Women in STEM receive academic boost

At the 2019 South African Women in Science Awards (SAWiSA), six women in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) industries were awarded scholarships worth over R500,000 - sponsored by Tata International in Africa. The awards were held at the Boardwalk Hotel and Convention Centre in Port Elizabeth on Thursday, 15 August.

SAWiSA is an initiative of the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology and was hosted by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Dr Blade Nzimande.

Now in its 15th year, the awards recognise and reward excellence by women scientists and researchers who are South African citizens or permanent residents and profile them as role models for younger women. The theme for the 2019 SAWiSA was making the fourth industrial revolution work for women.

Len Brand, CEO of Tata International in Africa and Dr Gerda Botha, Chairperson of the Board of the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions presented the Tata scholarships to full-time postgraduate Masters and PHD students in areas where participation by women is traditionally low.

Scholarship winners

This year's Tata and SAWiSA scholarship recipients are: Sibabalo Noludwe (University of Cape Town), Sarah Jane Selkirk (University of Cape Town), Mokgadi Mahlatse Nchabeleng (University of the Witwatersrand), Nomonde Sharon Malanda (Instituto de Empresa, Spain), Katekani Shingange (University of the Free State) and Julia Lynn Healy (University of Cape Town).

"It is important for us to invest in women in South Africa, especially within the field of science and technology. At Tata we believe in empowering people through giving back and promoting social and economic development of local communities through education, this is one of the key components of the TATA business values and belief system. We feel very proud to be associated with SAWiSA and we hope to continue this long-standing partnership," said Brand.

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