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ECOSA YOUTH DAY ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION BRINGS LIGHT ON THE ROLE OF ECOSA

On Thursday, 16 June 2022, the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECOSA) launched its first ECOSA Youth Day Round Table Discussion.

The discussion facilitated by Mr Jones Moloisane Pr Tech, brought together engineering professionals at different levels in their careers to shed light on their experiences in academia and professional industry, as well as their knowledge and perception of ECOSA.

The panel was represented by Ms Megan Brink: PHD engineering student at the University of Pretoria, the young professionals were represented by Mr Malcolm Louw who is currently an Engineer in Training at Joburg Water and master's student at the University of Johannesburg and Ms Yanko Banda Pr Eng, who recently registered with ECOSA, and is a Project Manager for Telkom, represented experienced engineering professionals.

In a quest to ascertain the visibility of ECOSA, Mr Moloisane posed the question "Is ECOSA visible to the industry?" Budding engineers Ms Brink and Mr Louw responded in the affirmative, due to their exposure of student chapters in their institutions of higher learning, and Ms Banda emphasised the need for collaboration between ECOSA and Voluntary Associations (VAs) stating that while VAs need to encourage discipline specific registration, they should also contribute to the promotion of professional registration with ECOSA in the effort to ensure greater awareness of the importance of registration and ultimately effective regulation of the industry.

To highlight the importance of the relationship between ECOSA and Voluntary Associations, Mr Moloisane pointed to the Engineering Professions Act, 46 of 2000 which prescribes VAs as one of the key stakeholders that ECOSA needs to firstly recognise, secondly consult on matters of engineering organisations, identification of engineering work, professional conduct and lastly for ECOSA, in collaboration with VAs, to provide an advisory role to the Ministry overseeing the Six Built Environment Professional Councils.

This response prompted the question whether everyone involved in the engineering sector from designer, contractor, artisan, and even the person conducting maintenance work be registered with the Council? The consensus from the panel members was that by virtue of the persons' qualifications in the engineering sector, regardless of the type of work they perform on a project, engineers should be registered to ensure accountability of the work conducted.

The panel agreed that while ECOSA is visible, there should be a conscious effort to create awareness of the ECOSA brand, enhance the value proposition as well as foster and strengthen relations with key stakeholders such as Voluntary Associations in the effort to bolster professional registration with ECOSA.

Overall, the discussion brought about different perspectives of the engineering profession as well as the strategic direction in which the profession is heading. It was also established that

fostering relations with ECSA stakeholders is crucial to strengthen ECSA's position and to make it impactful.