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TODAY'S NEWS

SA's black representation on mining boards at 37%

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But things have remained mostly the same at other levels, says report by research compar

BLACK representation in mining companies at board level might have increased, but things have remained relatively the same at other levels, according to a report released by execu research company Landelahni Business yesterday.

FEATURES

About 37% of boardroom executives are black, an increase from 0,05% in 2001.

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Landelahni group chief executive Sandra Burmeister said: "This represents a significant shi since the mining charter was formulated in October 2002, but at other levels, representatio trails the average across all industries".

While the number of nonengineering black and white executive directors in the mining indu grew significantly between 2001 and 2004, the ratio between black and white remained sta at about 13%. Black representation in positions from executive to mid-management level g from 24% in 2003 to 29% in 2005.

But more than 80% of blacks were in support functions such as human resources, shared services, finance and communications, the report found, with only 11 black mine managers compared to two in 2001.

The research indicated that, to date, the mining industry had been slower than other secto putting processes in place to meet transformation requirements.

LEISURE

"However, the significant board transformation that has occurred is a step in the right direction. It is bound to accelerate the process across the rest of the organisation," Burmei said.

"What remains worrying is the downward trend in engineering graduates from tertiary institutions since 1998, including those with mining-specific degrees," Burmeister added.

Although there had been a 30% increase in engineering enrolments, only 5% of them actu graduated as engineers. Burmeister believes a decline in the available bursaries as well as lack of effective bridging programmes to assist students who have not necessarily had a st mathematics and science background, were behind this decline.

A target of 1000 learnerships set by the Mining Qualifications Authority, was also not met. According to Burmeister, as of August 2004, only 686 learnerships had been taken and onl had been completed. "The technical skills shortage will be compounded over the next 10 ye if such a reduction in numbers is allowed to continue," Burmeister said.

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More encouraging, she said, was the increase in Engineering Council registrations across al disciplines, indicating that mining companies are putting employees through the necessary certification processes.

Here the employment equity statistics were quite balanced, with 907 blacks registered in 2 and 940 whites, the report revealed. The two major reasons cited for not meeting the secto employment equity targets had been the shortage of skills in the industry and the competi for skills, Burmeister said. — I-Net Bridge