



# AHi newsletter

DECEMBER 2014

## AHi in a nutshell

- National Organised Business platform
- 110 business chambers
- 20 000 business members (corporate, medium, small and Employers' Association)
- Average turnover: >R3 million >R1 billion annually
- 500 volunteers driving the national and provincial council, specialist committees and business chambers of the AHi
- Between 450 to 500 business network sessions at local, provincial, national and international level annually
- Development of 600 young entrepreneurs thus far
- CoGTA and SALGA endorsed co-operation with local municipalities.

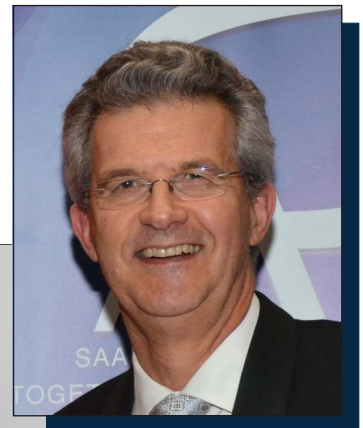
## The AHi's new officials



**President** - Prof Tommy du Plessis, Director of the NWU Business School



**Second vice-president** Dr Ernest Messina, one of Western Cape's top business leaders



**First vice-president** Christo Botes, CEO of Business Partners

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## AHi shares concern about country's economy

**T**he AHi recently held its annual congress at Umhlanga along the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal. The discussions over two days were constructive and very positive.

This organisation shares in the concern of many business people about the country's economic situation:

- The triple challenge of unemployment, poverty and inequality has to be addressed and this is not only government's responsibility.
- There is a shortage on the trade account of the country's balance of payments, government spending is too high and the ordinary South African's debt is shockingly high.
- We cannot afford a further downward adjustment of the country's credit rating.
- With a growth rate of about 1% the country cannot do all the things necessary to achieve its economic potential.
- Nevertheless, the AHi has the structures, through its

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- Corporate and business members as well as its business chamber network, to unlock this potential.

It is now more or less three years since the National Development Plan came to fruition due to a variety of business leaders and the facilitating role of Mr Trevor Manuel.

After a lot of debating about the pros and cons of the plan over the last three years, there is consensus among the majority of business people that we do not have another choice but to make this plan work. What is clear is that “planning” has been completed and that “implementation” is crucial.

At the recent AHi congress in Umhlanga two ministers were present, namely Mr Pravin Gordhan, responsible for local government, and Ms Lindiwe Zulu, the new minister of Small Business. In these two areas an organisation as the AHi's relevance can be undoubtedly proved.

- At the congress it was heard that numerous business chambers are working with their local governments, in a critical but constructive way, to improve especially service delivery. Business chambers are keen to continue and extend this involvement. They don't want to argue, they want to help, as in this way they also assist local business people.
- In the past year the AHi has started with a programme of entrepreneur development. More than 500 young entrepreneurs of all languages and creeds have been trained and the top 16 were honoured at this congress. These young upcoming entrepreneurs need guidance. Where will you get better teachers or mentors than within the business chamber network?
- The majority of our members are small businesses and I don't have to elaborate on the important role that the small business sector plays in our country as job creators. The National Development Plan also indicates that about 90% of the 11 million jobs that have to be created by 2030, should be created by the small and medium-sized business enterprises.

These are only two practical examples that confirm the relevance of the AHi and its members. In addition, there is the influencing role that the AHi can play on the highest level

in this country.

Then there is the networking function within and outside our country's boundaries. International ties include chambers of commerce in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Taiwan, SANEC countries and the USA.

The upliftment and training role that is played among existing and potential business enterprises should also be mentioned.

However, unnecessary duplication exists because there are several organisations similar to the AHi, pursuing the same aims and one should look for “mutual ground” in order to increase the synergy and impact of organised trade and industry. In order to play a proper role in especially the country's policy aspects, the different organisations should be better organised.

At the congress in Umhlanga it was again confirmed that the AHi is an inclusive organisation concerning language and race. In the majority of the business chambers, Afrikaans is most probably the lingua franca, but this does not restrict access to membership. At our recent congress more English than Afrikaans was spoken!

For individual members of business chambers the relevance of the AHi would increase, should the value proposition to members be adjusted and extended in such a way as to make provision for modern business practices and technological developments.

This remains one of the AHi's major challenges in 2015.

Prof Tommy du Plessis,  
President, AHi

## Congress 2015

In consultation with the directorate, the provincial and national council, the decision was made to hold the Congress for 2015 in George, in the Western Cape.

## Pravin Gordhan receives AHi's highest honour

**P**ravin Gordhan, Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, was this year's recipient of the MS Louw Award. It is the highest honour the AHi annually awards to a South African personality that plays an influential role in the South African economy.

Previous recipients were Louis von Zeuner, former deputy chief executive of ABSA in 2012 and Sipho Nkosi, CEO of Exxaro, who received the award in 2013.

The M.S. Louw award refers to Dr MS (Tinie) Louw, a co-founder of the AHi and who served as AHi president from 1944 to 1956. He was also an entrepreneur in his own

right and served on the boards of Sanlam and Sasol. Sanlam entrusted the M.S. Louw award to the AHi in 1976 to be bestowed on business leaders who made an exceptional contribution to the South African business world and economy at large.

Ben Deysel, former president of the AHi, in his speech paid tribute to Pravin Gordhan's contribution to the transformation of the South African Revenue Service.

He also praised Gordhan for his role as the former Minister of Finance and the footprint he left on the international economic stage. He also pledged the AHi's support for

Gordhan's 'Back to basics' campaign, aimed at improving service delivery and accountability at municipal level.

In his response Gordhan pointed out that given the history of our country, he values the award a lot and regard it as one of the highlights of his career.

He praised the AHi as an affiliate of BUSA for its role in promoting local economic development and building an inclusive economy.

It is especially the role of chambers at local level and the entrepreneurial training provided by the AHi that impressed him most.



*Minister Pravin Gordhan receives the AHi's highest honour, the MS Louw Award, from former AHi President, Ben Deysel*



## Development programme for start-up entrepreneurs



*Minister of Small Business, Lindiwe Zulu, with start-up entrepreneurs during the AHi congress*

The recently held AHi Congress was a turning point for the organisation's role in enterprise development in South Africa. Sixteen start-up entrepreneurs from all over South Africa attended the congress which was held at the Sibaya Conference Centre in Durban. They were selected from more than 600 entrepreneurs throughout South Africa who attended the AHi's entrepreneurial programme for start-up entrepreneurs.

It is rolled out in cooperation with local chambers and the participants had to submit business plans which were then evaluated by experts. ABSA, as the national sponsor, enabled the AHi to pay for their travelling and accommodation costs. The opportunity to interact with Minister of Small Business, Lindiwe Zulu and to rub shoulders with experienced business people was a memorable experience second to none. The leadership of BUSA was also in attendance.

In her presentation, minister Zulu endorsed the National Development Plan (NDP) as the basis for the development of small business. Not only does the NDP emphasise the role of the small business sector to create jobs, but it promises extensive support for small businesses through better coordination of all relevant agencies, development finance institutions and public and private incubators.

Furthermore, it promises to reduce the cost of financial support and to provide better access for small and medium enterprises to financial services. It further commits itself to reduce red tape, to provide ongoing training to all workers and to support local industries and job creation through ensuring that preference is given to local industries when it comes to public and private procurement.

Minister Zulu also referred in her presentation to the commitment and zeal of Afrikaans-speaking businesspeople and encouraged the young entrepreneurs to follow in their footsteps.

She however made it clear that her ministry will not tolerate abuse of financial support provided by her department to assist start-ups, as well as poor financial management and extravagance. Conversely accountable, growing and sustainable businesses under good leadership will be rewarded.

## Business Chamber of the Year Award

### George wins President's trophy

The winner of this year's AHi Business Chamber of the Year competition is the George Business Chamber that won the AHi's President's Trophy. George Business Chamber, with its 263 members, is highly active in the Southern Cape and focuses on activities aimed at promoting networking between established business members and providing training opportunities for young entrepreneurs.

Networking sessions for the past year provided a host of contact and business opportunities for members. More than 15 such events, which focussed on themes such as why networking, first impressions, personal branding, success stories, body language and attitude, pitfalls of networking, the importance of follow-up, management of cultural diversity and conflict were organised.

Dr Willie Celliers, current chairperson of the George Business Chamber is also passionate about empowering business people. Initiatives related to this involve entrepreneurial training in cooperation with the AHi for young entrepreneurs in George,

financial training to emerging entrepreneurs in Thembalethu, mentoring the Kanna--land Small Business Development Chamber and the establishment of chambers in the Great Brak River area. Willie also serves on the board of AHi Western Cape and has a weekly slot discussing various aspects related to business and the local economy on Eden FM.

Cooperation with municipalities is a priority for both George and Waterberg Business Chambers. In their speeches, both ministers Pravin Gordhan, responsible for local government, and Lindiwe Zulu of the ministry of small business, emphasised the important role that inclusive

and professionally run chambers play at the local level. Both pledged their commitment to work closer with local business chambers and want to see local chambers actively participating in local government ward committees.

The AHi, as a member of BUSA, also emphasised its commitment to work with municipalities and the ministry for small business development to improve local economic circumstances and to help bring about an inclusive economy through the empowerment of young entrepreneurs.



*Dr Willie Celliers, chairperson, and representatives of George business chamber, with ministers Gordhan and Zulu*



## ***Business Chamber of the Year Award***

### **Waterberg wins Vice-president's trophy**



*The chairperson of Waterberg Business Chamber, Fernando Goncalves receives the vice-president's trophy*

**T**he Waterberg Business Chamber in Modimolle was appointed the Business Chamber of the Year in the medium category at the AHi's congress in Durban on 10 October this year.

This congress was attended by representatives of the largest companies in South Africa and of business chambers right through the country. Messrs Fernando Goncalves (chairperson), Gerhardt Breytenbach (management member) and Ms Sonette Ebersöhn (PRO) represented the Waterberg Business Chamber at the congress.

Some of the prominent guest speakers at the congress were Mr Senzo Mchunu, Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Minister Pravin Gordhan, Minister of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs, Minister Lindiwe Zulu, Minister of Small Business and Messrs Willie Lategan of Barclays Africa and Theo Vorster, well-known financial expert and TV personality.

Business representatives of the Waterberg agreed that it was a privilege to attend the congress and that it was a revelation to experience the positive spirit between the

different business role players in South Africa.

Two issues stood out during the congress, namely:

- There are still incredible business opportunities in South Africa notwithstanding several challenges that our economy faces. In this regard the central message is that with each change a new opportunity is created and that positive people are needed to see and exploit those opportunities;
- There is a need for closer cooperation between the role players in the private business sector and government, which includes local government on grassroot level. The AHi and the business chambers can, together with other business organisations, such as BUSA, in an organised way, play a constructive role in this regard.

The highlight of the congress was the gala dinner that took place after the formal activities and where Waterberg Business Chamber was appointed as the winner of medium business chambers.

## Don't underestimate the power of women

The year 2014 will be remembered for a number of milestones. These include South Africa celebrating 20 years as a democratic nation, holding free, fair, transparent elections and the first year that as a nation we celebrated former President Mandela's birthday in his absence.

Furthermore, 2014 reaffirms SA Council for Business Women as an organisation that has remained true to its commitment of women empowerment as it marks our 26 years in existence. I have personally appreciated the platform that the organisation has provided for women from all backgrounds in relation to personal and business growth. This has been in numerous forms, but importantly it's through travelling across the country to branches and networking with women that I have come to appreciate that as a collective we share more similarities and passion for both the organisation and the country in relation to the plight of women and their advancement thereof. Amidst great progress in the past twenty years in advancement of women, there remains huge responsibility on our shoulders to continue to seek to empower other women on the periphery. Too many women both in South Africa and around the world continue to face barriers to financial independence. When women lack economic power, communities suffer! We must remove economic barriers for women in our value chain. We can no longer afford to waste the potential of half the world's population. It is both a matter of justice as well as good business and economic sense.

The SA Council for Business Women celebrated its achievements with its National Congress and Gala on the 13 September 2014 in Pretoria.

We were privileged to have Deputy Minister of Communications, Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, as our main speaker. The Minister has encouraged the women to fully participate in the country's decision-making processes. "It can never be correct that we, politicians, sit somewhere and draft policies ... But when we hold public hearings or meetings, people do not come to engage and propose ideas that will benefit them. She also said that it is important for women to make use of platforms such as the SA Council for Business Women in order to increase the participation of women in the mainstream economy.

The highlight for the year is finding the "diamonds" for our Business Women of the Year competition. I am always amazed to listen to the success stories of the participants who succeeded and are proud to enter the competition. The transformation process is important to grow our organisation and it is noted that the national finalists this year represent the different nationalities and the youth. The Council's 2014 Business Women of the Year received awards during the gala dinner, and Ivy Meyer of Lakeside in Cape Town, walked away with the award for Woman Entrepreneur of the Year. Meyer was awarded for successfully running two projects that empower her community, especially youth and people with disabilities. Meyer, who is the Director of Rapitrade 458 Pty Ltd and a founder of Out of Africa Dance Academy, was thrilled to be recognised as one of the outstanding women among many. Abigail Mahlangu, owner of Tushiyah Services won the Professional category and her business was born from a desire to

mobilise and up-skill the ordinary South African to deliver extraordinary business results. Anita Botes, an agent at Harcourts Witbank, was the winner in the Corporate Category. She is a success-driven person with a passion for people and wants to see positive results in all she does.

The President for 2015, Cerita Nagy, and the two vice-presidents, Diana Jansen and Mallory Lambert were also announced at the Gala function.

The partnership with The Job Club will open opportunities to create sustainable income and business through the members of the SA Council for Business Women. Their support to create job and business opportunities will bring a positive change to our communities.

The iDuc project, our social responsibility initiative, aimed at promotion of "No violence against women and children" has touched the lives of many. The pilot in Potchefstroom set the benchmark for the support of crises centres and the training of laymen councillors to give support in communities and to create jobs. Negotiations with the NWest University is in progress. The members of the SA Council for Business Women with their expert knowledge are our greatest asset. We have to use this asset to grow this organisation and to be seen and experienced as an organisation that women would desire to become members of. We must not underestimate the power within women and the difference we can make if we stand together and have the same focus and goals in mind.





Business Woman of the Year Ivy Meyer, Cerita Nagy, newly elect president for 2015, Elise Coetzer of the Job Club, Hester du Bruyn, previous SACBW president, Anita Botes, winner of the Corporate Category and Abigail Mahlangu, winner of the Professional Category



From left, Riaan Oden-daal, Christo van der Rheede, Mr Banie Claasen, Barclays Africa, main sponsor of the AHI congress, KZN MEC for Social Development, Mrs Weziwe Gcotyewa Thusi, Mr Edward Senzo Mchunu, Premier of Kwazulu-Natal, who opened the congress, and Ben Deysel



From left, Christo van der Rheede, guest speakers Mr Theo Vorster, Minister Pravin Gordhan, Minister Lindiwe Zulu, Mr Willie Lategan, Ben Deysel and Prof Carolina Koornhof



Sakkie Jacobs of Vanderbijlpark receives an honorary award from the AHI and Vanderbijlpark Business Chamber for his involvement over 40 years





*Ansie Nieuwenhuis, chairperson of AHI-KZN, host of this year's congress, with Theo Vorster*

*KZN-leaders Aart Verrips (left) and Riaan Odendaal (right) with Minister Pravin Gordhan*

*Santam representatives John Lomberg and Ms Ray-Ann Sedres with Minister Pravin Gordhan*



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<b>AHi - CALENDAR 2015</b>			
<b>DATE</b>	<b>MEETING</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>VENUE</b>
<b>FEBRUARY</b>			
2 February	Audit committee	15:00 - 16:30	AHi offices
10 February	Directorate	09:00 - 12:30	AHi offices
<b>MARCH</b>			
19 March	Chairperson's forum	09:00 - 11:00	Western Cape
	Provincial Council	09:00 - 11:00	
	National Council	11:15 - 13:00	
	Lunch	13:00 - 14:00	
	NR work session, speakers	14:00 - 17:00	
	Network function	19:00	
20 March	Board of Trustees	12:00 for 12:30	Western Cape
<b>MAY</b>			
18 May	Audit committee	15:00 - 16:30	Ahi offices
26 May	Directorate	09:00 - 12:30	AHi offices
<b>JUNE</b>			
11 June	Chairperson's forum	09:00 - 11:00	Pretoria
	Provincial Council	09:00 - 11:00	
	National Council	11:15 - 13:00	
	Lunch	13:00 - 14:00	
	NR work session, speakers	14:00 - 17:00	
	Network function	18:30 for 19:00	
<b>JULY</b>			
13 July	Audit committee	15:00 - 16:30	AHi offices, Pta
21 July	Directorate	09:00 - 12:30	Sandhurst
	President: Lunch	12:30 - 14:30	Sandhurst
<b>AUGUST</b>			
13 August	Chairperson's forum	09:00 - 11:00	Midrand
	Provincial Council	09:00 - 11:00	
	National Council	11:15 - 13:00	
	Lunch	13:00 - 14:00	
	NR work session, speakers	14:00 - 17:00	
	Network function	18:30 for 19:00	
31 August	Oudit Committee	15:00 - 17:30	AHi, Pretoria
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>			
8 September	Directorate	09:00 - 12:30	Sandhurst
	Trustee meeting	12:30 - 14:30	Sandhurst
<b>OCTOBER</b>			
21-23 October	Congress		George
<b>NOVEMBER</b>			
2 November	Audit Committee	15:00 - 17:30	AHi, Pretoria
12 November	Chairperson's forum	09:00 - 11:00	AHi, Pretoria
	Provincial Council	09:00 - 11:00	
	National Council	11:15 - 13:00	
	Congress, resolutions, pl.	11:15 - 13:00	
	Lunch	13:00 - 14:00	
	National Council (cont.)	14:00 - 17:00	