MEDIA STATEMENT

ECSA to Host a Fundraising Golf Day to Stop the Bleeding Engineering Skills Pipeline

13 March 2025, Johannesburg – The Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) will on Wednesday, 26 March 2025, host its inaugural fundraising Golf Day at the Country Golf Club Woodmead, Johannesburg.

The first of its kind by the engineering regulator, this initiative is aimed at raising funds to support women in engineering programmes, establish a fund to assist engineering students with financial constraints as well as support ongoing initiatives to increase the uptake of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Speaking on the significance of the Golf Day, ECSA Chief Executive Officer, Dr Bridget Ssamula, noted that each year the engineering fraternity faces a bleed in the skills pipeline which can be attributed to a number of factors including financial constraints, female engineers leaving the profession as well as among others, the low up take of STEM subjects to contribute to students studying towards qualifications in engineering.

These factors are supported by research findings documented in an article titled “Universities Face Decline In Engineering Graduates” by Ryan Cloete noting that South African universities have recorded a decline in the number of engineering graduates. According to Cloete, of the 208,299 students who entered university for the first time during the 2023 academic year, 69,000 enrolments were within scarce skills areas. Some of these enrolments were recorded in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) qualifications. Furthermore, statistics on trading economics, reveal that in 2018, approximately only 8% of all tertiary graduates in the country completed programs in engineering, manufacturing, and construction.

Further research notes that engineering students in South Africa face notable financial challenges impacting their education and ability to complete their qualification in record time. A case study conducted by the University of KwaZulu - Natal revealed that 49% of students who left the engineering faculty cited financial reasons as a primary factor contributing to student attrition in engineering programs.

“This is particularly alarming since STEM degrees hold significant impact in addressing global challenges, fostering economic growth as well as leading in innovation,” said Dr Ssamula.

It is for this reason that the Engineering Council of South Africa seeks to address this gap through strategic partnerships with government, academia, the private sector as well as industry by raising funds that will go towards stopping the bleeding skills pipeline.

“The Fundraising Golf Day is therefore more than just an event, but it provides an opportunity for stakeholders to partner with the Council to stop the bleeding skills pipeline, increase the number of

engineering practitioners who can professionally register with the Council and contribute to the overall public health and safety," concludes Dr Ssamula.

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Issued by The Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) in collaboration with Twenty8Zero7 Communications.

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