

SAPOA elects new president, board

The South African Property Owners Association (SAPOA) has elected a new president, Estienne de Klerk, and a new board.



Estienne de Klerk

De Klerk is executive director of Growthpoint Properties, South Africa's largest JSE listed property company. He is also a director of Growthpoint Properties Australia, V&A Waterfront and chairman of the REIT committee of the SA REIT Association. He has a B.Com Honours in Accounting and Marketing and is a qualified CA (SA).

Neil Gopal, SAPOA CEO, says, "The appointment is a boost for SAPOA, with his respected professional knowledge, energetic personality, buoyant outlook and a deep commitment to our sector."

Long-term industry knowledge

De Klerk has been involved in banking and the listed property sector for over 18 years, with experience in take-overs, mergers and acquisitions, BEE deals and capital raisings. He started his career with the marketing department of Eskom Durban Distribution followed by banking and property finance with Investec Private Bank in 1995. In 2002, he joined Investec Property Group's property fund management business, responsible to build the listed funds under management, Growthpoint and Metboard Properties Limited.

Growthpoint internalised management in 2007 and continued to grow to the largest listed property company in South Africa and the only listed property company included in the ALSI40 index.

De Klerk has always played an active role in property industry initiatives via SAPOA. He also represented the Property Loan Stock Association, now the SA REIT Association, as signatory to the Property Sector Charter and chairs its REIT committee tasked to settle the country's REIT legislation with the National Treasury, SARS, FSB and JSE. South Africa's new REIT dispensation came into effect this month, on 1 May 2013.

Education, training, skills development high on agenda

Speaking at the recent 45th annual SAPOA International Property Convention & Exhibition at Sun City, de Klerk said, "The association and its members are known for an optimistic mind-set and persistent approach to delivering value and conquering adversity. This was obvious through the global financial crisis, where we benefited from conservative balance sheets and the stable banking environment, to achieve growth and outperformance. These attributes will stand us in good stead when tackling some of the headwinds currently facing the industry."

He says the property sector will need to deal with the pressing issues of continuous above inflation increases on administered costs, such as electricity, rates and taxes, being forced onto the property industry. Skills shortages and poor education are also matters he highlights as priorities, among other tough challenges, as well as attracting foreign investors and businesses to our country.

"In the coming year we'll focus on our platforms which enable members to leverage off one another. Education, training and skills development will be high on our agenda, as will providing the industry with valuable information and research."

He is also eager for the association to promote the South African property sector locally and internationally and advance the use of sustainable technology.

"Its continued liaison with government - national, local and provincial - is paramount for our member's interests. I look forward to the challenges of the coming year and I am dedicated to its vision and goals in representing the collective voice of the property industry."

Board

- Amelia Beattie, CIO of Direct Property Investments at Stanlib and president elect
- Brian Azizollahoff, MD of Capstone Property Group
- Dr Sedise Moseneke, CEO of Encha Properties and Immediate past president
- Ipeleng Mkhari, non-executive director of Delta Property Fund
- Lesiba Maloba, GM of Property Investments at PIC
- Malcolm Horne, CEO of Broll Property Group
- Marius Muller, CEO of Pareto Ltd
- Michael Deighton. CEO of Tongaat-Hulett Developments
- Musa Ngcobo, CEO Lulama Property Fund
- Neil Gopal, SAPOA CEO
- Peter Levett, CEO of Old Mutual Properties

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