

CBE announces initiatives to drive transformation

7th February 2019

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Transformation in the built environment has progressed at a slower rate than in other sectors, such as the financial sector, with only 26% of all registered built environment professionals being previously disadvantaged individuals and only 0.3% of all registered professionals being women, Council for the Built Environment (CBE) CEO **Priscilla Mdlalose** pointed out on Thursday.

She delivered an address at CBE's second yearly Transformation Indaba.

The CBE's analysis of built environment professional candidacy, however, indicates that the majority of participants are from previously disadvantaged groups and that women candidates now make up 35% of all candidate built environment professionals, raising hope that transformation will grow at a faster pace in future.

Mdlalose said transformation had been hampered by poor skills development programmes, inadequate funding, market factors, capacity constraints, fraud and corruption and data inconsistency and inaccuracy.

“To enhance transformation interventions, we need an industry-wide strategy that uses a skills development process, such as the CBE Skills Pipeline, for sustainability in the industry, to ensure that quality is not compromised with built environment advancements and projects to fix historical imbalances.”

Mdlalose said in-depth consultations with stakeholders is critical, as well as partnerships between the public and private sector and society.

The CBE wants to establish an institution with oversight of transformation initiatives and to advance human resource development from primary school to professional status, using programmes and awareness creation around subjects required to ultimately enter the built environment professionally.

It also wants to drive a structured candidacy programme, establish sustainable funding for bursaries and design a sector-wide monitoring mechanism that the aforementioned oversight institution will use.

“The success of the CBE’s efforts depends on the buy-in from public and private sector stakeholders, the successful establishment of a fund to sustain transformation initiatives, positive participation from stakeholders in the education and training value chain, and the willingness of private sector to fund key programmes and commit to workplace training of candidate professionals,” noted Mdlalose.

WHY TRANSFORMATION?

Turner and Townsend associate director, CBE council member and Transformation Indaba programme director **Noluthando Molao** said political emancipation must translate into economic emancipation, through transformation initiatives, to build a better South Africa for all.

Within the South African context, Molao explained, transformation specifically relates to addressing past injustices created by the Apartheid system, which still affects the built industry today.

Transformation, both within the South African built environment and society at large, is much broader than the promotion of the previously disenfranchised into positions of social and economic empowerment.

Within the built environment, the CBE believes that, besides the quantitative aspects, relating to representativeness, transformation should also be closely linked to qualitative changes that will lead to the empowerment of built environment professionals, while unblocking the skills pipeline and generating new knowledge that enhances the contribution of the built environment professions towards the developmental objectives of the country.

“Essentially transformation should entail the creation of an enabling and sustainable environment which will allow each and every South African, regardless of race, gender, age or disability the opportunity to actualise their dreams,” said Molao.

This year’s Transformation Indaba was themed “Igniting the Possibilities” and the event discussed unlocking the built environment skills pipeline through adequate resource mobilisation, skills development and leading the South African built environment sector into the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

“The skills pipeline essentially depicts and explains the journey an individual needs to undertake and conquer in order to become a registered professional. This journey starts at the foundation stage of early childhood development and schooling and progresses all the way through to eventual retirement as a professional.

“Throughout this journey, individuals are faced with a variety of different challenges that will hinder their progression and might deter them from reaching their envisaged destination. These challenges mainly relate to the limited availability of resources, both financial and humane in nature,” said Molao. 🇷🇵

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