

Woolworths is awarded global 'responsible retailer' status

Woolworths has received international recognition in the retail sector by being named Responsible Retailer of the Year at the World Retail Awards – held during the annual World Retail Congress recently. Six companies from across the globe had been shortlisted for the prestigious award.

The accolade recognises Woolworths' commitment to embed the 'good business' journey through all facets of the business. The good business journey is a five year plan, announced in April 2007, to change the way Woolworths does business and address the issue of sustainable growth in the context of the changing social and environmental needs of South Africa. The plan sets challenging targets and commitments centred on four key priorities: accelerating transformation, driving social development, enhancing the environmental focus and addressing climate change.

Woolworths was one of only two retailers to be shortlisted outside Europe. The other five retailers are C&A Europe (Germany), Carrefour Group (France), Sainsburys (UK), Tesco (UK) and The Warehouse Group (New Zealand). Last year's winner was UK based retailer, Marks and Spencer.

The entries were reviewed at the World Retail Congress in Barcelona, Spain by a jury of the world's most respected retailers and industry experts.

The panel considered retailers who demonstrated an overall strategy and approach towards corporate responsibility that was embedded in their business and its operations. They sought companies who set new world-class standards of good practice through initiatives that 'added ethical value' and represented a long term commitment in the areas of employment practices, sourcing, environmental policies, fair trade and supply chain.

Woolworths CEO Simon Susman said: "This recognises that our good business journey is a timely and correct strategy. We know that sustainable growth can only be achieved through paying greater attention to the world around us than has been the case in the past. The links between economic growth, transformation, social development, the environment and climate change must create a better world for everyone, and we believe that this is part of our responsibility to the communities in which we trade. Together we can and will make a difference."