to men.

Says Mjoli: "The construction sector needs to give more bursaries for women, include them in apprenticeships and create mechanisms for re-training of unemployed women. There is no reason why women can't become electricians, brick layers or plumbers."

Says Ms Povey: "I, like most of the women at the conference, related to the passion and determination that Nhlanhla expressed when it came to including women in the construction industry. This was not just the passion of one woman in construction; it was the voice of all women in the construction industry, from consulting engineers to home builders.

"Construction is a male-dominated industry, and it could be argued that our male colleagues maintain and promote values, images and practices axiomatic of a male-only culture thus characterising the industry in this way. The industry needs to recognise that you can't change the women in construction to fit the culture of the industry, instead we must work towards changing the environment and culture of the industry. Interestingly, it has been suggested that there may be a relationship between the dynamics of the construction industry's image and the industry's culture. Poor image is something all engineers have decried for years.

For more information on SAACE contact Graham Pirie, CEO (011) 463 2022



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