

## Trust on the rise in South Africa

- *2019 Edelman Trust Barometer finds that South Africans have increased their trust in NGOs, Government, Media and Business*
  - *Trust in Government in South Africa at five-year high*
  - *'My Employer' emerges as the most trusted institution*

March 26, 2019 – JOHANNESBURG – The 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer reveals that trust in South Africa has risen for all institutions (NGOs, business, government, media) with NGOs in the lead (60 percent) over business (58 percent) followed by media (40 percent) and government continuing to be the least trusted institution (21 percent).

The Edelman Trust Barometer measures trust in institutions across various markets around the world annually, it has been conducted since 2001. This year 27 countries and 33,000 respondents were surveyed, including more than 1,000 South Africans.

“Given the current economic, social and political climate, it’s encouraging to see that trust has risen in South Africa across institutions,” said Jordan Rittenberry, CEO of Edelman Africa. “Business and consumer confidence in South Africa has improved with President Cyril Ramaphosa’s implementation of a turnaround strategy for the South African economy, alongside rectifying maladministration and corruption at state owned enterprises. However, consumers will want to soon see results.”

South Africa experienced one of the biggest changes on the overall trust index this year, gaining seven points, but it still falls into the general distrusting group. This means that while it is good that trust is on the rise in South Africa, the institutions still have a way to go until the citizens would say they trust more than distrust.

For the first time this year, the Edelman Trust Barometer measured how much employees trust their employer, and globally ‘my employer’ ranked as the most trusted institution. South Africans have very high expectations when it comes to business and are looking for leadership from CEOs.

“The last decade has seen a loss of faith in traditional authority figures and institutions,” said Rittenberry. “More recently, people have lost confidence in the social platforms that fostered peer-to-peer trust. These forces have led people to shift their trust to the relationships within their control, most notably their employers.”

As trust in government lags business, CEOs are now the ones who must speak up on issues such as equal pay, discrimination, sustainability, and job training. The Edelman Trust Barometer found that more than three in four people in South Africa now agree with that CEOs should take the lead on change rather than waiting for government to impose it.

South Africa has one of the highest levels of trust in the world for CEOs.

“This high level of trust in employers creates an opportunity to connect with people, to reassure and inform them on contentious issues. The majority of employees look to their employer to be a trustworthy source of information on topics on which there is disagreement and controversy. Businesses have an opportunity, even an obligation, to provide data and certainty, and to drive informed conversations,” said Rittenberry.