

Pink Progress takes leadership to next level

For the first time in Kenya, corporate women met at a Women On Boards Seminar, organised by Pink Progress, to discuss the issue of women representation on corporate boards.



Susan Mudhune of Pink Progress stated that according to statistics, gender disparity is quite glaring. "For example, in companies listed in the Nairobi Securities Exchange, out of 449 directors, only 54 are women. To make matters worse, only one woman chairs a board. Moreover, there are many companies that do not have a single woman on their board. Outside the listed companies, the situation could be worse" she stated.

Due to this problem, Pink Progress, a partnership by Mudhune and Susan Omanga, both directors, organised the first ever Women on Boards seminar in Nairobi, attended by senior corporate women from a diverse number of backgrounds, who are aspiring to join boards.

Capital Markets Authority (CMA)'s chairman, Kungu Gatabaki officially opened the seminar and urged women to vie for board positions. He stated that the CMAs latest guidelines to boards recommending that listed companies need to comply with the gender appointment requirements under the new Kenyan Constitution.

Speakers at the event included Nelius Kariuki, who is the only serving woman chairman of a listed company; radio personality and KTDC chairman Caroline Mutoko; New Faces, New Voices chairman Stella Kilonzo; and vice president of InMobi Africa, Isis Nyongo.

The Pink Progress initiative which was sponsored by Deloitte, Chase Bank and L'Oreal, resonates well with the requirement that women are given one third minimum of elected public bodies as per the new constitution. It should also prompt chairmen of boards to recognise that there are many skilled and competent women that can add value to their companies.

Mudhune, who was the first woman to chair the board of a listed company in Kenya at KCB Group, said that the seminar aims to encourage women to form an association for networking and mentoring potential female directors, especially next generation women directors.

"Once formed, the Women on Boards association will plan to engage companies and other institutions to tap the skills that women have as far as leadership at high level is concerned, she added.

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