

New chairman of the board for SAMRO

SAMRO has announced the appointment of the Reverend Abe Sibiya as the new chairman of its board of directors, following a recent SAMRO board meeting.



Sibiya is a well-known composer, producer, publisher, multi-instrumentalist and broadcasting executive, who is the chief executive of the Urban Rhythm Factory music publishing and audio production house. He is also the pastor and founder of the Zoe Bible Church in Ivory Park, and has written songs for the likes of Yvonne Chaka Chaka, Deborah Fraser, Dorothy Masuku and Chicco.

In accepting the chairmanship, Sibiya, who has served as a SAMRO board member since 2010, quoted John Maxwell's words about a great leader's courage to fulfil his vision coming from passion, not position.

"I subscribe to this insight and look at the task at hand with a mixture of emotions, part of which is the realisation of the enormity of the task, having to take over from a capable, wise and knowledgeable [predecessor] who has served this organisation in a sterling way.

Salute to predecessor

"Ms Emdon, your mission was always clear, your vision greater than all of us and your passion for the task always unquestionable and for that, I salute you."

Emdon has served as SAMRO chairman for 15 years, since 1997. She held the reins during the tenure of two CEOs, Rob Hooijer and current chief executive Nick Motsatse, whom she praised as "men of great calibre".

"They set the standard and ran a very tight ship, ensuring that SAMRO's able to grow from strength to strength," she said. "It has been a great privilege to serve during a time of great changes for the company, and I hope going forward that I can still be of service as an ordinary board member."

Motsatse hailed Emdon's steady stewardship "during a period of great transition for the company", during which Hooijer, as chief executive, was tasked with transforming SAMRO from a well-run family business under the founding Roos family into a corporate entity, and was succeeded by Motsatse, whose mandate has been to grow the business and maintain its

performance on behalf of its members.

"Her leadership in guiding the board through this process, and ensuring it happened, has been nothing short of remarkable and is testimony to the stability of the organisation. Together we were able to usher in a new era for SAMRO," Motsatse added, hailing Emdon's unstinting passion, wisdom and support for the company. "The interests of SAMRO always came first."

A different dynamic

Motsatse said that incoming chairman Sibiya would bring a different dynamic to the position, taking over as he did at a time when the business environment in which SAMRO operated was evolving.

"He is young, agile and adaptable, and very much aware of global trends. We look forward to his firm, but calm and steady, hand in helping steer SAMRO through a new transition - that of the conversion of its corporate form - and beyond."

Sibiya paid tribute to SAMRO's ongoing championing of the music creator. "Through SAMRO, the composer has found a vehicle that has turned many a song into revenue. [This] has seen many men and women who are members of this great organisation raising their families, putting their children through school, putting food on the table. And that is a reward - and it is something we will need to get better and better at."

The world is not what it used to be

He pledged to build on the efficiencies instituted by the current leadership, particularly as the industry moved into a new digital age that required new ways of thinking and operating. "We have been entrusted with so much, and much is expected of us. We must always remember that nothing has changed in the business of music: songs are still king, the melody rules and music lives forever. But the world is not what it used to be.

"As heavy and as bad as it might have looked in the recent years when the music industry was shaken through loss of sales, I submit that these are the best of times," he said with optimism, quoting Charles Dickens' *A Tale Of Two Cities*.

With Sibiya at the helm, SAMRO looks forward to a seamless continuation in leadership as the music industry and the company embraces a challenging yet exciting new era.

For more information on the Southern African Music Rights Organisation, go to www.samro.org.za.

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