

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### NATIONAL BOOK WEEK 2011

Cape Town, South Africa – With the aim of promoting and sharing the joy of reading books, the South African Book Development Council (SABDC), in partnership with the Department of Arts and Culture, is proud to announce National Book Week 2011 (NBW), which is scheduled to run countrywide from **5-10 September**.

With only 14% of South Africans being active book readers, and a mere 5% of parents reading to their children, National Book Week is an important initiative to encourage citizens to view reading as a fun and pleasurable activity, and to show how easily it can be incorporated into one's lifestyle.

National Book Week aims to celebrate books and promote the love of reading, while promoting South African and African writers, publishers, booksellers and related businesses.

"It is in our interest to invest in reading promotion and increasing access to books," says SABDC CEO Elitha van der Sandt. "We launched National Book Week last September to instil a sense of national pride and encourage South Africans to read books, be they books in English or in our own languages."

The Department of Arts & Culture bestowed Ministerial Project Status on National Book Week, and would like to see it become a platform for all stakeholders to collectively work towards a National Reading Campaign for South Africa.

The purpose of National Book Week is to:

- Become the premier platform for collective efforts to promote reading in SA
- Be a credible gateway for corporate Social Investment (CSI)
- Be a platform for collaboration, networking and partnerships aimed at growing our reading market
- Showcase local and African authors
- Test and sell new kinds of publishing while reducing the cost of books.

The **New Growth Path** of Government requires a more informed citizenry, capable of recognising opportunities being created by various programmes, **empowered to actively participate** in building a prosperous democratic country. **The book** remains one of the **best mechanisms** to help achieve this.

Through its emphasis on reading promotion and access to information, National Book Week is a key strategy in governments **New Growth Path** as it has the potential to **influence scientific, technological and industrial advancement**, while at the same time also placing emphasis on **socio-cultural development, public private partnerships**, fostering an informed citizenry, to the **benefit of government, industry and civil society** alike.

### THE SHOCKING FACTS

In a recent Quantitative Research Survey conducted by the South African Book Development Council, it was deduced that a whopping 51% of South African households did not have a single book in their homes and that only 14% of South Africans are active readers. Sadly, only 5% of South Africans read to their children.

Another significant finding is that 45% of the poll felt that books were too expensive, while 27% said they do not read

because there is no library nearby, and 22% said that books are too difficult to read.

Commenting on the above findings, Van der Sandt says: "The success of National Book Week will drive growth in our industry. It calls on us to become very creative, pool our resources and be consistent in our efforts to promote reading. The SABDC and the DAC are therefore providing a platform to be used by all in industry to reach out to new readers, expand our markets and together create a more sustainable, viable book publishing sector."

More information on National Book Week 2011 and opportunities for participating in the programme will be coming your way soon... so diarise these dates!

**For further information:**

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