

*The only Spanish bank on-the-ground in the Southern African region*

## **CaixaBank brings together some twenty female executives to take part in a “Diversity Talks” event in Johannesburg**

- ***The debate was attended by representatives from major industries for the South African economy to discuss how African women are changing the continent.***
- ***In 2017 the bank accounted for 60% of all international guarantees issued in South Africa by Spanish companies.***

**Johannesburg, 24 May 2018**

CaixaBank, the only Spanish bank with an on-the-ground presence in the region of Southern Africa, brought together some twenty female executives from key industries for the South African economy to take part in one of its international “Diversity Talks” debates. The event, held in Johannesburg, focused on how African women are changing the continent.

The debate featured female business leaders in industries that are major drivers for the regional economy, including finance, mining and insurance.

Taking part in this “Diversity Talks” event were Isabela Poco (Commerzbank), Elize Crampton (J.P. Morgan), Bernadette Colbourne, Jessica Gadimang, Montsei Modise, Mpeleng Mpholo, Pam Govender (Standard Bank) and Claire Holden (Change in Mindset), among other key business figures. The speakers shared their experiences and discussed diversity’s critical role, as well as how it contributes towards business success in the region. One of those present, Claire Holden, a Coach at Change in Mindset, observed that “working with people to help them feel satisfied, confident in themselves and successful is an absolute privilege”.

In 2017, CaixaBank, the only Spanish bank with an on-the-ground presence in the southern African region, accounted for 60% of all international guarantees issued in South Africa by Spanish companies. The bank has operated in the country since 2016, with a representative office in Johannesburg providing support to Spanish companies that hold business relations in South Africa, as well as South African companies working with Spain.

Trade relations tend to be very diverse in nature, ranging from tenders and trade operations right the way through to import contracts. However, all require steadfast guarantees, specialised consulting and outstanding technical support. CaixaBank helps Spanish businesses by minimising risk in international operations and providing various instruments to support transactions, including guarantees issued by the bank thanks to its close relations with local institutions.

### **Diversity is key for CaixaBank**

CaixaBank set up the international “Diversity Talks” debate programme in 2017, seeking to encourage discussion on diversity and business management. The inaugural “Diversity Talks” events took place in Turkey and Poland, with local representatives examining diversity and how it contributes to business. The event in Turkey focused on the role of women in the Turkish financial industry. While, the debate in Poland discussed diversity as a pivotal aspect to business management, particularly in terms of women in senior positions at the country’s international companies and institutions.

The bank recently organised an event in Dubai, bringing together key figures from institutions and businesses in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to discuss the importance of diversity in business.

CaixaBank has pioneered diversity in Europe, establishing a specialist team to coordinate multi-sector projects that encompass a range of aspects: cultural diversity, gender diversity, functional diversity and generational diversity. Diversity is also a core aspect to its Socially Responsible Banking plan.

In international banking, diversity is not only vital to human resources management, but also represents a core aspect of the business model. CaixaBank’s international network specialises in providing consultancy to Spanish companies undertaking projects overseas. Therefore, specialist insight into international banking is just as important as understanding cultural diversity.

### **International position**

The bank has established multicultural teams of diverse origin, which implement specific projects to provide close support to clients, factoring in the local requirements of each region. Gender diversity is particularly important: 42% of managerial positions in CaixaBank’s international network are held by women.

CaixaBank currently has an international network comprised of 26 operating branches and representative offices in 18 countries. The bank has been operating in South Africa since 2016, via a representative office in Johannesburg. It also has offices in Paris (France), Milan (Italy), Istanbul (Turkey), Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong (China), Dubai (United Arab Emirates), New Delhi (India), Cairo (Egypt), Santiago de Chile (Chile), Bogota (Colombia), New York (USA), Singapore, Sao Paulo (Brazil), Algiers (Algeria) and Lima (Peru).

The bank likewise operates international branches in Warsaw (Poland), Casablanca, Tangier and Agadir (Morocco), London (United Kingdom) and Frankfurt (Germany). CaixaBank holds agreements with international banks to support companies and individuals as they embark on overseas operations and foreign trade all over the world.

CaixaBank has equity investments in financial institutions in a number of countries, with which it runs partnership strategies. The bank controls 84.51% of Banco BPI and 9.92% of the Austrian operator Erste Bank.