ABOUT US
The Business Women’s Forum of Swaziland (BWFS) is the apex representative body for female entrepreneurs and corporate businesswomen in Swaziland. The Forum aims to facilitate women’s economic empowerment by acting as a source of support, advocacy, information, networking and recognition for members of the sector. Currently, the Forum operates under the auspices of the Federation of Swaziland Employers and Chamber of Commerce.

Vision
To be the leading organization that fosters the development and economic empowerment of women in Swaziland.

Mission
To facilitate an enabling environment in which existing and aspiring businesswomen have the technical, legal, and cultural support to succeed in Swaziland.

UPCOMING EVENTS
- International Women’s Day Celebration:
  Thursday, 10 March, 2011, 18:30, at the Royal Swazi Sun (Gigi’s Restaurant). E200 per person/E2,000 per table. For more details, email bwfs@business-swaziland.com or call 2404 4408.
- Bimonthly training and networking opportunities will be announced soon!

PARTNERS
The BWFS is ever grateful for the partnerships that enable the secretariat to offer its services. Key supporters include:
- The Federation of Swaziland Employers and the Chamber of Commerce (FSE & CC)
- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- TechnoServe

In addition, we thank the many corporate and individual contributors who have been essential to our success.
ON THE HORIZON FOR BWFS
As the secretariat continues to expand, we look forward to engaging with you on several projects in our pipeline. These include:

- Continued lobbying and advocacy
- Sector-specific training events
- Networking opportunities
- Exploration of market days
- BWFS website and continued communication

Many women engaged in business in Swaziland remain invisible. The goal of the directory is to demonstrate the great number of women-owned businesses in the country, thereby acknowledging the contribution of women to the Swazi economy and stimulating increased attention to these enterprises.

The BWFS would like to beam the spotlight on your business. Subscribed members of the Forum will be specially marked in the directory and ad space is also available. Please email bwfs@business-swaziland.com or call 2404 4408 for more information.

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS ON WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT
Women’s economic development is making global headlines and the BWFS is excited to be part of the international momentum. Examples of transnational initiatives include:

- International Women’s Day Centennial Celebration:
  8 March, 2011 marks the centennial celebration of International Women’s Day, which recognizes the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. This year, there are more than 1,000 events planned throughout the world to celebrate this milestone. In line with the 2011 United Nations theme, “Equal access to education, training and science and technology: Pathway to decent work for women,” the BWFS will host a dinner in honor of local women in the scientific fields and education on 10 March, 2011. See first page for details.

- African Women’s Decade, 2010-2020:
  Declared by the African Union (AU) with the goal to “cascade, in concrete terms, the execution of commitments on gender equality and women’s empowerment from the grassroots, national and regional to continental level.” The decade was launched with a conference in Nairobi, Kenya in October, 2010.

- United Nations focus on women: The UN has recently brought together four formerly separate divisions to create UN Women, the freshly established UN entity for gender equality and empowerment of women. Visit http://www.unwomen.org for more information.
Women Farmer Training:  
20-24 September, 2010  
Through support from the UNDP Swaziland, the BWFS hosted a five-day workshop at the St. Juliana’s Conference Center. Thirty-seven farmers came from rural areas throughout the country to improve their skills in marketing, budgeting, and product decisions. These women were all former entrants to the Women Farmer of the Year competition and it was through our connection with the organizers of the competition, notably with Mrs. Sonia Paiva from Carson Group, that it was possible to involve all of them. Through the training, which was facilitated by Salile Consulting, the BWFS was able to fulfill its mandate of capacity building and also promote the Forum to women in agriculture.

Annual General Meeting (AGM):  
8 October, 2010  
Ninety-one women from all over Swaziland made their way to S&B Restaurant in Matsapha for the second BWFS AGM. Those who attended discussed the current operations of the BWFS as well as proposals for new initiatives. The women decried the limited options that they have for business capital. They promoted the idea of having their own bank to cater specifically to their needs.

Global Entrepreneurship Week:  
15 – 21 November, 2010  
The BWFS hosted a series of activities for the annual Global Entrepreneurship Week. Sessions included a two-day training for women in business on “Negotiating your way to Success,” led by Ms. Phumelele Thwala of Bezalel: Law, Gender, and Development consultancy. Another workshop covered customs procedures for women informal cross-border traders. The activities of the week culminated in a BWFS-led symposium at the Mavuso Trade Center where women entrepreneurs exhibited their products and services and attended a seminar on financial management, “Enjoy the Harvest.
MEMBERSHIP

The BWFS is honored to represent women who are engaged in a wide array of sectors and enterprises throughout Swaziland. Working under the credo of inclusivity, we take great pride in our growing membership base. It is through this diversity that we are able to authentically speak on behalf of all women in business, at a national level, and advocate for policies and opportunities that benefit all.

BREAKDOWN OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS BY SECTOR

![Pie chart showing the breakdown of individual members by sector. The chart indicates the following sectors and their respective percentages: Service: Home, Health, Clerical (24%), Service: Hospitality (15%), Service: Consulting & Marketing (12%), Agriculture (7%), Finance and Real Estate (10%), Retail & Distribution (29%), and Other (3%).]
ADVOCACY

As a representative body of women in business in Swaziland, an important role of the BWFS is to serve as a lobbying voice for issues pertaining to women and commerce.

In the last year, we have engaged in the policy conversations pertaining to the following topics and legislative bills:

- Procurement Bill
- Citizen Empowerment Bill
- Informal Cross-Border Trade
- SME and Land Policy

BWFS Advocacy objectives

To be a business lobby and influence legislative processes for the advancement of women

To take the lead in researching business and trade-related issues

To actively disseminate information and motivate public discourse

CONTACT US

We would like to hear from you.
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