

Let's help each other, women urged

NETWORK REPORTER

THE Businesswomen's Association brought Venete Klein – the 2009 BWA Businesswoman of the Year national winner – to Durban last week as part of its national roadshow.

An influential banker, Venete Klein scooped the title in the corporate category while exhibitions and events specialist, Carol Weaving walked off with the title in the entrepreneurial category.

The Businesswomen's Association awards has been honouring outstanding businesswomen in South Africa since 1980.

Its aim is to recognise successful women and raise the profile of significant role models to inspire other women to raise their sights and reach their goals.

Klein flew into Durban to address the members of the association's Durban branch at PricewaterhouseCoopers, as well as guests at a networking breakfast in the city. She is the executive director for retail banking at Absa and boasts a remarkable career in the financial services industry.

Currently responsible for a turnover of R2.5 million an hour, 10 million clients and 15 000 staff, Klein was spurred on to succeed when a superior told her that "people like you will never amount to anything".

In a talk filled with humour and humility, she recalled how she set out to prove her supervisor wrong, illustrating that, with determi-



Businesswoman of the Year, Venete Klein, second left; with, from left, PricewaterhouseCoopers's Farzanah Mall, Susan Abro, chairwoman of the Businesswomen's Association in Durban; and Nedbank's Ebrahim Shaik.

nation and effort, all women can achieve success as defined by their own objectives.

In addition to her demanding responsibilities at Absa, she is the first South African to serve on the World Trade Organisation's international policy commission; the first woman and person of colour to serve as vice-chair of the Agricultural Business Chamber; and is the first woman to be appointed as president of the Afrikaanse

Handelsinstituut in its 66-year history.

Klein is also a visiting professor at the University of the Free State and regularly lectures at Stellenbosch University, as well as the University of Louisiana and Cornell University in the US.

She emphasised at the breakfast that what might seem like a failure could spur one to explore other potential, more significant avenues. She highlighted the importance

of the support of family and friends without whom she would have been unable to take advantage so many opportunities, and without whom her success would be far less rewarding.

Klein challenged all businesswomen to help to promote other women in business.

To join the Businesswoman's Association in Durban, phone Catherine Smith at 031 261 8668 or e-mail dbn@bwas.co.za

Fraudulent tax returns cost taxman R51m

THE SOUTH African Revenue Service (Sars) has lost almost R51 million in income tax refund fraud because of duplicate company registration, according to Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan.

In a written parliamentary question to Gordhan, Marius Swart of the DA asked what amount of money Sars lost in cases where employees of the Companies and Intellectual Property Registration Office (Cipro) duplicated companies on the database in the 2008/09 financial year.

In his reply, Gordhan said Sars had only detected two cases where this type of fraudulent activity took place. "These cases reveal that Sars has lost a total of R50 949 743.80 in income tax refund fraud as a result of duplicate companies registered at Cipro," he said.

The companies were SBC International Management Services (R31 600 946.89 lost) and Sun Microsystems (R19 348 796.91 lost).

"In relation to (these) cases, the kingpin has already been arrested through co-operation of SAPS and Sars," said Gordhan.

Further investigations were under way, Sars, SAPS, and the Asset Forfeiture Unit were in the process of recovering the losses.

The amounts were uncovered as a result of Sars' own checks and balances.

The exact amounts were known because of thorough investigations, Gordhan said. – Sapa