

25 October 2016

South Africa Pays Tribute to Black Business Pioneers

On 28 October, black business people of previous decades will reunite to be celebrated by their peers as well as South Africa's current generation of business leaders.

The "Tribute to Black Business Pioneers" brings together black business people of the 50s, 60s and 70s, who defied economic exclusion to help shape South Africa's economic landscape. The dinner will recognise unsung heroes, whose stories have, until now, remained relatively unknown. These are stories of immense individual tenacity and achievement, written in the margins of economic history, but which have had a lasting impact in their communities.

Some of the pioneers being honoured for their tremendous achievements include:

- Jabu Vilakazi
- Samuel Malope
- Pearl Tshabalala
- Reggie Hlongwane
- Petrus Molemela
- Laura Mpahlwa
- David "Boykie" Kupane
- Richard Maponya

The pioneers are drawn from diverse industries and sectors, including property development, funeral services, retail, and more. Although each story is unique, each pioneer drew upon their personal resilience to build businesses which provided vital services to their communities.

Pearl Tshabalala, who hailed from Queenstown in the Eastern Cape, initially trained as a nurse but upon her marriage to Vuka Tshabalala focused instead on the family business, Kings Road Butchery in Durban. She soon diversified to include a grocery shop, general dealer and tea room – all part of the Kings Road Shopping Centre – while her husband pursued his law studies and became an aspirant advocate. In the 1970s, the Tshabalalas opened a greengrocer in Beachway and a self-service bottle store in Clermont. This came with added challenges, including security, cash control and stock taking – but the opportunity to provide jobs and livelihoods outweighed these headaches. At the same time, Pearlie, as she was known, immersed herself in Clermont community initiatives including church outreach, neighbourhood schools, and old age homes. She was a founding member of Sibusisiwe Child & Welfare and Zibambeleni Old Age Home, and was active in many other initiatives.

Pearlie died in 1998, when she was killed at her business premises in front of her six-year-old son.

Another pioneer, Boykie Kupane dedicated his business efforts to building a funeral service which would assist bereaved families to bury their loved ones with dignity. The business was inspired by his own experience burying an infant daughter. Saddened by the shoddy workmanship he encountered, Kupane vowed to give others better care.

These are just two of the many stories which will be celebrated at the dinner.

"Many of our pioneers have been personally inspiring to me in my own career. They dedicated their lives to building enterprises which served their communities and created vital jobs at a time when our people were marginalised and oppressed. It is fitting that we should honour them at last," Telkom CEO Siphosiso Maseko.

The tribute, initiated by Maseko, is being undertaken in partnership with Transnet, The Land Bank, the IDC, Standard Bank, BMW, Tsogo Sun and Airports Company South Africa.

“I have long admired the people we will be honouring at our tribute dinner. For me and many others, they serve as role models for our present generation of business leaders. It is my hope that as we hear their stories, we will be able to make a similar difference to South Africa’s economic development,” said Maseko.

For further enquiries, please contact:

Pynee Chetty Senior Specialist: Media Relations Group Communication Tel:+27 12 642 1716 Mobile: +27 81 389 7874 Email: chettpr2@telkom.co.za	OR	Leigh-Ann Francis Specialist: Media Relations Group Communication Tel: +27 12 642 1728 Mobile: +27 81 391 4780 Email: francilm@telkom.co.za
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Telkom is a leading communications services provider in South Africa. We had consolidated operating revenue of R37.3 billion and normalised profit after tax of R4,052 million for the year ended 31 March 2016. Total assets amounted to R46.8 billion and equity attributable to the owners of Telkom to R26.1 billion as of 31 March 2016. The group generated normalised free cash flow of R3.9 billion for the year ended 31 March 2016.

As of 31 March 2016, we had approximately 3.2 million telephone access lines in service and 1,077,939 ports connected via MSAN access. We offer business, residential and payphone customers a wide range of services and products, including:

- fixed-line retail voice services using PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network) lines, including ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) lines, and the sale of subscription based value-added voice services and calling plans;
- fixed-line customer premises equipment rental and sales services both voice and data needs and these include PABX, Computers, Routers, Modems, Telephone handsets and other ancillary equipment;
- interconnection services, including terminating and transiting traffic from South African mobile operators, as well as from international operators and transiting traffic from mobile to international destinations;
- fixed-line data services, including domestic and international data transmission services, such as point-to-point leased lines, ADSL (Asymmetrical Digital Subscriber Line) services, packet-based services, managed data networking services and internet access and related information technology services;
- Data Centre Operations includes e-commerce, application service provider, hosting, data storage, e-mail and security services;
- W-CDMA (Wideband Code Division Multiple Access), a 3G next generation network, including fixed voice services, data services and nomadic voice services;
- mobile communication services, including voice services, data services and handset sales through our mobile brand called Telkom Mobile;
- information and communication services including cloud services, infrastructure services, workspace services, global service integration management and hardware and network equipment sales locally, in seven African countries, the UK and Dubai through Business Connexion Group; and

- other services including directory services, through Trudon (Pty) Ltd, wireless data services, through Swiftnet (Pty) Ltd.
- Convergence is one of our key strategic initiatives in building a sustainable future for Telkom. We will lead the provision of converged services in South Africa in support of our mission statement: Seamlessly connecting people to a better life.