

## **SANRAL celebrates women in infrastructure development**

**Ballito, 24 August 2014** - The empowerment of women in infrastructure development was reinforced and celebrated at a roundtable discussion hosted by the South African National Roads Agency SOC Ltd (SANRAL) to commemorate Women's Month.

The event was addressed by Deputy Minister of Transport Sindisiwe Chikunga who emphasised that women must play a more important role in the economy of the country.

"Traditionally, women and engineering were not two words that went together. But that older world ethos has changed. From a base of 20 or so a decade ago, there are about 1000 women engineering undergraduates currently studying at South African universities and technikons.

"However, despite the progress made in closing the gender gap and making more opportunities available for women in business, South Africa's construction industry is one place where being a woman is still a major challenge," said Chikunga.

"To help address the underrepresentation of women, government has invested R3.2 trillion towards infrastructure investment projects with R845 billion earmarked for the implementation of infrastructure programmes.

She said she wanted to see 50% of women in managerial positions and more women engineers working with SANRAL.

Nompumelelo Pakade, SAWIC (South African Women in Construction) National President said: "It is imperative that contractor development programmes (CDP) are cemented to promote skills development. For women empowerment to be sustainable, training needs to be followed by work opportunities. CDPs create an enabling environment for contractor development, allowing for targets to be set, the growth process to be monitored and evaluation to be conducted at the end of a particular period."

"SANRAL's commitment to ensuring women feature very prominently on the agenda of meeting procurement requirements is very reassuring," said Fusi Makhasane, Deputy Chairperson of the South African Network for Women in Transport.