

South African gets intl brand leadership award

The Brand Leadership Award, described as the most prestigious award an individual can receive at the World Brand Congress, will be handed to Anitha Soni, chairperson of the board of trustees of the International Marketing Council of South Africa (IMC), at the 19th congress being held in Mumbai, India, 22-24 November 2010.

The World Brand Congress represents 60 countries, which will be sending some 600 people to participate in the 2010 event.

Soni, a tourism specialist and award-winning businesswoman, will be honoured for her "professional efforts" in overseeing the activities of the IMC, as it delivers on its mandate to manage the country's reputation and position South Africa as an investment destination of choice. Under her guidance, the IMC is delivering on this mandate, both domestically and internationally, the most recent example being the 2010 FIFA World Cup, when its mobilisation initiatives engendered strong social cohesion among South Africans, fulfilling the country's 2010 brand promise: "Ke nako - celebrate Africa's humanity".

She was also instrumental in the council's drive to position South Africa's business and economic competitiveness at the 2010 meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Everyone participated

Soni believes the award does not belong to her alone, but to all the role players in government and the private sector that participate in building the country's brand.

"The IMC is the custodian of Brand South Africa, but the brand belongs to all South Africans. The World Cup has shown that when South Africans act with unity of purpose, everyone contributes to growing our reputation on the international stage. The primary role players responsible for enhancing the nation brand are dedicated, skilled and passionate about our country. This past year they have worked with great diligence to foster relationships, engage with international stakeholders and promote South Africa. The award belongs to them all and I will think of all South Africa's brand builders when I receive it," she said.