

# More balance needed between men, women in leadership roles

## TNA Reporter

WHILE the proportion of women in executive management positions has increased over the past few years, it is still too low at directorship level, said the Businesswomen's Association of South Africa (BWA).

Findings from the 2012 women in leadership census showed that women account for only 3.6% of CEO positions, 5.5% of chairperson positions, 17.1% of directorships and 21.4% of executive management positions. This is despite the fact that women make up 52% of the South African population.

The BWA said the situation required a comprehensive societal shift to achieve more balance between men and women in leadership roles in the public and private sectors.

"Essentially, the findings of the census show that we have a long way to go to achieve more equality in the upper levels of workplace," said BWA president Kunyalala Maphisa.

"The advancement of women in South Africa is no longer an option, it is an urgent requirement."

According to the census, women account for 17.1% of directorships in 2012, up from last year's 15.8%, while 21.4% of executive managers are women, about the same as last year.

These figures were based on 329 companies, comprising 252 main board JSE companies, 57 AltX companies and 20 state-owned enterprises. Just more than 89% of the companies included in the census verified their details.

At the top of the pile, 38 companies had more than 25% of their boards and executive management represented by female directors, up by one company from 2011. However, this was still way down on 58 companies that achieved this in 2008.

At the bottom of the pile, 35 companies – or 10.6% of the total companies in the census – had no women in directorship or executive management positions, up from 27 companies in 2011.

In the public sector, however, women have made greater strides, with 40.7% of senior managers in government service being women. However, this should

also be seen against the backdrop of women occupying 60.6% of government jobs (excluding the SANDF) in 2012, up from 58.2% in 2011.

When it comes to total numbers of women directors, the number is rising slowly. There are 669 in 2012, compared to 646 in 2011, holding 1224 directorships compared to 1127 in 2011. Executive directors number 498, up from 467, while non-executive directors number 726, up from 660. From the companies included in the census, female executive managers number 1452 in 2012, down slightly from 1461 in 2011.

The census shows there are more white women than black women in executive manager positions, but more black women in director positions.

"Most of the decision-making powers sit at executive manager level, so the question then becomes are the black women in director positions just window dressing?" said Maphisa.

Importantly, while much improvement is needed, the country does not fare badly against many others. Women account for less than 9% of executive management and director positions in Australia. In Canada, women account for 17.7% of executive management positions and 14.5% of director positions, while in the US, women account for 14.1% of executive manager positions and 16.1% of director positions. In Israel, however, women account for 30% of execu-



**TOP JOB:** Nonkululeko Nyembezi-Heita is CEO of ArcelorMittal. Not many women climb the heap of engineering careers. Picture: GALLO IMAGES

tive manager positions, higher than in South Africa.

When it comes to CEOs, the census shows that of the 329 companies included, only 12 have females at the top of the organisation, with the biggest penetration (25%) occurring in state-owned enterprises. Across all 329 companies the figure is just 3.7%, while in JSE-listed companies included in the total, it drops to just 2.3%.

Another interesting statistic is that only eight of South Africa's top 25 companies by market capitalisation have women occupying more than 25% of their executive management positions.

Looking across the different industry sectors, only state-owned enterprises and the oil and gas sector had a higher level of women in executive management and director roles in 2012 compared to 2011. – 701125

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