

## INFRASTRUCTURE AFRICA PROVIDES PLATFORM FOR WOMEN TO TAKE PART IN AFRICA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**JOHANNESBURG, 3 August 2017** With Women's Month taking place in South Africa this month, the Infrastructure Africa Business Forum in Sandton is providing a platform for women's development in traditionally male-dominated infrastructure sectors.

"The role of women in Africa's economic development remains a central issue with gender inequality thwarting growth in many countries. The women of Africa currently represent an untapped economic force that is necessary for the continent's socio-economic development as well the optimisation of its potential," said Liz Hart, Managing Director of Infrastructure Africa.

Women are catalysts for meaningful change on the African continent and that women and women leaders will be critical in leading our continent into a new future is very evident. As such, creating opportunities that promote African women's economic participation is a prerequisite if Africa is to experience its predicted growth within the next few decades.

In most African countries, only about a third of women participate in economic activities, however research shows that when women are actively involved, the improvement is measureable: In Africa, women's economic participation encourages increased GDP, better governance within political structures and improved performance as a result of leadership within organisations.

And it's not only women's economic participation that's needed – women in Africa need to become more representative in most spheres, including in infrastructure sectors, and women need to become more involved in the decision-making and planning of infrastructure projects and programmes.

In addition, the burden of infrastructure deficit is carried mostly by women, who walk kilometres per day and spend hours collecting water as well as wood for cooking and heating. Thus the design of infrastructure programmes needs to prioritise such gender-specific issues to ensure that women are able to carry out their everyday chores more efficiently, allowing more time for family care, educational opportunities, productive work and participation in community life.





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Although significant progress on the integration of gender in the infrastructure domain has taken place in the last decade, much more is needed to establish women's inclusivity in African infrastructure. The event aims to provide opportunities for women to unlock opportunities for growth in the African infrastructure arena and this can be in the form of personal growth through learning, meeting business mentors, creating new business connections through the key people attending and growing their existing infrastructure businesses by doing deals.

The Infrastructure Africa 2-day conference takes place at the Sandton Convention Centre from the 21 - 22 August and will host several leading women infrastructure experts as speakers as well as participants who are active in Africa's infrastructure sectors.

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#### **More information about the 2017 Infrastructure Africa Business Forum**

The sixth Infrastructure Africa Business Forum to be hosted on the 21-22 August 2017 in Sandton, South Africa, will bring together prominent African infrastructure experts, government officials and business leaders to accelerate the business of infrastructure development across the continent.

The 2-day conference and showcase exhibition provides an opportunity for companies to focus on the continent's growth hotspots, discuss infrastructure trends, meet project developers and relevant government authorities, whilst exploring infrastructure business opportunities. The event has the highest level of African and South African endorsement for an infrastructure event on the continent, and provides the business platform for private and public sector players seeking to meet African infrastructure project owners.

The event partners are the NEPAD Planning & Coordinating Agency (NEPAD Agency) and Trade Invest Africa. Strategic corporate sponsors have aligned themselves to the Infrastructure Africa Business Forum and include Liquid Telecom, DBSA, Trade & Development Bank and ECIC.





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