



INFORMATION REGULATOR (SOUTH AFRICA)

*Ensuring protection of your personal information
and effective access to information*

Address: JD House, 27 Stiemens Street
Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 31533
Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2017
Email: Enquiries@infoeregulator.org.za

MEDIA STATEMENT

INFORMATION REGULATOR HOSTS IDUAI SYMPOSIUM FOCUSING ON RECORD KEEPING AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION FROM PUBLIC BODIES

28 SEPTEMBER 2024

Yesterday, 27 September 2024, the Information Regulator (IR) in partnership with the Centre for Human Rights (University of Pretoria) hosted the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI) Symposium 2024 in Pretoria. IDUAI, commonly known as the Right to Information Day, is observed globally on 28 September annually as proclaimed by the 74th United Nations General Assembly in October 2019. This day supports the idea that everyone around the globe has the fundamental right to seek and receive information. South Africa's access to information law, the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (PAIA), is a trail-blazing piece of legislation which came into effect after the fall of the undemocratic system of government that was symbolised by a culture of unresponsiveness and secrecy by public and private bodies. This secrecy and unresponsiveness had led to the abuse of power and the violation of human rights.

The right to information is necessary for making decisions, engaging in democratic governance, and increasing openness, which aids the public in having access to information about how they are being governed and it also builds ground for fighting corruption. The objective of this year's IDUAI celebration was to capacitate public bodies such as government departments information officers, record management officers, legal and compliance officers, so to encourage compliance with the PAIA.

Delivering his opening remarks, the CEO of the IR Mr Mosalanyane Mosala raised the concern that the public sector is not submitting their PAIA section 32 Annual Reports which amongst others contains information such as the number of requests for access to information received, denied, internal appeals etc. "We have more private sector reports than that of the public sector reports submitted, this is a huge challenge and as we celebrate this day the objective is also to hone in on the public sector and the record keeping challenges they face," he said.

PAIA empowers the IR to monitor how effectively public bodies are giving effect to the constitutional right of access to information. When the public bodies do not submit their PAIA Annual Reports, it impedes on the IR's ability to monitor compliance with PAIA. The theme for this year is "**Mainstreaming Access to Information and Public Participation in the Public Sector**".

Business Leader from Auditor-General South Africa, Mr Dumisani Cebekhulu, delivered the keynote address and spoke on the status of internal controls regarding record keeping and their audit implications, also highlighting that from the audit side the lack of non-compliance is concerning. "In an ideal environment we want a public sector that is characterised by performance, transparency, accountability and institutional integrity. There's a lot that still needs to be done when it comes information management and access to information," he said.

PAIA still comes under criticism that it does not have strong enough enforcement powers, the participants of the symposium shared sentiments that there needs to be amendments to PAIA so as to strengthen enforcement and compliance and to protect the human right.

For media enquiries or interviews contact Nomzamo Zondi on 078 674 2598 /

nzondi@info regulator.org.za

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE INFORMATION REGULATOR OF SOUTH AFRICA.