



INTERNET ARTICLE

Women still face challenges in Construction Industry

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“The construction industry is still male dominated and very few of the big construction companies have women as owners or managers. We all tender for the same job but in most cases it is a male owned company that gets the job.”

These were some of the sentiments that came out during Women in Water Business and Construction Workshop held recently at the Lesley Monnanyane Hall in Mangaung.

The workshop which targeted women in the construction industry took place under the theme “25 Years of Democracy: Growing South Africa together for Women’s Emancipation”. One of the presentations that sparked a keen interest was with regard to Supply Chain processes.

Evelyn Bosch, Supply Chain Manager from the department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) outlined how companies get disqualified from getting government jobs due to incomplete paperwork. “You always have to make sure that your company is registered and is in good standing with SARS. This is where most companies fail to qualify for work”, said Bosch.

She further said that many companies, irrespective of being male or female owned, bid for work from the Department but do not deliver the services after qualifying. She said this leads to blacklisting of most companies. “Owners of business should bid only when they know they can deliver and also be able to communicate if they will not be able to due to financial constraints”, she said.

Xolisa Mfingwana, Civil Engineering Technician in DWS also encouraged the women to keep empowering themselves especially with courses relating to water and sanitation. “The water industry is very specialized and not just everybody can be given an opportunity to work with water that is consumed by communities as there is a danger factor, there are a number of short courses available start empowering yourself”, said Mfingwana. She emphasized that women should also empower each other instead of dragging each other down. “We need to do stellar jobs that are of the best quality so that men never doubt us when we bid for the same work as them”, she said.

The women raised issues of unfair practices towards them especially when it comes to construction. They also complained that they would only qualify for the small jobs while their male counterparts get the bigger chunks. Women emphasised that there should be a shifting of the mind and political intervention is desperately needed in relation to the empowerment of women in business.

Women's month is an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on women's achievements, as well as the problems they are faced with in terms of development. The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) constantly supports women based projects and endeavours to always empower women in the sector.

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