



## MEDIA STATEMENT

26 April 2024

### ENGINEERING COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA (ECOSA) APPEALS FOR PRIORITISATION OF ENGINEERING PROFESSION TRANSFORMATION

As South Africa commemorates 30 years of democracy, the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECOSA), calls on the private and public sectors to accelerate transformation of the engineering profession through deliberate interventions that are aimed at empowering even more women.

We must do everything humanely possible to encourage girls to choose the STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) subjects and pursue careers in engineering, as we prepare them for key engineering roles to drive infrastructure development and economic growth for a sustainable future,” said ECOSA president Refilwe Buthelezi, Pr.Eng.

The World Federation of Engineering Organizations, founded under the auspices of UNESCO, in 2020 called on public and private sectors to ensure equal opportunities of work, development and progress for male and female engineers, and all the under-represented people.

While ECOSA acknowledges the visible progress that has been made since the dawn of democracy in South Africa, barriers that hinder access to the profession, for black women, remain in place.

Looking into the 30 years of democracy and efforts on equality, ECOSA has registered 8,002 female engineers, majority of the female engineers we already have, are subject to an environment of toxic masculinity and biases that are embedded in the fabric of social institutions and workplaces, including, but not limited to, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying and work–life balance conflict, Buthelezi said.



In 2022, Buthelezi became the first female president of ECSA, a century old regulatory body that in its current form, was established in terms of the Engineering Profession Act (EPA), 46 of 2000.

In addition to her nearly two decades long experience in diverse management environments and leadership roles within the water, power and energy utility industries, Buthelezi holds multiple qualifications including a BEng in Electrical and Electronics, MEng in Engineering Management, both from the University of Johannesburg and a Master of Business Leadership (MBL) from UNISA.

Buthelezi believes the time for paying lip service towards meaningful transformation is over. “We cannot keep having these conversations in isolation or with male counterparts speaking at us rather than with us. We need more male champions to drive meaningful change in the sector,” said Buthelezi.

Transformation remains one of ECSA’s key objectives, and in joint partnerships with stakeholders such as institutions of higher learning and working centers, it strives to facilitate funding, mentorship, and other forms of support to women engineers and aspirant professionals.

On Wednesday, 17 April 2024, the Engineering Council of South Africa’s President Ms. Refilwe Buthelezi Pr. Eng joined the Women in the Built Environment’s (WITBE) webinar series as a guest speaker on “Championing Women’s Leadership in Engineering Organizations”.

The Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) has forged a strategic partnership with WITBE to provide educational and career mentoring platforms for approximately 60 women peers, professionals, and experts spanning all disciplines within the Built Environment. This collaboration marks the beginning of ECSA's commitment to furthering such initiatives, seeking out additional opportunities for similar impactful collaborations in the future.

**ENDS**



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## **ABOUT ECSA**

*The Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) is a statutory body established in terms of the Engineering Profession Act (EPA), 46 of 2000. The ECSA's primary role is the regulation of the engineering profession in terms of this Act. Its core functions are the accreditation of engineering programmes, registration of persons as professionals in specified categories, and the regulation of the practice of registered persons.*

*ECSA is the only body in South Africa that is authorized to register engineering professionals and bestow the use of engineering titles, such as Pr Eng, Pr Tech Eng, Pr Techni Eng, Pr Cert Eng, on persons who have met the requisite professional registration criteria.*