

Furniture Sector Forum to discuss core industry issues online

- A link to the web conference is available at the end of this document

The 2nd Annual Furniture Sector Forum, presented by the South African Furniture Initiative (SAFI) in partnership with Proudly South African, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), Interior Design Professions (IID) and Trend-Forward, will take place on 21 October 2020 at 10:00.

According to Bernadette Isaacs, Managing Director of SAFI, the Furniture Sector Forum is an online knowledge-sharing platform where core issues in the Furniture Industry will be discussed.

“The COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent lockdown and the economic downturn had a significant impact on our industry, but we also received many uplifting stories from our members, manifesting in a renewed sense of urgency to improve and sustain the industry,” she said.

Proceedings will kick-off with Proudly South African CEO, Eustace Mashimbye doing a recap on the 2019 Furniture Sector Forum and emphasising the importance of buying local. This will be followed by a brief overview of the furniture industry by SAFI’s Chairperson, Penwell Lunga, together with Isaacs. Following a roadshow completed earlier this year, Ncumisa Cordelia Mcata-Mhlauli, Chief Director of Agro-Processing and Resource Based Industries at the DTIC, will give feedback on the Furniture Industry Master Plan (FIMP). Comprehensive feedback from a representative section of the industry were collected by consultants to assist in the compilation of the FIMP report.

“The government has shown its intention of supporting the South African manufacturing sector by creating an environment conducive to long-term planning and investment,” Isaacs said. “We believe the FIMP will go a long way in guiding future industrial development, the creation of supportive policies and the growth of the industry through export promotion and transformation.”

In a ground-breaking first for South African, the Forum will see the launch of the new Furniture Design Qualification during an education-focused panel discussion facilitated by Prof Des Laubscher, president of the Pan African Institute of Design. Laubscher will also touch on the idea of bringing “design thinking” to all school programmes at secondary level. He will be joined by Angus Campbell, head of the department of Industrial Design at the University of Johannesburg, Prof Mugendi K M’Rithaa, from Machakos University in Kenya, Juliet Kavishe, a professional interior architect and educator, and Daryn Molenaar, lecturer on product and industrial design at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

The discussion on education will be introduced by former First Lady of South Africa, Gugu Motlanthe. As a trained designer, she is actively involved in creating inclusive education opportunities for learners across the country focusing on capacity building, dialogue, education, the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), youth and leadership.

According to Isaacs the second panel discussion will focus on *Architecture and the future of local furniture design and manufacturing*. The session will be facilitated by Dave Nemeth from Trend-Forward, who was recently identified as one of the top creative influencers in the country.

“I believe that this session will create a lot of interest and discussion from delegates. With Dave being a trend analyst and creative thinker, he will guide the dynamic inputs and forecasts of our panel and delegates,” Isaacs said.

Nemeth will be joined on the panel by Chryss Joannou, principal architect at Anagram Architects, Mpho Vackier, multi-awarded furniture and interior designer, Mia Els, project interior designer, Adrian Morris, MD at Design Partnership and Theo Bothma, MD of Theo Bothma Architects & Design.

Registration is free, with delegates being able to participate in the many facets of the South African Furniture Value Chain.

To register please follow this link:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/9616019934213/WN_IVVz5D3JTgmW2-LzKKJVIw

Or contact Nazley Hendricks at safi.ct@furniture.org.za

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