

Studies show women are denied access to top posts and labour market

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The proportion of women represented in the C-suite has declined, while female workers in SA are not fairing well, according to two studies released on Thursday, 8 March.



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In SA, the *Women in Business* report shows that "almost one third (29%) of senior roles ... are filled by women, [however], one in five local businesses (20%) still have no women in senior positions".

"Businesses with all-male leadership need to act fast if they are to stay competitive," warned Lee-Anne Bac, a director at Grant Thornton Johannesburg on Thursday, which was International Women's Day.

University of the Witwatersrand political sciences professor Sheila Meintjes blamed a lack of political will for the worsening labour market trends in SA.

Grant Thornton International's *Women in Business* report showed that the female proportion in senior management teams

had declined one percentage point from 25% to 24% internationally, while an International Labour Organisation (ILO) report found that entrenched gender roles and labour market discrimination continued to hamper women's access to decent jobs.

In addition, women who participated in the labour force were still unlikely to find employment, the ILO study showed. The ILO is an agency of the UN.

Meintjes said the recent appointment of the beleaguered Bathabile Dlamini as minister in the presidency for women pointed to a lack of seriousness in addressing the challenges faced by women in the country, while good policy was not being implemented to change disparities faced by women.

"The big problem in SA is that we have good policy and just don't implement it. There is also a lack of will in broader politics. We are in a situation where at one point we were all proudly saying SA is a woman-friendly state, I just don't think we can say that anymore," said Meintjes. "Part of the reason is to do with the demobilisation of the women's movement. It packed its bags thinking the new democracy is on our side," she said.

Source: Business Day

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