



## ***Ethics Practices Survey results point to a significant drop in perceived ethics amongst private sector leaders***

**Johannesburg, 22 July 2020** - The Anti-Intimidation and Ethical Practices Forum (AEPF) will tomorrow release its 2019 Ethics Practices Survey Results and host a webinar to discuss key findings. The *most significant drop* in ratings is with regards to the statement on whether “Leaders in the private sector are ethical”. This area was rated 48% strongly agreed in 2017 when the survey first started and in 2019 it was rated 5% strongly agreed.

The purpose of the AEPF Ethical Practices Survey is:

- 1) To serve as a measuring barometer and quantitative tool, used, to capture the perceptions of professionals regarding ethical practices in society, organisations and professional institutions; and
- 2) To report on how unethical behaviour is perceived by professionals in the governance, auditing, risk management, fraud management and ethical practices domain in organisations in South Africa.

In 2019 1866 professionals responded to the AEPF Ethical Practices Survey. This is the third survey since its inception in 2017.

In the statement, “In society organisations want to do the right thing?”, 16% strongly agreed where in 2017 the rating was 26% and in 2018 it was 19%. This is a significant drop in the trust in organisations in South Africa.

At 45%, the rating related to the statement, “People are encouraged to report on unethical behaviour”, remained constant and indicates a culture of reporting on unethical behaviour. This is a positive indicator as organisations are seen to maintain their programmes for employees to report on unethical behaviour.

47% of respondents agreed that professional Bodies create awareness of ethics amongst their members”. This relates to whether professionals are encouraged to be aware of the importance of ethics and ethical behaviour in the execution of their duties.

On the question of, “Have you ever reported unethical behaviour?” 44% agreed to have reported in 2019 and 39% agreed in 2017. The data indicates that 62% report on unethical behaviour at their places of work i.e. at organisation level.

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**Founding Partners:** Association of Certified Fraud Examiners of SA (ACFE SA), Corruption Watch, The Ethics Institute, Institute of Directors of Southern Africa (IoDSA), Institute of Internal Auditors of South Africa (IIA SA), Institute of Risk Management of South Africa (IRMSA), South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) and South African Institute of Professional Accountants (SAIPA).

**Forum Partners:** Chartered Secretaries Southern Africa, The Financial Planning Institute of Southern Africa (FPI) and Southern African Communications Industries Association (SACIA)

In the statement, "I feel comfortable to report on unethical behaviour", 36% strongly agreed which indicates the rating has not changed since 2018 but there is a slight increase since the rating was 25% in 2017. However not much has been done in organisations to create a sense of trust and safety when it comes to the experience of reporting on ethical misconduct.

According to Chief Executive Officer of the Association for Certified Fraud Examiners in South Africa (ACFE SA), Jaco De Jager, "The AEPF will continue to strive to be a collective professional voice and make recommendations to improve accountability within the public and private sectors with a view to creating a more enabling environment for members and others to blow the whistle on corruption".

"The Forum will continue to explore measures to strengthen ethical practices in organisations to ensure that professionals are not intimidated when reporting instances of fraud and corruption" Conclude Julius Mojapelo, AEPF Chair and Chief Executive Office at the Institute of Internal Auditors South Africa (IIA SA).

#### **About the AEPF:**

The Anti-Intimidation and Ethical Practises Forum (AEPF) is a collective forum made up of professional body organisations, who share a common concern about the rising levels of corruption, fraud and lack of corporate governance in South African organisations. The Forum was established to assist and support professionals who are experiencing forms of intimidation and who want to expose corruption in their workplaces, safely and responsibly.

For more information on the AEPF visit [www.aepf.co.za](http://www.aepf.co.za)

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