

SA's empowerment stars to be honoured at ABSA Impumelelo weekend

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South Africa's most anticipated empowerment event, the ABSA Impumelelo Empowerment Awards Weekend, is set to take place at Sun City from Thursday 22 to Sunday 25 September 2005.

Impumelelo announces, rewards and celebrates South Africa's top companies and outstanding individuals in business and government for their achievements in broad-based empowerment, development and social investment.

The high-profile event, which is co-hosted by Top Companies Publishing and Events, ABSA and Metropolitan, will consist of a conference, 'Doing Business in South Africa - The Gateway to Africa', an awards gala, a networking event, a cocktail event, and a masked ball, among others.

In an exciting change to this year's gala, the Top Business Persons (one man and one woman) and the Top Company of the Year will only be announced on the night of the awards. The event is supported by the authoritative annual 'Impumelelo: South Africa's Top 300 Empowerment Companies', the website www.beeonline.co.za and the (free) weekly e-mail BEE Online Newsletter.

We are also very pleased to announce that Dr Mzwanele Mfunwa, Development Policy Officer of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, will be keynote speaker at the conference. Dr Mfunwa will be addressing the delegates on issues pertaining to doing business in Africa, the role of UNECA in promoting private sector growth, and the laudable role South African business is increasingly playing on the African continent. Other high profile speakers include representation from NEPAD, Mathews Phosa, Dr Iqbal Surve and Bheki Sibiya.

Richard Fletcher, publisher and Chairman of Top Companies Publishing and Events says they are thrilled that ABSA and Metropolitan have chosen to partner Impumelelo. He adds that their work will have long-term benefits for the sponsors' respective businesses, the entire financial services industry and the country's empowerment and development goals.

"Our work has been very gratifying. Impumelelo's success, and particularly ABSA's and Metropolitan's support, shows just how far beyond compliance South African businesses are prepared to go."

Says Israel Skosana, ABSA executive director and keynote speaker at the event: "Impumelelo's stature is due to the fact that it is a driving force in empowerment."

"By the time the BEE Act was signed into law in January 2004, Impumelelo's fourth print edition had already seen the light. It has almost single-handedly paved the way for the Act and its positive reception by business leaders.

"Impumelelo is and does many things. It is an authoritative national print publication, a website, a weekly e-mail newsletter, and a series of regular events and forums - all with strong media exposure. It rewards companies and individuals. It showcases. It creates opportunities to network and do business. It addresses issues, legislation and industry charters. Impumelelo helps companies formulate empowerment goals."

"Our partnering with Impumelelo will extend our empowerment work in all of these directions.

According to Christabell Kota, manager: Corporate Affairs at Metropolitan, Impumelelo has played a key role in communicating the progress of empowerment in business and therefore highlighting its importance and challenging those who may be left behind.

"It encourages companies and key decision makers to understand and support the spirit and motives of the Act in the context of long-term business growth, and then goes on to reward leaders for their empowerment contributions."

"Our view has been that empowerment is good for sustainable business growth, rather than an impediment to it. Impumelelo is a part of our broad-based empowerment planning."

Top performers, both individuals and organizations, in the private and public sectors, are nominated by organisations such as the Black Management Forum, the Black Business Council, the South African Chamber of Business, various chambers of commerce and industry, and Trade and Industry South Africa.

For this year's Impumelelo Awards, over 3 000 companies as well as all SA government departments were researched by 10 full-time researchers, over a period of eight months, with a call for public nominations made through the daily media news resource and website Bizcommunity (www.bizcommunity.com) and the empowerment accreditation website BEE Online (www.beeonline.co.za).

Out of all the companies nominated this year, 1 800 companies qualified. From these, a final shortlist was drawn up and sent to our distinguished panel of judges - Leighton Itholeng, Patrick Wadula, Lisa Tait, Cairan Ryan, Wiseman Khuzwayo and Gordon Day - who chose the final winners.

This year's Impumelelo Top Business Personalities are Futhi Mtoba, Monhla Hlahla, Wendy Luhabe, Gloria Serobe, Gugu Moloi (women), while the men are Patrice Motsepe, Lazarus Zim, Eric Molobi, Tokyo Sexwale and Iqbal Surve.

The Impumelelo Honorary Award for Contribution to Economic Development in Africa is Danny Jordaan, and the Top Business Personality is Minister Trevor Manuel.

Companies awarded in their respective sectors will be Eyesizwe Coal (resources), Kwezi V3 Engineering (manufacturing), I & J (food processors & producers), Sizwe Medical (health), Afripack (packaging), Black Like Me (personal products), Enaleni Pharmaceuticals (pharmaceuticals), Edcon Group (retail), Tsogo Sun Holdings (leisure, entertainment & hotels), Kagiso Media (media & photography), Securicor (support services), Airports Company SA (transport), MTN Group (telecommunications), Eskom Ltd (utilities), Metropolitan Holdings (financials), Sentech (information technology) and Telkom Ltd (corporate social investment).

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