

MARCH 2020

AFRICA

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THE LIST

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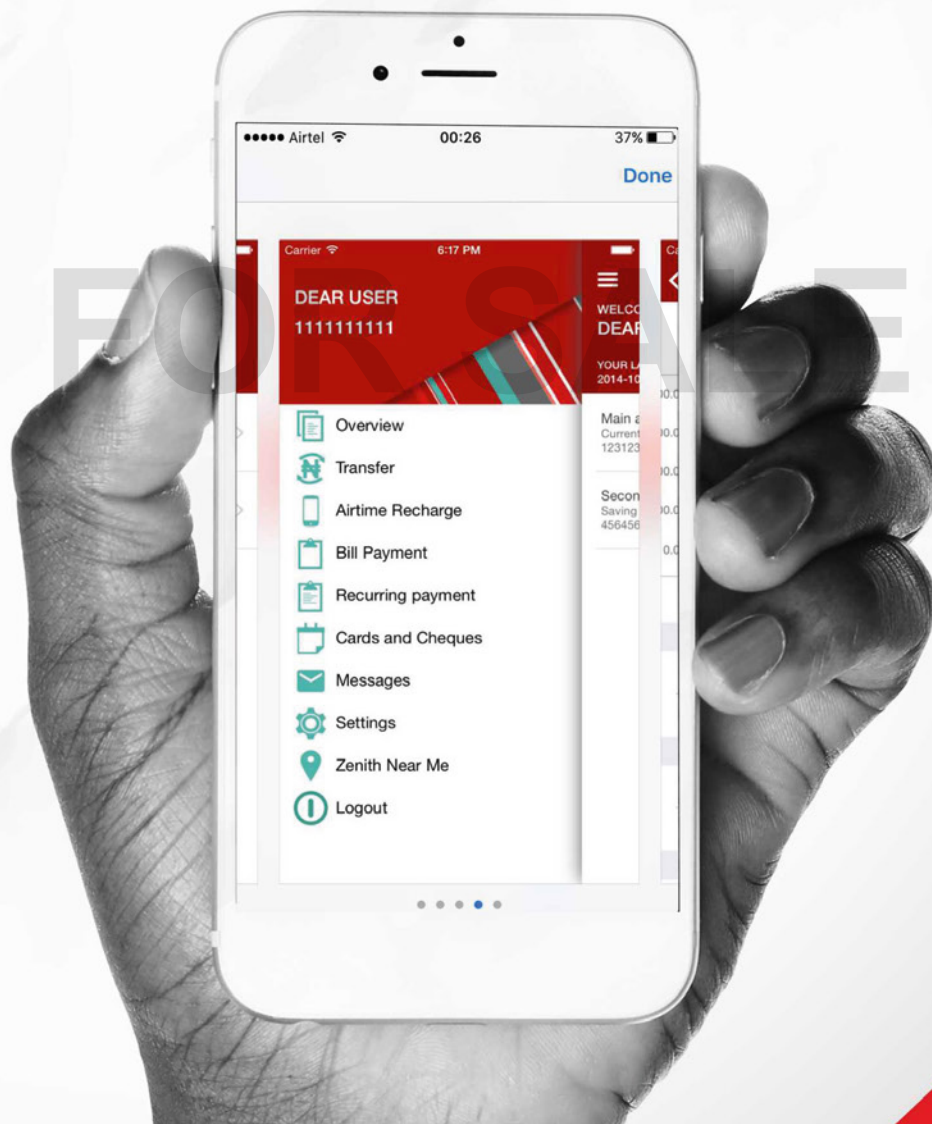
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By Chris Bishop

Cover image by Motlabana Monnakgotla

5 Surprising Ways Your Printer Wastes Your Money!

written by  printulu

You could be losing money. Big time.

In this guide, we are going to cover the 5 things that you need to look out for the next time you visit the printers. If you are a print reseller, being knowledgeable about money wasters could save you and your clients quite a few bucks.

1. Waiting days to get your quotes? Do this instead.

When you request a quote from the printer it may take days, or even weeks, depending on how swamped the quote estimator is. We all know that time is money. If you are waiting for a quote for more than 48hrs to send to your client, it reduces the likelihood that you'll get the sale.

Your competitor might have supplied a quote on the same day and it's alarming to know that you could be losing clients because of an inefficient quoting process.

The reasons there are time delays:

Most small printers don't have the resources to hire a lot of staff who will just be in charge of print estimating. This means that your quote request will be dealt with depending on how many quotes the often only one estimator still has to cover until they get to yours.

Their prioritisation model is flawed in the sense that corporate or high-value quotes get preference over smaller quotes.

The quoting process is often not optimized. There is no set checklist in place to indicate what is required for a quote to be fulfilled and in most cases, there will be a back and forth of explaining your requirements over the phone. This leaves a whole lot of room for big mistakes that could cost you not only time, but also money due to misunderstandings.

This will usually land you into a deep sea of frustrations because you constantly have to follow up on the quotes. If you sent multiple quote requests, it gets even worse. You have to free up more time in your busy day to follow up on these various quotes.

Are you sick of waiting for your quotes? Then Printulu might be an option. Printulu has created a fast and transparent system for everyone to get quotes. 90% of our quote requests are done instantly online and you can get a PDF copy directly from the website.

There is no preferential treatment when it comes to pricing and custom quotes are handled with a first in first out prioritisation system. Any quotes that cannot be done online are usually done within 24 hours.

"This leaves a whole lot of room for big mistakes that could cost you."

Wait... is that it? No, it isn't. This is only one out of FIVE things that your printer is using to avoid giving you the best price you could possibly have. Download this [free](#) guide to find out what else you could be doing to save money on your prints. If you sign up now you will score our amazing BLACK FRIDAY deal! ■



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THE FUTURE WE ARE FACED WITH

THERE'S PESSIMISM IN THE AIR, LITERALLY. A new decade has just begun and there's pandemonium over a planet-ravaging virus spreading faster than the news on it. Conferences are being cancelled, business travel is taking a back seat, and airlines are cutting back operations.

In an article, *Forbes* reports global aviation monies to fall by at least \$5 billion in the first quarter of 2020, with the expected impact on the industry to be greater than the 2003 SARS epidemic.

The globe's peripatetic tribe of corporate travelers are either reigning themselves in or companies are cancelling business trips. The suitcase is changing its character and turning into glorified first-aid kits with reinforcements to keep the virus at bay. This includes industrial hand sanitizers, Betadine throat gargles, face masks, gloves, wet wipes and ubiquitous clinical literature on combating 2019-nCoV, with such instructions as "when someone sneezes in front of you, beware, but it will take a great three meters before it drops to the ground and is no longer airborne".

You certainly want to be light years away from being airborne with a coughing co-passenger; the metal tube that is a plane is not one of the best places to be in right now.

Medical suppliers and entrepreneurs trying to milk the moment are undeniably seeing an unprecedented rise in the sales of such clinical supplies.

In a way, the mask has unveiled the new face of global travel, and is an uncanny, unsettling metaphor for the air we cannot trust, the people we can no longer shake hands with, the cultures we cannot greet. We have become unwitting victims of a virus staring us in the face.

I am guilty too, running to the pharmacy to grab all the sanitizers in Johannesburg, as I prepared to travel on assignment to Barcelona for the Mobile World Congress, supposed to take place last month. The multi-million dollar global smartphone conference was cancelled, for the first time in its 14-year history, stalling significant global product launches.

Closer home, in South Africa, the 2019-nCoV has thankfully not reared its ugly head, but the hard-hitting reality that is HIV/Aids has been a constant threat. At our photoshoot profiling Africa's 50 Most Powerful Women, our first-of-its-kind assemblage of the continent's leading women, Winnie Byanyima, the Executive Director of UNAIDS, who flew in directly from Geneva for the interview, related the startling fact that 1,500 young girls are infected by HIV every day in South Africa. *Every day!* "That's unacceptable, they are so vulnerable. Sadly, the face of HIV in Africa is female," she emphasized.

If we continue on with this tirade, we are faced with a future that is completely unfathomable.

It's hard to be an optimist. And this is being mirrored in the corporate world as well.

The key findings of a new PricewaterhouseCoopers survey say that as we enter a new decade, "CEOs are showing record levels of pessimism in the global economy, with 53% predicting a decline in the rate of economic growth in 2020. CEOs in South Africa are also pessimistic about the rate of global economic growth with 44% (compared to 35% in 2019) believing that it will decline over the next 12 months".

Amid all the doom and gloom, as we battle global crises and trade wars, I am hoping we will find comfort in humanity and brotherhood that will eventually prevail for the panacea we are all looking for. **P**

RENUKA METHIL,
MANAGING EDITOR

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DO WE 'COMPROMISE' TO ADAPT OR DO WE TRULY CHANGE?

BY RAKESH WAHI, FOUNDER AND PUBLISHER, FORBES AFRICA

IN 2019, I WITNESSED A MAJOR change in my television viewing habits; I took to Netflix with a vengeance, almost like playing catch-up for time lost. A movie I enjoyed recently was *The Two Popes*, an intense film with key lessons in dealing with ideological differences, confessions and forgiveness. It does not matter who you are but seeking forgiveness and then atoning for your sins is a blessing. The banter and fervent exchanges between the two Hollywood legends in the film is captivating. Anthony Hopkins, as Cardinal Josef Ratzinger and finally Pope Benedict XVI, makes an important statement when Jonathan Pryce, playing Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio and finally Pope Francis, refuses to be nominated for Pope: "Not wanting to be a leader qualifies you the most to lead".

It's a very profound statement.

There are examples in history where leaders have either refused (Gandhi) or relinquished office (Mandela) to allow others to lead. It was their interest to bring about change for their people and not for personal reward that distinguished these great men revered until this day. The mark of a leader is that he will do what is correct, irrespective of the circumstances; he or she will not be looking at personal gain when making a decision, particularly when nominated to play a role that influences the lives of millions of people. It's a lesson for everyone being nominated for high office to really introspect on whether they believe they can fulfil their mandate through their own competence and inner beliefs on values that are needed in fulfilling those responsibilities. I really wonder how many people truly introspect on their capabilities with honesty and integrity and then act accordingly!

The next statement that made an impact was when Pope Benedict XVI asks Cardinal Bergoglio if he had "compromised" when he adapted to things he may not have believed in. The Cardinal's response was he had not "compromised" but had "changed". This is again a defining lesson. Do we compromise to adapt or do we change? In all our lives, we make compromises to avoid conflict. There are a lot of mundane day-to-day things we agree to but those matters do not deviate from our grain and other compromises that may be made to arrive at a middle ground in a negotiation. However, compromising our values to accept something is a weakness in character.



So change is the answer to matters we believe to be core to our values. When differences arise, we must have the fortitude and courage to influence others to bring about change; it also means that when we are wrong, we must have the ability to change our own mind-set to something more relevant to our times.

Change brings me to another very topical matter; inequality in the treatment of women. It being International Women's Day on March 8, and a time to reflect on gender equality, I thought it appropriate to use this narrative to contrast compromise or change. Looking back in history towards all the exclusions makes one wonder what women have gone through to find their place in society; I shudder to think if it had been the other way around and men had undergone the same treatment. To my mind, the rear-view mirror is, proverbially speaking, a reflection of the past and can

give us lessons and perhaps a reality check on progress.

However, on this most topical subject, the real question is whether we have simply made compromises and checked boxes or are we truly changing? This is a very complex issue facing society and there are no quick-fix solutions to this historic incongruity. There is a lot of lip service to this societal imbalance and in reality, the journey has been a prolonged one embedded with contention. Part of the reason is there is a reliance on makeshift solutions of creating "quotas" rather than making it competence-based. Putting any person in a role of responsibility on the basis of any matrix other than competence is setting the individual up for failure and then setting a precedence to question the very rationale behind the dissymmetry.

The last decade has brought about a lot of change with more sectors opening up to women, including the police, military, aviation industry and many more vocations that had exclusions earlier.

One answer lies in more opportunities at the grassroots level by making sure our girls are educated and receive the same opportunities. To achieve this, more skills development resources need to be spent on young women so they can be trained in the vocation of their choosing. I also believe successful women need to pay more attention to this important issue and not only be role models but also champions for this much-needed change; otherwise, it will remain a compromise. 

AKAGERA NATIONAL PARK



NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK



VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK



LAKE KIVU



LIVE ENTERTAINMENT IN KIGALI

RWANDA'S TOP 5 DESTINATIONS

VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK

Two and a half hours north of Kigali you will find Volcanoes National Park, home to most of the world's remaining mountain gorillas. Rwanda is among only three countries in the world where you can trek to see the majestic gorillas up close – a truly once in a lifetime experience.

LAKE KIVU

Kivu is one of Africa's Great Lakes, with deep emerald-green waters and a shoreline of magnificent mountains and fishing villages. The lake is dotted with uninhabited islands that can be explored by boat and provide the perfect location to relax and enjoy the peace of Rwanda's countryside.

NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK

Nyungwe is one of the oldest rainforests found anywhere on the continent. The lush, green forest is home to over 300 bird species and 13 primate species including chimpanzees and

colobus monkeys. Take a stroll through the canopy along a 70m high walkway for exhilarating views of the rainforest.

AKAGERA NATIONAL PARK

Rwanda's largest national park is home to a diverse array of plant and animal life. The lakes, papyrus swamps, savannah plains and rolling highlands make Akagera an incredibly scenic reserve. The park is home to the elusive Shoebill stork, seven newly introduced lions, elephant, leopard and the shy but stunning roan antelope.

KIGALI

Rwanda's capital provides the perfect backdrop for a weekend getaway. As one of the safest cities in Africa, Kigali is quickly becoming a favourite for East African and international tourists. Savour the tastes of international cuisine at the city's best restaurants and enjoy live music at the many clubs and bars in Kigali.



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FRONTRUNNER

NEW BILLIONAIRE

GHOST WRITER

Mackenzie Bezos is an author,
an early Amazon employee, a billionaire
— and isn't talking.

BY NOAH KIRSCH

MACKENZIE BEZOS was not fussy, which was helpful, as there was no time for fussiness at Amazon headquarters in early 1996. She shared her office with a junior employee in a space that doubled as the company kitchen. For 12 hours a day, as workers squeezed by to use the microwave, she presided over the accounting. At night she headed to the warehouse to pack orders. She “was a huge contributor,” says Mike Hanlon, Amazon’s seventh employee. “She really is a talented person in a way that I think gets lost when you’re the billionaire’s wife.”

The mystery around MacKenzie, 49, seems carefully cultivated. She largely slipped into anonymity after Amazon’s early years and has granted no interviews since January 2019, when her split from husband Jeff became public.

The couple finalized their divorce in July, with MacKenzie getting 25% of his Amazon stock. That stake is currently worth \$36.1 billion, enough to put her 15th on 2019’s Forbes 400. “She should have gotten 50% of the company,” says Nick Hanauer, one of Amazon’s first investors. “MacKenzie was an equal partner to Jeff in the early days.”

In keeping with character, MacKenzie wouldn’t talk for this story. To shed some light on her, we spent weeks contacting more than 100 friends and former classmates and coworkers; even that yielded only a hazy picture,

one of an intensely private but talented woman who has, quietly, excelled at every stage of her life.

MacKenzie grew up in San Francisco, a middle child with two siblings. At six, she wrote a 142-page book called *The Book Worm*. Her parents, a homemaker and a financial planner, sent her to Hotchkiss, the Connecticut boarding school, where she graduated a year early. She studied at Cambridge, then Princeton, where she majored in English; Nobel Prize-winning novelist Toni Morrison was her thesis advisor. “She was generally a very poised and a quiet and brilliant presence,” says Jeff Nunokawa, one of her English professors.

After graduating, she took a job at the hedge fund D.E. Shaw, where she began dating Jeff Bezos, who left to found Amazon in 1994. From the outset, MacKenzie was heavily involved. “No one really had job titles . . . so she did just about everything,” says Tod Nelson, another early employee.

MacKenzie pulled back around the time Amazon went public, in 1997, to focus on fiction writing. She kept a low profile until 2005, when HarperCollins published her first novel, *The Testing of Luther Albright*.

Morrison deemed it “a rarity.” MacKenzie followed it in 2013 with *Traps*. The more recent chapters of her life are largely unknown. In

2018 she and Jeff committed \$2 billion to fight homelessness and support nonprofit preschools. In May, as their divorce neared completion, she signed the Giving Pledge, promising to donate at least half her wealth. True to form, she hasn’t said a word about where those billions will go. **F**



CORONAVIRUS TO LOWER GLOBAL AIRLINE REVENUE DOWN BY UP TO \$5 BILLION IN Q1

The coronavirus outbreak has caused wide-ranging flight cancellations and global airline revenues are set to fall by \$4 billion to \$5 billion in the first quarter of 2020.

This is according to the forecast from the UN’s international Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

According to *Forbes*, the Montreal-based agency, in a statement, warned that the coronavirus, would have a greater impact on the aviation industry than the 2003 SARS epidemic.

According to the report by ICAO, 50 airlines have significantly cut back operations, 70 others have fully cancelled all international flights to and from mainland China.

This has resulted in an 80% reduction of foreign airline capacity for travelers to and from China as well as a 40% capacity reduction by Chinese airlines.

SOUTH AFRICA’S DARK TIMES CONTINUE

Mid last month, South Africa’s electricity utility Eskom announced more plans for load-shedding.

During the contentious State of the Nation Address last month, President Cyril Ramaphosa said load-shedding will likely continue in the near future as Eskom completes “fundamental maintenance”.

He admitted power cuts over the past few months hampered the state’s efforts to rebuild the economy and create jobs.

“At its core, load-shedding is the inevitable consequence of Eskom’s inability over many years – due to debt, lack of capacity and state capture – to service its power plants,” Ramaphosa said.

South Africa will work with independent power producers to accelerate the completion of the previous window projects.



A Celebrated Couple

Jeff and MacKenzie Bezos attend a 2009 awards dinner at the Plaza Hotel in New York City.

IN NUMBERS

• Africa's economic growth remained stable in 2019 at 3.4% and is on course to pick up to 3.9% in 2020 and 4.1% in 2021, the African Development Bank's 2020 *African Economic Outlook* revealed late January.

• In the 2020 Agility Emerging Markets Logistics Index, Nigeria rose eight spots to No. 35 and Ghana dropped seven spots to No. 39. Each nation in the region moves in this year's Index, Agility's 11th annual ranking of 50 leading emerging markets. South Africa at No. 23 (up one spot from 2019) is the highest performing market in sub-Saharan Africa, along with Kenya (29, up two places), Tanzania (37, up one spot), Ethiopia (43, down two spots), Uganda (42, up three places), Mozambique (48, down one spot) and Angola (46, up three spots).

UGANDA BREAKS WORLD RECORD AGAIN

Uganda's world 10,000m champion Joshua Cheptegei has broken the 5km road world record by 27 seconds in Monaco.

According to *BBC News Africa*, the 23-year-old ran 12 minutes 51 seconds to smash the previous record, set by Kenya's Rhonex Kipruto en route to victory at January's Valencia 10km.

"I had sub-13 minutes in my mind so when my legs felt good I decided to really go for it," said Cheptegei.

In December, Cheptegei ran 26:38 to break the 10km road world record, which had stood for almost 10 years.

But in January that mark was beaten by Kipruto.



ANGLOGOLD SELLS WORLD'S DEEPEST GOLD MINE

Global mining giant, AngloGold Ashanti announced last month it will be selling its remaining assets to Harmony Gold for \$300 million.

This will make Harmony Gold the largest gold producer in South Africa.

According to *Reuters*, AngloGold said the deal is part of its plan to shrink its portfolio and focus on assets with higher returns.

They want to shift their primary listing to London or Toronto, included selling Mponeng mine, the world's deepest gold mine.

Harmony, which also has operations in Papua New Guinea, said acquiring AngloGold's assets provided a strategic, financial, operational and geographical fit.

"The acquisition has the potential to improve our overall recovered grade and increasing our cash flow margins," Harmony Chief Executive Peter Steenkamp said.

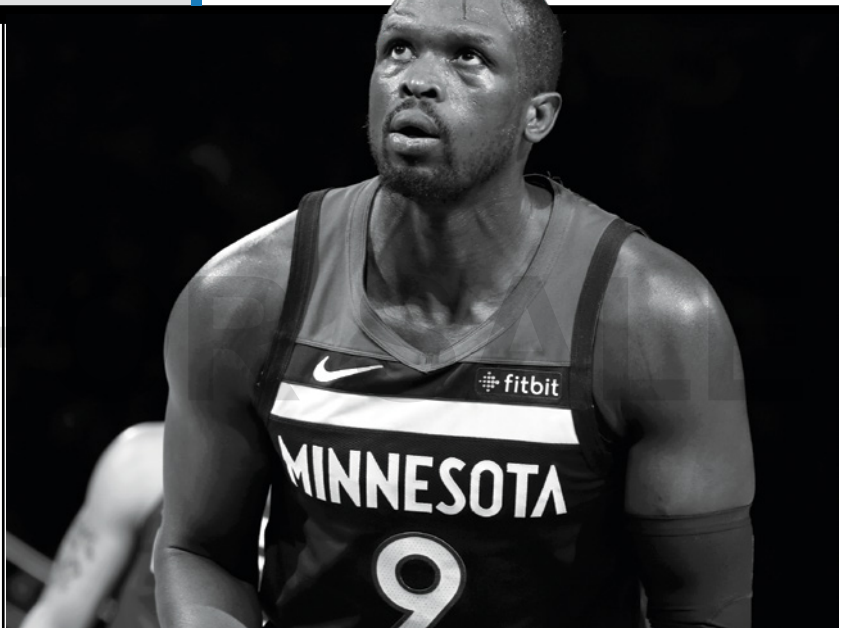
He added that it would increase annual gold production by around 350,000 ounces a year.



OLYMPIAN LUOL DENG FOR AFRICAN BASKETBALL

The Basketball Africa League (BAL) has named two-time NBA All-Star and 2012 Olympian Luol Deng as BAL Global Ambassador. Following his retirement from an NBA career that spanned 15 years, Deng will help grow the BAL's profile throughout Africa and around the world, while inspiring African youth through basketball. Deng's basketball journey includes a 15-year NBA career, two All-Star selections and participation in the 2012 Olympic Games.

Born in Wau, South Sudan, Deng was selected with the 7th overall pick by the Phoenix Suns in the 2004 NBA Draft and was subsequently traded to the Chicago Bulls where he played from 2004-2014. He also played for the Cleveland Cavaliers (2014), Miami Heat (2014-16), Los Angeles Lakers (2016-18) and Minnesota Timberwolves (2018-19), before signing a one-day contract with the Chicago Bulls to retire as a Bull ahead of the 2019-20 NBA Season.



– Compiled by Karen Mwendera



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VIGILANCE AGAINST THE VIRUS

With the coronavirus spreading faster globally than the news around it, how is corporate Africa bracing itself for the threat?

BY TIANA CLINE

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 14 years, the world's biggest smartphone conference, Mobile World Congress (MWC), was cancelled last month. This multi-million-dollar Barcelona-based event shut its doors due to fear of the novel coronavirus (also called 2019-nCoV) which has led to shops across China shutting their doors and cruise ships docked and quarantined.

"The cancellation of MWC is not just a big blow to major players who had planned their most significant product launches of the year but also for startups and small to medium enterprises who would have invested a big chunk of the marketing and sales budget into establishing a presence at MWC," explains Arthur Goldstuck, a technology analyst and World Wide Worx founder and CEO in South Africa.

While most of the Hubei-born coronavirus-related deaths have occurred in China, there have been multiple cases of people contracting the virus in other parts of the world. To date*, there are no confirmed cases of the virus in South Africa but according to Dr Cheryl Cohen from the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), it is likely that we will see a case.

Dr Anchen Laubscher, Netcare's group medical director, says that the Netcare Group is ready to respond to and manage any cases, should the need arise: "Netcare has developed a set of comprehensive clinical risk assessment pathways in consultation with the NICD, that are being used to assess all admissions for possible exposure to the virus," she says. "These are used routinely and diligently as a precautionary measure by our emergency medical personnel, doctors and hospital staff to assess any patient who may have been exposed to risk factors associated with coronavirus."

NICD, together with the National Department of Health (NDOH) and National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS), are on high alert, implementing strict vigilance for any possible case. They have developed and distributed clinical guidelines and case definitions for doctors and nurses, in both the public and private sectors, to ensure detection, identification and appropriate response to any possible case of imported coronavirus infection.

But the coronavirus outbreak is also impacting businesses at a local level. Those attending MWC had their trips cancelled.

Surgical mask sales are at an all-time high thanks to a global "chronic shortage", says the World Health Organization.

"MWC being cancelled is not about not having a stand, but all the investment that has gone into travel arrangements and preparing for those stands. It is difficult to repurpose for smaller, local and future events," adds Goldstuck.

HSE Solutions, one of the biggest local suppliers of the N95 surgical mask, have seen an unprecedented amount of mask orders. Their client base are buying masks for China and an employee attests they have stopped taking orders from new clients.

Companies like Sunstone Logistic Systems, who develop and supply technology and telemetry solutions throughout Africa, have felt the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on their Chinese imports. According to Sathian Chetty, Sunstone Logistic Systems' telematics manager, they have not been able to get their shipments out of mainland China: "Both the supplier and DHL have confirmed that there is a hold on all Chinese shipments. Our stock cannot be delivered to our clients in Nigeria, Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia which means telemetry units cannot be fitted to vehicles and a few of our projects have been put on temporary hold."

According to a major importer finance business based in Johannesburg, one of the biggest problems they have faced is many of the factories throughout China have been shut down. And while some have started to reopen, the raw materials needed to begin manufacturing have to be procured first. Often, these materials come from separate factories scattered across China which has led to a further delay in the supply chain. So it will be some time before goods can get back onto ships heading to Africa.



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Netcare has developed a set of comprehensive clinical risk assessment pathways in consultation with the NICD, that are being used to assess all admissions for possible exposure to the virus.

Meanwhile, at Huawei, all business trips to and from Hubei Province have been suspended indefinitely, with the company's operations in offices outside China continuing as usual, from supply to delivery. While Huawei do not anticipate any effect on its African operations, all its Chinese employees recently dispatched on overseas assignments, along with their family members and any others who have had close contact with them, are currently being quarantined outside their places of work to ensure they are not unknowing carriers.

According to David Shapiro, Sasfin Securities' Deputy Chairman, South Africa's biggest exposure is through the commodity markets: "If the factories are closed for a little bit, I'm not sure whether this will affect anything specific but I think what is the worry is that it will cause a slowdown in the Chinese economy and naturally, affect the demand for commodities that we supply... that is in theory. In practice, it hasn't hammered commodity prices, it hasn't brought them down dramatically other than the oil price which actually works in our favor," Shapiro explains. "The worry is that prices [of those] like iron ore, coal and other commodities that we supply would come down and of course, other commodities in general that we produce, whether it's platinum or palladium. The fact that the Chinese government is trying its best to stabilize the Chinese economy has steadied the issue."

Shapiro adds that the fear of the coronavirus has manifested itself in the weakness of the currency. In other words, the fear that the global economy is going to slow down and that it will affect emerging markets: "As the rand appreciates, it does help our exports but it does make a lot of things that we import more expensive and it pushes up inflation," he ends. 

* As of February 14 2020



MINING'S PLANS TO CLEAN UP ITS ACT AND PLUG THE POWER GAP

IS THE BIGGEST MINING GATHERING ON THE PLANET STILL WORTHY OF NOTE? IT MAY HAVE BEEN SHORT ON NEWS, BUT IT WAS LONG ON BACK STORIES AND HOPE WITH A DASH OF TENSION. MANY THOUGHT THE MINING INDABA WAS FADING, BUT THE 26TH EDITION IN CAPE TOWN LAST MONTH WAS RARELY DULL IF YOU LOOKED HARD ENOUGH.

BY CHRIS BISHOP



LIKE A DUMP TRUCK on a mine, the four-day Mining Indaba in February in South Africa spilled forth a torrent of topics that kept nearly 7,000 delegates talking for four days: gold; power; precious metals; Ebola; risk; an investment battle in a boxing ring; battery metals and a bishop from Birmingham looking for a bounty. Pardon my alliteration, but it was a remarkable week if you looked behind the scenes.

Deals emerging, within weeks from the Mining Indaba may be few and far between, but in the next few months there is likely to be action. Mining Indaba old hands describe the networking gathering as a catalyst that ushers in deals, albeit in the long term.

In recent years, many thought the Mining Indaba was mirroring the cloud over South Africa's once vibrant mining industry. The industry contends with regulatory uncertainties, rising costs and falling productivity.

Rising commodity prices have lifted the gloom, slightly, this year.

Palladium prices – a platinum group metal – have rocketed in the last year as demand has grown for car catalytic convertors. Andrew van Zyl, a mining analyst with SRK Consulting, said Anglo Platinum had doubled its share price in that time on the back of the palladium boom. Gold and so-called battery metals have also picked up in price since the last Mining Indaba, but more of that later.

The organizers claim a 7% increase in attendance with one African head of state, around 40 ministers, 600 investors and 280 executives from junior mining companies. Junior miners are the scouts of the mining industry who spend their lives grafting and grubbing away on mining projects that few know exist. They range from two men, with an excavator and a dump truck, to small, robust, lean, companies ready to go anywhere to develop a mining deposit. They cash in by selling on the developed asset to major miners who have the



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What we want to see is action, action, action.

– Roger Baxter, CEO of MCSA

ability to pour in the ocean of capital needed to fully exploit it.

One of the aims of this conference was to connect junior miners with investors from around the world. One of the supreme ironies was that the junior miners of South Africa were among those who made a lot of noise claiming they were being ignored by investors.

There are around 1,500 South African junior miners which support 45,000 jobs. They released a report through the Minerals Council South Africa (MCSA), on day three in Cape Town, claiming 230,000 jobs could be created, through the multiplier, if there were tax breaks, less red tape and more support from investment funds.

“A lot of people at Mining Indaba say to us: ‘If only this mining project was in Australia it would be 10 times the value of the market capital price’. It is sad,” says Errol Smart, of junior miner Orion Minerals, one of the presenters of the report.

Smart claimed South Africa was losing projects across the border to more go-ahead mining nations like Botswana and Namibia. He claimed junior miners struggled to wade through piles of bureaucracy and scorecards, at what he claims is an overstretched Department of Mineral Resources, that is often difficult to comprehend by two men with an excavator and a dump truck.

“We have got to declutter the system and get red tape out of the way,” says Smart.

Another problem for South African junior miners – in a land of big mining and big government – is that investment funds here have no mandate to invest in their projects often considered too small.

Ironically, according to Smart, Australian pension funds invest in South African junior mining projects along with retail investors in Canada who enjoy tax breaks for doing so. All of

these factors make it even tougher for the mining scouts on the front line who lose sleep through high risk and narrow margins.

“Our members invested R55 billion and earned R54 billion in revenue last year. That shows you that it is a tough gig,” says Smart.

Former finance minister Trevor Manuel promised tax breaks for junior miners more than a decade ago. Junior miners are still waiting.

Mmadikenedi Malebe, the deputy director general of the Department of Mineral Resources, says: “We deal with all applications on receipt and we always try to assist junior miners with their paperwork.”

Junior miners plan meetings with government in the coming months to raise their issues.

Big mining in South Africa has its problems too.

It saw the Mining Indaba, attended by scores of government mandarins, as the place to air them.

Power cuts of between 2,500MW and 3,000MW – the output of a large power station – contributed, along with costs rising at 3% above inflation, to clipping South African production by 2.8 %, in 2019, in an industry that employs 454,861 workers. It was the second year in a row that production has fallen significantly.

Gold saw an untimely 13.5% production drop in South Africa when the world is crying out for the yellow metal.

Central banks around the world are buying more as economies prepare for tougher times and lose faith in the dollar. The central banks bought 656 tonnes in 2018 – the biggest amount since major economies came off the gold standard – and last year, another 650 tonnes, according to the World Gold Council (WGC).

The gold price rose 12% in the last year and even though there are 190,000 tonnes of gold in the world – nearly half of which was mined in South Africa over the last 130 years – there is a shortage. According to the WGC, world supply is 3,400 tonnes, and demand 4,500 tonnes.

“The gap between demand and supply is being filled by recycled jewelry but there are not enough new gold mines being built,” says John Reade, the head of research for the WGC who spent years working for Gencor in South African gold mines.

One reason is that mining companies can’t rely on a constant supply of electricity. The MCSA unveiled its plan to plug the power gap. It has a list of power projects, including wind and solar, that it claims can create more than 2,000MW in nine months.

The MCSA chief economist Henk Langenhoven reckoned that these projects could generate up to 10% of the power the mines need and act as a hedge.

The only problem, says Roger Baxter, CEO of MCSA, is that it takes a raft of expensive and lengthy bureaucracy, including negotiating with municipalities, registering a change of use of land and paying to connect to the national grid. Any project bigger than 1MW has to go through these hoops; the mining companies want the red tape cleared away.

“At last, this is being seen as a country problem and not a mining

AN EXCLUSIVE URBAN OASIS



When it comes to the evolution of unparalleled hospitality in Johannesburg, luxury has a new location at one of Johannesburg's most exclusive addresses. Whether you are an avid local or international traveller, looking for leisure or a business base, the Houghton Hotel has something to suit your needs. This urban oasis, with a unique and personalised offering, makes guests feel right at home in a modern, contemporary space. The Houghton Hotel prides itself on providing unforgettable experiences for all types of travellers; making every effort to ensure that the hotel exceeds expectations, enveloping guests in a luxury experience that lingers long after check out.

An exceptional lifestyle resort situated on the sprawling expanse of a signature Jack Nicklaus golf course, in the leafy suburb of Houghton, one of the oldest and most beautiful parts of Johannesburg; the R880 million establishment is the crowning glory in a newly built residential estate, flanked by footpaths navigating lush landscaped gardens. An unexpected escape from the hustle and bustle, and a stone's throw from the metropolis, The Houghton Hotel is perfectly positioned, affording discerning guests a plethora of options; from exploring the nearby neighbourhoods to soaking up the sumptuous comforts of the hotel, with its signature services and state-of-art facilities.

Expertly designed by Boogertman + Partners architects, with the interiors by DSGN,

the Houghton Hotel showcases the very best of South African luxury design and craftsmanship. As a prestigious member of the Leading Hotels of the World, and having recently been named the Best Luxury Hotel in South Africa, at the HOSCO Luxury Tourism Awards; it boast 68 beautiful rooms, suites and penthouses cocooned in layered luxury and offering unobstructed views of the city skyline and scenic surrounds. Drawing inspiration from the most iconic hotels around the world, paired with intuitive service that surpasses standards and exceeds expectations; The Houghton Hotel certainly delivers a 'decidedly extraordinary' experience as one of Johannesburg's most luxurious destinations.

With a palpable passion for hospitality that is deeply rooted within its cultural identity, The Houghton Hotel is a world-class facility that rivals some of the greatest hotels globally, while fulfilling the role of a home away from home. From a fully equipped business centre to boardrooms proffering personal assistants, and bespoke business conferencing solutions of up to 500 delegates, as well as a 24 hour concierge service to ensure that no need goes unmet, there is no detail that has been overlooked in the architectural gem, which truly captures the imagination: from exotic Egyptian cotton bedding to extended breakfasts and a five star flagship wellness centre from Amani Spa; with a restorative and relaxing rasul chamber, meditation garden and heated infinity pool. Affording guests all the amenities imaginable, not to mention a

spectacular sundowner spot at Sky Bar, with an uninterrupted vista over Johannesburg; if you can dream it, the Houghton Hotel should probably be able to make it possible.

For guests interested in medical tourism, The Houghton Hotel takes pleasure in offering on-site Medical Suites with world-class specialists and practitioners, and the suites are suited to provide extra care to medical tourists post-procedure.

The special attention to the guest's dining experience includes the culmination of good food and great produce at the Nova Deli; with its culinary cave of cured meats, cheeses, pastries and imported product offerings. Signature dining at "The H" provides a unique haute cuisine experience, where guests can enjoy a personalised gastronomic journey.

The Houghton Hotel was created for people who have earned the right to demand more from life – a place where the option of casual and luxury meld into one; and living up to its promise, the Houghton Hotel is central to The Houghton experience. Combining luxury hotel living with the convenience of the concierge services of a private club, the Houghton Hotel is designed to ensure that every need is not only met, but exceeded.

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problem,” says Baxter. “What we want to see is action, action, action.”

In reply, mining minister Gwede Mantashe said: “We will work with the mining companies to help them complete the paperwork so they can generate their own electricity, but we won’t allow a free for all.”

Mantashe also announced that the government was looking at creating a public-private electricity generation company.

“If we can increase competition, it will pull the price of electricity down,” he told a press conference.

The analysts believe the quest for gold is moving to West Africa. A growing number of projects in West Africa are poised to profit from growing gold demand and a competitive advantage over the more established, yet deep, difficult and narrow gold seams in the south.

By contrast, West African deposits are shallow, easy to get to and largely under-exploited; they are also cheaper, less risky and easy to scale up.

It is a sign of the times that the winner of the investment battlefield contest – where people put their mining projects for intense scrutiny by a panel of experts – was a 2.2 million oz open cast gold project in Cote D’Ivoire that hopes to be 3 million oz before the end of the year.

The Mining Indaba organizers went to town this year with the investment battlefield and put boxing ring ropes around the stage and kitted out the contenders with boxing gloves. In real life, when it comes to gold in West Africa, investors shouldn’t worry about being knocked out because the referee is in their corner.

Out of the gold corner, both Ghana and Nigeria are working on their mining codes to ease the cost of doing business to encourage more capital.

Nigeria, in particular, has high hopes for gold as the oil price continues to dip, even though its mining is in its infancy and the entire economy struggles from a dearth of electricity.

“We are sorting out this power problem and we hope to one day export more gold than oil from Nigeria,” says the Nigerian minister of mines and steel development Olamilekan Adegbite.

Looking further into the future, there are brighter prospects across Africa, especially the glister of so-called battery metals set to drive future demand. These are metals like vanadium, rhodium, cobalt and lithium that will drive a new generation of factories, offices and electric cars as the world tries to wean itself from carbon.

China is undergoing a huge industrialization program based around the battery. Experts expect the world market to increase 122 times in the next 20 years attracting \$660 billion in capital.

One African operation that is pushing to the front of the queue to supply battery metals is run by 43-year-old Fortune



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If you look at a cell phone battery, it can retail for a thousand dollars, while the raw materials can cost cents. That is how much money can be made in the battery business and Africa needs to get into it.

– Benedikt Sobotka, head of the Global Battery Alliance

Mojapelo. When the teenage Mojapelo used to take a taxi from his township to the nearby small town of Kwekwe, in Zimbabwe, he used to marvel at the huge, imposing, chrome refineries that loomed large by the roadside. He never dreamed that one day he would be a mining boss poised to take over 10% of supply of one of the planet’s most sought-after minerals – vanadium.

Mojapelo, who studied actuarial science at the University of Cape Town, spent a few years as a management consultant before applying his skills to a consortium seeking mineral rights in South Africa. By his early 30s, Mojapelo was a founder of Bushveld Minerals, listed on Alternative Investment Market (AIM) in London in 2017, which mines vanadium near Brits west of Johannesburg. It has 3% of world demand and supplies the United States and Asia. The company hopes to treble output to 8,400 tonnes in the next five years at its Vametco plant, which employs 600 workers, to capture 10% of the world market.

Now the South African company is gearing up to take advantage of the world rush for battery metals to unearth more metals like cobalt, lithium and vanadium that will make the batteries that will power the world’s cars, factories and mines. This transformation, expected to be led by Chinese manufacturers, will replace fossil fuels with electricity to diminish the world’s carbon footprint.

“My only question is can Africa keep up with this demand,” says Mojapelo at the Mining Indaba in Cape Town, “I think we

can and our company is expanding to make sure we can.”

Mojapelo is also planning to invest in a factory to make the batteries from the mined vanadium. He agrees that Africa should be extracting more from its raw minerals.

Benedikt Sobotka, head of the Global Battery Alliance set up by the World Economic Forum, said at the Mining Indaba that Africa needed to get busy making batteries as well as mining the raw materials.

“If you look at a cell phone battery, it can retail for a thousand dollars, while the raw materials can cost cents. That is how much money can be made in the battery business and Africa needs to get into it,” says Sobotka.

Aside from making money, there was a lot of talk about ethics; one of the themes of this year’s Mining Indaba was so-called ESG investing – that is taking into account environmental social and governance issues as well as pure profit.

No surprise there with mining these days looking to clean up its act. But it was a surprise, at least for me, to see the conservative Church of England leave behind its hassocks, prayer books and draughty churches to head to Africa in search of ethical investing in mining.

The avuncular Bishop of Birmingham, the Right Reverend David Urquhart, a former oil company executive, spent years doing church charity work and gave up his lucrative day job to become a man of the cloth after a child he was helping asked him: “When are you going to do this full-time?”

“I went to see my boss to tell him. I saw he had a book open in front of him with a calculation as to how much more he could pay me. He thought I was going to another oil company. When I told him I had got the call and was going into the church, he slammed the book shut and said ‘in that case I can’t help you!’” the churchman chuckled.

Right Reverend Urquhart arrived in Cape Town looking for new investments for the £4.5 billion (\$5.87 billion) Church of England pension fund. I cautioned him that ethics and pollution control may fall on stony ground in Africa’s mining industry; he had faith.

“Mining is important for everyone on the planet, 45% of the whole economy of the world depends on material that is dug out of the ground... You have mentioned pollution and of course the Church of England’s Transition Pathways Initiative, which has put a number of measurements together whereby investors can look at an organization, it could be a mine, it could be something else, and measure it against the Paris Climate Change benchmarks in terms of carbon emissions,” he says. Heavens! 📌



Mining activity
in Sierra Leone

‘SIERRA LEONE A FLAGSHIP OF AFRICAN MINING’

The coronavirus is causing havoc in China, killing hundreds of people and threatening to also wipe one per cent off the country’s growth rate – a born-again African mining nation must surely feel the bitter pain of this human and economic tragedy.

The deadly Ebola virus killed nearly 4,000 people in the West African nation of Sierra Leone between 2014 and 2016. It also all but killed the country’s thriving mining industry.

When the disease broke out in May 2014, Sierra Leone had recovered from the ravages of its draining civil war and was exporting a billion dollars a year in iron ore exports alone. When Ebola struck, it devastated mining; workers died; exports were paralyzed and those who survived fled the country taking their mining skills with them.

Nearly five years on, the dapper, young, director general of the mining ministry of Sierra Leone is helping to bring the industry back to life.

Julius Mattai’s eyes light up when he talks about the prospects for his country’s mining industry on his mission to find foreign investors at the Mining Indaba in Cape Town in February.

“We can double the size of our mining industry by 2025,” he says with genuine pride and enthusiasm.

In this, inspiration has come from above. The government has just completed an aerial survey of the country’s mineral wealth and the results, to be released in March, look good at first sight. They show that Sierra Leone has a healthy stock of platinum group metals, rutile – a prized and pricey titanium dioxide used in aerospace and pigmentation – that Sierra Leone has a claim owning most of the world supply. There is also an abundance of coltan – used to bind together the inside of laptops – along with gold, diamonds, bauxite and chromite.

“We want to make Sierra Leone a flagship of African mining,” says Mattai.

Already the moribund mining golden goose has been clucking back into life. Changes in government mining rules have tempted back 15 mining companies to Sierra Leone, of which four are operational. In 2019, mining in Sierra Leone increased its exports to \$350 million and employed 7,000 people.

“We want to create the right business environment,” says Mattai.

Sierra Leone suffers, like many African mining nations, from a dearth of skills and power, but at the very least it is trying to open the door to investors in the hope of a rapid revival and all the wealth and employment it brings. Other African mining nations could learn from this.

AFRICA'S 50 MOST POWERFUL WOMEN

THIS IS A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND PAN-AFRICAN COMPILATION OF THE CONTINENT'S LEADING WOMEN, DRAWN FROM BUSINESS, POLITICS, MEDIA, SCIENCE, SPORTS AND PUBLIC LIFE, WHO ARE CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO AND CREATING A TRAIL ON TERRAIN WHERE THERE WAS NONE. THEY ARE RESHAPING HISTORY, CLOSING INEQUALITIES AND PIONEERING NEW AVENUES OF WEALTH CREATION AND IN TURN, LIFTING OTHERS WITH THEM.

BY MASHOKANE MAHLO

The privilege of new beginnings is reflection. At the commencement of the new decade, and as the pursuit for personal and continental progress endures, it's the ideological contemplation of what 'power' is that challenged FORBES AFRICA to compile an unprecedented, unranked listing of Africa's 50 most powerful women. We examine 'power' as more than wealth, assets, control or accomplishment. We explore 'power' as a utility of success. The stories, journeys and current efforts of all the women uncover the truth of the great African proverb: "When sleeping women wake, mountains move." *The list on the following pages is in no particular order.* 

A portrait of an elderly woman with short, wavy grey hair, wearing glasses and a vibrant blue blazer over a matching blue top. She has her arms crossed and is smiling slightly. She is wearing red nail polish, a gold ring with a pearl on her left hand, and a black watch on her right wrist. Pearl earrings are also visible. The background is a solid dark color.

Photography:
Motlabana Monnakgotla
Art Director: Lucy Nkosi
Makeup: Mavis Tshabalala
Studio: Flashing Lites Studio,
Johannesburg

METHODOLOGY:

In compiling this list, our research looked at female African leaders across sectors and industries, as well as government agencies and non-profit institutions. We sifted through other recognition lists and nominations that came in from our editorial teams across Africa, and applied our own metrics of leadership, influence, consistency and most importantly, impact. We also engaged an external panel of judges, who are experts in their fields: Melanie Verwoerd (politics), Ayesha Kajee (development and governance), Nick Said (sports), Gina Schoeman (economics), Yasmin Furrnie (media) and Ayanda Myataza (business). For every woman featured in this compilation, there are many more making history as we speak and will no doubt grace the list and these pages in years to come.

'POWER IS PROVOKING POSITIVE IMPACT'

Graça Machel's name will be etched in history as a political activist, public servant, global humanitarian and advocate for the rights of women and children. Dressed in a regal purple suit, and sporting a chic new look and hairdo, she arrives for an exclusive FORBES AFRICA photoshoot late January, in a studio in a leafy suburb of Johannesburg, South Africa. With an alluring aura and a disarming "hello", she puts the team at ease, and shares her personal odyssey including her journey as a social entrepreneur through the Graça Machel Trust that she founded. Excerpts from the interview:

You were born in 1945, the youngest of six children. What was it like growing up?

I was born three weeks after my father passed away, and my mother was a widow at the time, but I am [fortunate as] it was always a very loving environment. I was given solid foundations to provide me with a very clear value system. I had the guidance, even in those old days, to be myself within my family, within society, but to also be a child and person connected to others. My inclination for social work comes from the foundations I received from my family.

Mozambique was still under colonial rule then, which gave rise to your freedom fighter spirit. What was it like living in the country as a child before independence?

You are a child, but you observe what's going on. When I got to secondary school, I realized there were years where I was the only black child in a class of 40, and you begin to ask hard questions: 'How is it I'm in Mozambique, a country with a majority of black people and here I am, the only one in this school?' Then you count how many other black children are in your class, for instance, and you say, 'no, there's something wrong!'

For [me], to even go to secondary school, [I had] to take a bus. [I] had to walk kilometers because, in the suburbs where I was living with my brothers, there was no secondary school. Everything begins to build inside you, not only questions but even revolt. But my political conscience developed and consolidated when I went to Lisbon.

What made you study overseas at the University of Lisbon, Portugal?

In the beginning, it was really because what I had chosen to study wouldn't be available at the university in Mozambique, which was still very young. It was also this curiosity to see the world differently and learn more. It wasn't easy emotionally for me to leave because of the deep connection I had with my family, particularly with my mother,

but I said, 'let me give it a try'. It became the best option because [my] horizons broadened exponentially and I was even able to find new ways to connect with the liberation movement.

It was when you were a student that you became a member of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO). What compelled you to join the struggle?

It started when I was in secondary school, when I began to ask these hard questions. From Portugal, I could connect easier with the FRELIMO: to learn what the movement is doing and even understand broadly what are the objectives to take us into independence. It was important for me not to jump to join the FRELIMO without understanding exactly what it was about. In my small cell, we were connected to the movement in Tanzania through a system. Information had to go through France to Algiers, and would eventually get to Dar es Salaam.

You made an indelible mark in the sphere of education in Mozambique and South Africa. What are the lessons you took with you after recently stepping down as chancellor of the University of Cape Town (UCT), a role you spent 20 years filling?

For me, it was how do you see the transformation [of UCT], particularly the first years of transformation when you have children who are coming from the Eastern Cape who hardly speak English; they write with deficiencies, they've never seen a library, and they have never seen a computer. Today it's normal, but 20 years back, it was not. Those transformative years, in the beginning, gave me good lessons of how to deal with a situation of exclusion and then the process of inclusion at the highest level of education.

Secondly, I understood much better the struggle we have as a society in terms of boys and girls, young women and young men, particularly [how to have them] learn to accept one another as equal. It's still going on, and it's a very tough [issue].

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To be a powerful woman means to have the possibility, the right and the responsibility to make choices that better oneself and better one's community. Power is making a conscious effort in both your private and public spaces to tear down the walls of disrespect, discrimination and disenfranchisement wherever you meet it. Using your influence to create impact and better the lives of others — that is what being a powerful woman means to me.”



What made you start the Graça Machel Trust, which is celebrating its tenth year?

The Trust came as an effort to fill a gap. I have been involved with the political promotion of women's rights, but I felt in the economic sphere, there were no organizations focusing on enhancing the capabilities of women in the formal sector. So, I decided to establish the Trust.

What are some of the challenges facing female entrepreneurs in accessing funding?

There are too many. There are still countries on this continent where if a woman has to start a business, she has to have permission from her husband. We are working to remove that kind of barrier. Women are not children; they are adults that know what they want to do. They should be recognized with their dignity and to start a business whenever they feel like it.

But, there are many others which are structural, in terms of mentality. Women still struggle to be recognized and valued for their potential to transform our economies.

[Through] our programs with women, [we] intend to firstly encourage [women] to build their self-confidence, that they know that nothing and nobody can impede them from doing what they want to do. Secondly, to get [women] to work together because if you had to remove the obstacles, you [still] can't do it individually, you need the power of the collective. That's why we chose to work through networks. The third is to strategize because there are so many issues to deal with so you need to prioritize those which will have an impact in transforming institutions, transforming structures and would open avenues for many [more] women to work.

What are your opinions of the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement coming into force this year?

It's extremely welcomed. It came at a time when the conversation within the African Union is about [launching] an African passport and removing barriers. It's important to create those instruments which materialize what we have been saying for decades 'we are one'. Now, you need to facilitate transport, trade and border-crossing for those in the informal economy.

The trade agreement is a legal framework, but the most important thing is the attitude of those who have to implement it [to understand] we all gain when we have free movement of people and goods across the continent. Governments need to be more educated [to remove] the obstacles they are creating and that make no sense.

How would you describe a powerful woman in 2020?

I struggle to understand this issue of power because, speaking for myself, I do not care [about] being powerful. People say I am powerful but I care more about being impactful – in the work I do with children, adolescents, women, or even institutions. Those who observe can say, 'you are powerful,' but it doesn't come from me to say I am powerful. What is important as a human being and social being is [to ask]: "how do I provoke positive impact which will make life much better for the people I work with and work for?"

You have also been very impactful when you were First Lady of South Africa and Mozambique. What advice would you give First Ladies in terms of how they can use their voice for the voiceless?

I don't think I can advise First Ladies because from that point of view, I

was a very bad First Lady [since] I didn't assume my activities as First Lady; I continued to do what I have been doing, even before I married Samora [Machel]; before I married Madiba [Nelson Mandela]. When I married Madiba, I was already with the United Nations (UN), I was already a special representative with the secretary-general of the UN.

In Mozambique, everybody remembers my time as minister of education. They never remember me as a First Lady. In this country [SA], I'm known as someone who has been in the humanitarian space. I established the Graca Machel Trust from South Africa. What I would say, is that it simply made sense [for me] to continue to champion the causes I have embraced regardless of being married to someone who, from his own merit, was in the highest position in the land.

Fortunately, [Madiba and I] had such a mature relationship, and [he] respected all my engagements. I would travel wherever I could and sometimes even when I was with the African Peer Review; he would come with me to allow me to do my work when I needed to do two to three weeks in Kenya. We went together to Kenya, and he stayed. He was retired at that time. He continued to do his work, and I continued to do mine.

What is next for 'Mama Graca Machel'?

I want to consolidate the institutions I established. I want them to be strong enough to allow me to gradually 'retire from retirement' as Madiba would say. My energy will be reducing and by the time I decide I will not be at the head of my own institutions, I want them to carry on without feeling any kind of difference because of my absence. Secondly, I would also like to identify a group of young women whom I can feel I had a direct impact [with] to increase and amplify 'those' faces and 'those' voices. I would like that sense of continuity.

When you eventually 'retire from retirement', what will be on your bucket list?

I just need to be in a space where I can enjoy the beauty of nature, my grandchildren, my friends; and perhaps be able to reflect and if there's anything I'd like to share with the world, perhaps to write. 

– For the full interview, visit cnbcafrica.com

CLARE AKAMANZI, RWANDA

CEO, RWANDA DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Clare Akamanzi is a cabinet member of the Rwandan presidency serving under the stewardship of President Paul Kagame. On February 4, 2017, she was appointed executive director and CEO of the Rwanda Development Board (RDB). She was born in Uganda to Rwandan refugee parents in 1979.

Akamanzi's career began in 2004 as a trade diplomat at the World Trade Organization. She later transferred to the Rwandan embassy in London as the commercial diplomat. In 2006, she returned to Rwanda and was appointed deputy director-general of the then Rwanda Investment and Export Promotion Agency before transitioning to the RDB.

Under her current leadership, the board registered foreign and domestic investments worth \$2.46 billion in 2019, an increase of 22.6% from the previous year to support the government's ambition to create 214,000 new jobs every year.

The lawyer-turned-public administrator has



over 15 years of experience in the promotion of foreign direct investment, private sector growth, business environment reforms and her expertise includes trade and investment policy and economic development policy. Throughout her term, she has established innovative projects to tackle youth unemployment, promote tourism, small-medium enterprises and stimulate agricultural productivity.



FOLORUNSO ALAKIJA, NIGERIA

EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIR, FAMFA OIL

DAILY MANTRA: "Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well."

When there's talk about breaking ceilings in Africa, Folorunso Alakija is top of mind. She is a mother, wife, minister, philanthropist, author, an eight-time honorary doctorate, and the definition of 'self-made'.

Alakija made a name for herself as a fashion entrepreneur catering to West Africa's elite before diverging her business interests towards oil prospecting and mining in 1993. The only billionaire on our list, she is the vice-chair of Nigerian oil exploration and production company, FAMFA Oil. The company holds a lucrative stake in one of the country's most extensive offshore discovery known as the Agbami Oilfield.

With a networth of \$1 billion, she is one of only two female billionaires in Africa.

As managing director of the Rose of Sharon Group, Alakija attentively watches over her empire which spans oil exploration, printing and real estate. By the same token, she equally directs her efforts to plough back into society, purposefully exercising her responsibility to bridge the gap between her fortunes and those less fortunate.

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JENNIFER RIRIA, KENYA

**GROUP CEO, ECHO NETWORK AFRICA (ENA);
FOUNDING MEMBER,
KENYA WOMEN FINANCE TRUST**

DAILY MANTRA: “The older I get, the truer it is, it’s the people you love, not the money and stuff that makes you rich.” (Quote by Alan Jackson)

Bankers are generally not considered stewards for the disenfranchised, except Jennifer Riria. She belongs to a small but widely esteemed group of microfinance practitioners in the world. For over three decades, Riria has been at the helm of the Kenya Women Finance Trust (KWFT), transforming it from an unprofitable non-governmental organization to a medium-sized bank. Since its inception in 1991, KWFT has supported over 3.5 million customers, specifically low-income women and their families. Moreover, it’s disbursed over \$5 billion in loans. “Women are bankable,” Riria says with authority.

Her efforts to enhance the financial inclusion for women are hailed immensely. In 2017, Riria was awarded the Women of the Decade in Innovation and Leadership by the World Economic Forum and subsequently, in 2018, received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Africa Women Innovation & Entrepreneurship Forum.

As founder of Echo Network Africa, formerly Kenya Women Holding, Riria has made it her career to empower and enable women to advance their security and prosperity through active partnerships with governments and community-based organizations. This includes providing access to education, maternal support and rescue activities for girls and women. In addition, she has labored closely with the Nigerian Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender to change policies on gender mainstreaming in both public and private spaces.

In appreciation of Riria’s endeavors, the Jennifer Ririra Hub is an ultra-modern shopping mall in Nakuru, Kenya, erected in her honor and will serve to enhance the sustainability of ENA as it persists with its quest.

LOUISE MUSHIKIWABO, RWANDA

SECRETARY GENERAL, ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE (OIF)

A citizen of the world but with deep roots in Africa and her home country, Rwanda, Louise Mushikiwabo is the head of OIF, an international organization with over 80 country members and present on five continents. Before that, she lived in the United States for 20 years before taking up a position with the African Development Bank (AfDB) in Tunisia. In 2008, she accepted the call by the Rwandan president to join his team as minister of foreign affairs and cooperation.

Her 10-year experience at the head of Rwandan diplomacy made her a winning candidate to lead OIF as its fourth secretary-general. She was elected into the role, with the backing of the African Union on October 12 2018. Her priorities will revolve around four key topics: driving the relevance of the organization and the co-existence of French with other languages; eradicating youth employment and the exchange of good practices amongst member states in economic and developmental cooperation, good governance, peace and security. Mushikiwabo is also outspoken on issues of gender equality and the economic inclusion of women.



AYA CHEBBI, TUNISIA

BLOGGER AND AFRICA UNION YOUTH ENVOY

DAILY MANTRA: “Let’s shake things up!”

Aya Chebbi is a proponent of inter-generational leadership, priding herself in bringing leaders closer to the youth. Chebbi rose to prominence through her relentless non-violent protests during the 2010 Tunisian revolution using a tool of the millennial age: blogging.

Her voice became world-renowned when numerous media outlets, including *Al Jazeera*, published her documentative blog. Since then, her pursuit of mobilizing African youth through non-violent social movements, like through the use of social media, led her to be the first-ever African Union (AU) Youth Envoy. As the youngest diplomat there, Chebbi’s focus is to advocate for the interests of youth within its decision-making bodies.

She has since brought over 300 youth to the “big boys” table in 18 African countries, including hosting Intergenerational dialogues centered around why youth should politically and economically co-lead Africa. Chebbi has contributed to the drafting of the AU Peace and Security Council Framework on youth, peace and security as well as mobilized for an official African ‘Youth Month’.

“My father has been a huge source of inspiration and support,” she attests.





ELSIE KANZA, TANZANIA

HEAD OF AFRICA AND MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

DAILY MANTRA: “CANI: Continuous And Never-ending Improvement.”

As one of the youngest and most dynamic female leaders emerging from Africa, Elsie Kanza is not one to be overlooked. A Tanzanian economist born and raised in Kenya, she spent parts of her career serving with the ministry of finance; the central bank of Tanzania as well as the presidency as personal assistant to the country's former president, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, where she was responsible for economic affairs.

Since 2011, Kanza has been leading the African agenda at the World Economic Forum (WEF). Based in Geneva, her mission is to bring issues of regional importance to the forefront; thereafter engage and collaborate with political, business and social leaders to make the right policy choices to transform Africa's economy and build sustainable growth.

She is especially passionate about how the private sector can confront unemployment and lead the charge to place job creation on the front burner and improve its competitiveness through economic reform.

According to Kanza, the safeguarding of women's rights may be of more importance to regional growth.

During her term, she has increased the participation of women attending the WEF summit on Africa to 30%, the highest ever, more than the annual international summit held in Davos.

IBUKUN AWOSIKA, NIGERIA

FOUNDER AND CEO, THE CHAIR CENTRE GROUP

Ibukun Awosika didn't plan on becoming an award-winning entrepreneur, but she did. One of Nigeria's most celebrated businesswomen, she defines resilience and tenacity. The founding CEO of furniture manufacturer and retailer, the Chair Centre Group, she also serves as chair of the board of Access Bank PLC and First Bank of Nigeria. Women empowerment peaks Awosika's social interests. She co-founded Women In Management and Business (WIMBIZ) to inspire, empower and advocate for better representation of women in leadership positions in both the public and private sector.

In 2019, Awosika became the new president of the International Women Entrepreneurial Challenge based in New York. The female-based economic empowerment organization supports leading

women entrepreneurs to access international markets. Moreover, she set up the Afterschool Graduate Development Centre to enhance the employability of graduates.

Through all her projects, Awosika aspires to use her success to further the development of Nigeria by raising entrepreneurs to create jobs and reduce youth unemployment. “Nigerians have great tenacity. Once you create an enabling environment, you'll be shocked at what they can achieve,” she said in an interview with FORBES AFRICA.



JUDY DLAMINI, SOUTH AFRICA

FOUNDER, MBEKANI GROUP

DAILY MANTRA: “Life is a gift, treasure it. Never give up on yourself and on your dreams.”

A woman of many feats, Judy Dlamini left her medical practice to pursue her entrepreneurial aspirations as the founder of Mbekani Group.

Dlamini has successfully built businesses in pharmaceuticals, luxury fashion and property management, to name a few. Amidst her busy schedule, she still finds time to pursue a string of degrees, lead the University of the Witwatersrand as Chancellor, and do philanthropy. “Power for its own sake has no value; power

only matters if it is used to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate than yourself,” Dlamini says.

In partnership with her husband, she registered and co-founded a public benefit trust focused on rural development with the purpose of providing access to tertiary education, sporting, computer literacy, quality health and exposing emerging African designers to mainstream luxury retail.

In March 2017, Dlamini authored *Equal But Different*, illuminating the rise and struggles of female business leaders in South Africa. She further leveraged the opportunity to launch a publishing company, Sifiso Publishers, to give a voice to other African writers and bring to the forefront more narratives that detail societal issues today.



CHARLIZE THERON, SOUTH AFRICA

HOLLYWOOD ACTOR

South African-born Hollywood star Charlize Theron continues to fly the African flag high. The Academy Award-winning actor has had yet another incredible year. Her rendition of Megyn Kelly's sexual harassment protest in the 2019 film, *Bombshell*, gained Theron her third Oscar nomination. While the A-list actress has kept movie-lov-

ers glued to the big screen consistently delivering remarkable performances; off-screen, Theron has been just as invested in sub-Saharan African youth. According to a UNAIDS 2019 report, South Africa has 7.7 million people living with HIV, the largest in the world. This prompted the star to establish the Charlize Theron Africa Outreach Project (CTAOP) in 2007, an organization that strives to educate, empower and invest in young people's ability to be productive and HIV-free.

CTAOP has raised more than \$6.3 million and today has programs that have supported and engaged more than 300,000 youth, including the creation of safe hubs for 12,000 at-risk girls as a result of gender inequality and self-efficacy. "Young girls are eight times more likely to become HIV positive," said Theron, during an interview with *Forbes*. "Because of cultural issues and old traditions, it's really much harder to reach young girls than it is young men."



CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE, NIGERIA

AUTHOR, PUBLIC SPEAKER

In modern times, there isn't a celebrated black-female intellectual of international stature whose influence transcends written words as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Adichie is a woman who has been able to dissect, shape and create social dialogues across the globe. Born in Nigeria, Adichie has drawn from her feminist values and experiences of her childhood into early adulthood as a canvas to ignite the minds of a diverse global audience. Her work has been translated into over 30 languages.

Her many awards include a Commonwealth Writers' Prize for her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus*. Her second, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, gained her a United States (US) National Book Critics Circle Award and her book *Americanah* has sold over a million copies in the US.

"[Adichie's writing] shows that African stories are best told through African lenses," says Yasmin Fumie, a social worker-turned-fashion designer in South Africa.

As a MacArthur Foundation Fellow, Adichie divides her time between the US and Nigeria. Within both countries, Adichie is playing an active role to cultivate and pave the way for emerging talented African writers. In her home country, she hosts an annual creative writing workshop for aspiring writers, for which applications pour in from across the world. Moreover, she has given every girl and boy a deconstruction of feminism made famous by Beyoncé in her 2014 hit song, *Flawless*: "We teach girls to aspire to marriage, and we don't teach boys the same. We raise girls to see each other as competitors, not for jobs or for accomplishments... but for the attention of men. We teach girls that they cannot be sexual beings in the way boys are. Feminist: the person who believes in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes," says Adichie. These painstakingly compelling words left an indelible mark in society.

In 2016, along with her publishers, Adichie collaborated with the Swedish government to distribute copies of her latest essay, "We Should All Be Feminists", to every 16-year-old student in the country. It also inspired Christian Dior to put feminism over femininity, when the luxe brand collaborated with Adichie on a limited-edition T-shirt with the inspired words in 2017. These were worn by numerous public figures to demonstrate their support including pop sensation, Rihanna, and Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Lawrence.

Proving that African women have a place in literature and the imaginations of people's minds, Adichie was awarded the PEN Pinter Prize in October 2018 and 14 honorary doctorate degrees.



PHUTI MAHANYELE- DABENGWA, SOUTH AFRICA

CEO, NASPERS SOUTH AFRICA

DAILY MANTRA: "We are each a miracle in motion. The great opportunity we have is to live out that unique purpose."

Phuti Mahanyele-Dabengwa is currently one of only two black female CEOs in the Top 40 Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) listed companies. Mahanyele-Dabengwa was appointed in July last year to lead the South African operations of media and technology conglomerate, Naspers, which has a current market capitalization of R1.1 trillion (\$73.3 billion)

and controls majority stakes in multinational companies including MultiChoice, Media24 and OLX and a minority stake in Chinese behemoth, Tencent.

Personally, Mahanyele-Dabengwa has privately funded the education of underprivileged children in primary school, high school and university. Over the last decade, she has administered funding for young school children from underprivileged families to join their colleagues on various educational trips abroad.

Through Naspers, Mahanyele-Dabengwa spearheads Naspers Labs, a program that blends technology and in-person coaching to prepare youth from low-income households in South Africa for jobs. One thousand and six hundred youth have been positively impacted, of which 780 have graduated, with 70% of them managing to secure permanent employment.

"My current role is very fulfilling and exciting. It allows me the opportunity to change the lives of the young people who have joined our labs. And through Foundry, our early-stage business funding initiative, I have the opportunity to back the leading businesses of tomorrow, by providing scarce capital to internet-based businesses in South Africa that use technology to improve people's lives," she says.



OBIAGELI 'OBY' EZEKWESILI, NIGERIA

**SENIOR ECONOMIC ADVISOR, AFRICA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY INITIATIVE
(AEDPI)**

DAILY MANTRA: "Nothing is worthy enough for me to negotiate my values."

A self-confessed softie who enjoys laughter, Dr Obiageli Ezekwesili is an accountant turned global politician. Ezekwesili is a woman of impact with influence that has stopped the world, its leaders and civilians to focus on one issue, #BringBackOurGirls, a social media campaign turned movement she co-founded after the horrific abduction of 276 girls from their school in the town of Chibok, Nigeria, by terrorist group, Boko Haram. The campaign received support from former American first ladies, Hilary Clinton and Michelle Obama, as well as prominent international figures including Beyoncé, Angelina Jolie and Malala Yousafzai. The movement compelled the government of Nigeria to take action that led to the rescue of 107 abducted Chibok School Girls, 104 abducted Dapchi School Girls and thousands of other abducted citizens of Nigeria.

"[Being powerful] means using my privilege, my agency, my power, my voice, my leverage, my resources, my talent, my networks and every other thing within my control to advance the cause of the weak, vulnerable and marginalized people starting from my country, to Africa and the rest of the world," she says.

Ezekwesili has dedicated her life to building vibrant and tolerant societies with democratically accountable governments. She travels the continent and the globe advising a number of presidents and their cabinets on sound economic policies to achieve inclusive growth.

Amongst her many accolades including her nomination for the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize, Ezekwesili recalls that her proudest is receiving the highest civilian honor of Commander of the Federal Republic (CFR) for service to her country. "I became the first woman ever to be decorated with the CFR in 2006."

She holds herself in high regard for being able to balance her fascinating career across many sectors: business; government and global civil society whilst functioning as well as possible in her reality as a daughter, wife, sister and mother. "The capacity to multi-task across this diversity of roles makes me value and enjoy my skills as a woman," she concludes.

GLEND A GRAY, SOUTH AFRICA

PRESIDENT AND CEO, SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (SAMRC)

DAILY MANTRA: "Dare to dream, dare to achieve and dare to question."

Professor Glenda Gray has built a career dedicated to HIV research. She fearlessly paused her science career to lead, as a civil servant, South Africa's national medical council. She has had many successes, including establishing the first whole-genome sequencing unit in Africa. However, it is making science more inclusive that oils her engine every day. Over the years, she has endeavored to transform the science landscape by fast-tracking transformation of medical and science graduates and post-graduates within medical research programs.

As the first female president of the SAMRC, she is proud to promote the careers of women and black scientists. Her awards are numerous. In honor of her significant contribution to the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, she was awarded the Nelson Mandela Health and Human Rights Award in 2002. A decade later in 2013, she was bestowed the Order of Mapungubwe by former president Jacob Zuma. Gray has brought treatment to many women and children who were HIV infected and is highly dedicated to finding an HIV vaccine. In 2017, she was named one of the 100 Most Influential People in the world by *TIME* magazine. She says more in an interview with *FORBES AFRICA*:

Who and what inspires your efforts every day?

The citizens of this country inspire me. I salute their resilience and their hope for a better future.



What is your proudest achievement?

My proudest moment is being able to be a mother, a scientist and a leader, to juggle these roles and not drop a ball.

What does being a powerful women mean in 2020?

It means embracing your power, but being mindful of supporting the journeys of others.

What do you enjoy most about being a woman?

Wearing red lipstick and high heels!

What do you want your legacy to be?

I want my legacy to be about pushing scientific boundaries to find an HIV vaccine, to develop women scientists, and about creating opportunities that allow people to grow and thrive.



THULI MADONSELA, SOUTH AFRICA

LAW TRUST CHAIR, SOCIAL JUSTICE RESEARCH AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

DAILY MANTRA: "Give everything your best shot."

A few years have passed since advocate Thulisile Nomkhosi Madonsela was the most feared woman in South Africa. Her rule as the public prosecutor of South Africa from 2009 to 2016, was decorated by "no fear and no favor," as she led the corruption charges against the serving president, Jacob Zuma, known as "state cap-

ture". Her initial findings prompted the ongoing Zondo Commission of Inquiry into state capture. After vacating her position, Madonsela has remained the moral voice for South Africa through her influence on social media. She has settled at the Stellenbosch University in the Western Cape province as a dedicated law professor. There, she focuses on teaching constitutional, administrative and social justice law while pursuing democracy strengthening research. "I enjoy my peace-making disposition that comes with being a mother for many, who often have disparate needs and outlooks," she says. She's the founder of the Thuma Foundation for Democracy Leadership and Literacy which launched the Siyazakhela Enterprising Communities, a social initiative which seeks to ignite entrepreneurial centered communities and is currently piloting at Emanzimeleni near Empanjeni in KwaZulu-Natal. She has become a mountain climber of note and led a women's day hike up to the summit of Kilimanjaro, called #Trek4Mandela Expedition, to raise support for the dignity of girls through sanitary pads and highlight social justice among other issues like climate change.

"It was the most difficult physical and emotional challenge I ever faced. Over 200 000 girls got sanitary pads as an outcome of the expedition," she says. To her, being a powerful woman in 2020 means to be at peace with yourself and the world while enjoying the ability to collaborate with others to influence change.



WENDY LUHABE, SOUTH AFRICA

CO-FOUNDER, WIPHOLD

Wendy Luhabe is the financial sector's investment steward bridging the gap between the economy and women. As one of South Africa's most accomplished businesswomen, Luhabe has broken countless stereotypes in the male-dominated environment of private equity and in doing so, has economically empowered many women through her strides.

Her economic activism took flight when Luhabe co-founded Wiphold in 1994 as an investment vehicle for female investors. Five years later, Wiphold would list on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

Wiphold has grown from a company with seed capital of R500,000 (\$33,140) to a portfolio valued at more than R2 billion (\$132 million) and holds shares in Sasfin, Sasol, Old Mutual and AdCorp. More than 1,200 direct and 18,000 indirect women are beneficiaries through the WIPHOLD Investment Trust, and over 250,000 indirect women are beneficiaries through the WIPHOLD non-governmental organizational trust.

And Luhabe has had a big role to play. She is the recipient of the Honorary Lieutenant of the Royal Victorian Order, bestowed upon her by Prince Charles of the British royal family in 2014, and is the awardee of three honorary doctorates.

With three successful decades in business, Luhabe is esteemed in many boardrooms in South Africa and beyond.

In recognition of her contribution to the economic empowerment and inclusion of women, **FORBES WOMAN AFRICA** awarded her the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019.

ANGÉLIQUE KIDJO, BENIN

FOUR-TIME GRAMMY
AWARD WINNER

Born on Bastille Day, two weeks before Benin's independence, Angélique Kidjo is a talented musician making a global impact in the lives of young women who need it the most. Kidjo has 13 albums to her name and in January, scooped her fourth Grammy Award for Best World Music Album for her recent release *Celia*. Of all her achievements, including the Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from France in 2019, she is most proud of singing in front of 70 world leaders to honor the unsung African soldiers who died during World War I, on November 11, 2018, for the centennial of the Armistice.

Through her own initiatives or as ambassador, Kidjo has reached out and supported the education of young girls in Africa. In 2006, she established her foundation, Batonga, which has helped over 100,000 girls, their families and

their community members with mentorship and in-kind sponsorships.

More recently, Kidjo attended the G7 summit and alongside the president of France, Macron and the African Development Bank president, Akinwumi Adesina, announced a \$251 million pledge by the G7 to provide access to loans to African female entrepreneurs through the Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa initiative.

"I have received so much from my continent when I was a little girl, so much culture and heritage that allows me to create powerful art. I want to give back to this continent for giving me this richness that people outside Africa don't know," says Kidjo to **FORBES AFRICA**. Through her role as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, she partnered with TOMS to give 67,000 girls in Benin new shoes. Kidjo also makes time to mentor and coach women.



MANAL ROSTOM, EGYPT

FOUNDER, SURVIVING HIJAB AND FACE OF
NIKE PRO HIJAB

DAILY MANTRA: "Get up, dress up, show up every day."

Egypt's most prominent marathon runner and female mountaineer, Manal Rostom, is a woman who has "gone where there is no path and left a trail" for Arab and Egyptian women. Rostom is the founder of a closed Facebook

group called 'Surviving Hijab', which exists as a support group for veiled Muslim women. It currently houses a community of over 740,000 female-only members. The group aims to empower women who wish to wear the hijab as a sign of faith and create a safe space to support each other as they defy stereotypes. In 2017, Rostom became the global face of the Nike Pro Hijab campaign. She is the first Hijabi female to model in a Nike running campaign and lends her voice to its audio-guided Run Club App.

As a fitness trainer and feminist, she supports women loving themselves and each other. "You are you, and that is your superpower. Quit comparing [and] don't forget to lift each other up," she says.

In 2019, she led a female-only trip to one of the base camps on Mount Everest in a bid to raise awareness about tolerance, inclusivity and equality. "The future is female. It's about time we continue to shed light on inspirational females and all the amazing work they live to do," she says. This feat is her eighth mountain climb, having already successfully conquered Mont Blanc, Kilimanjaro and Mount Saint Catherine in her country. She is the first Egyptian woman to have completed five of the six World Marathon Majors, excluding Tokyo, with the hope to complete all six by March 2020.

LYDIA NSEKERA, BURUNDI

PRESIDENT, NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (NOC) OF BURUNDI AND MEMBER OF FIFA COUNCIL

DAILY MANTRA: "You only live once."

Ranked number two in *Forbes'* Most Powerful Women In International Sports list in 2018, Lydia Nsekera is a shy woman who has never shied away from a challenge. She is responsible for transforming the good governance of Burundi's sports movement in line with the National Olympic Committee's (NOC) regulations. Given her international positions, Nsekera has been relentless in promoting inclusiveness in the world of sports. As chair of the Women in Sport Commission at the NOC, gender equality and the protection of women has topped her agenda. Moreover, as a member of the FIFA Council, Nsekera

advocates for the growth of women's football in Africa; an issue that has been marginalized throughout history. Through grassroots development programs and initiating dialogue centered around the formation of more female professional leagues, she has championed her dream to see women and girls enjoying the benefits of sport and physical education the same way as men, without discrimination. A testament to her impact, industry expert, Nick Said, agrees that women's football has seen a massive spike in participation across the African continent and is expected to almost double in the coming years. She tells *FORBES AFRICA* more:

What has been the biggest challenge you have faced, and how did you overcome it?

Embarking on an extremely difficult election to lead the Burundi Football Federation in 2004 with an all-male electorate is the biggest challenge I have faced. It was a real fight. [Yet] with my team, we put together an electoral strategy that surprised my competitors and led us to victory.

What is your proudest achievement?

I am most proud of the education of my son Stéphane [who was] born with Down Syndrome and in sport, the qualification of the national [Burundi] football team for the African Nations Championship in 2014.

What does it mean to be a powerful woman in 2020?

A powerful person has a clear vision for his/her society and his/her family. Nevertheless, a 'powerful' woman has some specific characteristics – for example, a powerful woman can reconcile her family and professional life. A powerful woman is respected by other women and girls; she protects them and gives them the courage and the willingness to fight for their rights.



What do you enjoy most about being a woman?

I am proud to be a woman! However, with the exception that I gave birth and raised my two children, I do not see the difference between myself and a man since I can accomplish what even men are not able to do. This differentiation is purely biological; men and women are equal and complementary.



WINNIE BYANYIMA, UGANDA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNAIDS

DAILY MANTRA: "Never give up. Just keep going."

Winnie Byanyima has seven names and one of them is 'Kyegiragire' which means: "I can make myself whatever I want to be." Having just landed from Geneva, she arrives at the *FORBES AFRICA* photoshoot and immediately makes one thing clear: "I want to be myself. I do not want to look like someone else." And that she did. Dressed in a long dark-red dress that complemented her tall African stature, Byanyima encapsulated African femininity.

Byanyima began her impactful career 30 years ago, as a social justice advocate serving in parliament as a member of the National Assembly of Uganda.

Since then, she has held several global leadership positions including leading Oxfam International, from 2013 to 2019.

Today, she serves in her new role as Executive Director of UNAIDS, appointed by the Secretary-General of the UN in August. In this position, she works with governments from around world who have the big challenge of HIV/Aids; as well as civil society organizations to reach and treat everyone living with disease, and to reach those who are at risk of contract-

ing the virus. The challenge is global but the key regions of focus include Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and partly Latin America.

"Here in Africa, we know that young women and adolescent girls are four or five times more infected than boys or men of the same age group," Byanyima says. She shockingly remarks that in South Africa alone, 1,500 young girls and women are infected every week.

Byanyima admits the journey is a long one. Poverty reduction, access to education and sexual violence of young girls are the key drivers. "We know if a girl would stay in school until the middle of high school, half of the vulnerability is removed by just staying in a classroom," she says.

"So I work every day, I dream every night about what are we going to do to protect our young girls in Africa from getting infected."

With a team of more than 700 people spread around the world, she has set an ambitious target to end HIV/Aids as a global health threat by 2030.

"Being a global leader is a privilege [that] I do not take lightly. I also never forget that in the hierarchy of people in this world, I come from the bottom. I am a woman, I am black, I am from Africa, the poorest continent, and Uganda, one of the poorest countries in the world. That reminds me that where I am, I must always be a voice for the poorest, the most marginalized, the weakest and for women."



NGOZI OKONJO-IWEALA, NIGERIA

CHAIR, BOARD OF THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR VACCINES AND IMMUNISATION (GAVI)

DAILY MANTRA: “I must get out of bed 70% of the time eager to go to my job or else it is not worth doing.”

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is a globally-renowned economist who is deliberate, purposeful and carefully accounts for every action and decision she makes. She has received honorary degrees from 15 universities and has recently been named the next Angelopoulos Global Public Leader by the dean of Harvard Kennedy School, following the footsteps of former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. She rose to prominence during her two terms as Nigeria’s finance minister, and briefly as foreign minister; the first woman to hold both jobs. But the positions were not without challenges. At the time, very few women had occupied these spaces regionally and globally, but this had little to no effect in deterring her successful reign. “I am an unapologetic optimist about the world and especially about Africa. I always have a sense of purpose even when faced with adversity,” she says. As a former managing director of the World Bank, she developed many successful approaches to encourage sustainable, inclusive growth in developing countries.

Today, she is chair of the Board of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, an organization that has immunized 760 million children in the developing world and saved 13 million lives.

Okonjo-Iweala sits on the boards of Standard Chartered and Twitter. She tells us more:

What are you most proud of?

The first is helping my country Nigeria [as finance minister] get \$30 billion of debt relief, an unprecedented feat under the Presidency of Olusegun Obasanjo and a strong economic team. [Also], helping to institutionalize greater transparency in the management of Nigeria’s finances to strengthen the fight against corruption. Second is being a mother to four wonderful grown-up children who are good human beings and doing good in society.

What does it mean to be a powerful woman in 2020?

I do not feel powerful; I have never felt powerful even as a minister. What I have felt and still feel is responsible... an awful sense of responsibility in 2020, especially as the world is experiencing so much uncertainty and young people are losing hope upon seeing what was once upheld as good values challenged across the globe. The key issue for me is how to use the global recognition I have to get more and more things done to help others.

PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA, SOUTH AFRICA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNITED NATIONS (UN) WOMEN

DAILY MANTRA: “Do not sweat the small stuff. Keep your eyes on the ball. Avoid being distracted from the main goal.”

When it comes to the advancement of the rights and economic upliftment of girls and women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is undoubtedly in the front-line. With her roots deeply implanted in the African National Congress, the organized resistance movement which fought against apartheid and subsequently the first ruling party of post-apartheid South Africa, Mlambo-Ngcuka is no stranger to confronting human injustice. Her dedication to human rights, equality and social justice, saw her hold the second-highest position in the nation, deputy president, where she served from 2005 to 2008.



Today, she is at the helm of the world’s leading women empowerment vehicle where she has contributed to the adoption and reform of 44 laws aimed at strengthening women’s rights in 25 countries. By invitation, LinkedIn selected her to be a member of its global collective of influencers made up of the world’s foremost thinkers and innovators.

The African continent arguably has the world’s largest gender injustices. For this reason, Mlambo-Ngcuka has set up the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) to advance, train and support female leaders across sectors and generations into decision-making positions in their countries.

WARIS DIRIE, SOMALIA

PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER, DESERT FLOWER FOUNDATION

DAILY MANTRA: “A day without laughter is a day wasted.” (Quote by Charlie Chaplin)

The story of former model, Waris Dirie’s is genuinely an accurate tale of turning negative experiences for good. When Dirie was five years, she suffered the inhuman procedure of female genital mutilation (FGM). At the age of 13, Dirie fled to London to escape a forced marriage with a man who was more than three times her senior. Before being discovered as a model, she worked as a housemaid and at McDonald’s. As a United Nations ambassador, Dirie is tirelessly fighting the practice of FGM around the world.

According to the World Health Organisation, 8,000 girls are subjected to FGM everyday worldwide. “In 1997, only a few people knew about FGM. Now studies show a massive decrease of FGM all over Africa,” she says.



Dirie founded the Desert Flower Foundation with operations in 11 countries. Through her foundation, she recently opened three schools for 1,200 children in Sierra Leone. The foundation supports 1,000 girls and families who they’ve saved from FGM and forced marriages. To ensure the holistic treatment of FGM victims, she has also opened four centers in Berlin, Stockholm, Amsterdam and Paris. In 2009, she produced a biopic *Desert Flower*, and later got translated into a major musical, to empower girls all over the world. Dirie has won many awards since starting her mission in 1998 including the Chevalier de La Legion d’honneur in France, and the Sunhak Peace Prize from Korea.

ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF, LIBERIA

FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA, NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE

DAILY MANTRA: *"I am strong, I am invisible, I am woman." (A song by Helen Reddy)*

A renowned traditional chief's granddaughter from western Liberia did not foresee that she would grow up to make history in 2005 when she became the first democratically-elected female leader of an African state. This was the destiny of President Sirleaf, born Ellen Eugenia Johnson Sirleaf. A Nobel laureate, Sirleaf is praised for leading Liberia through reconciliation and recovery following the end of her nation's decade-long civil war, winning international acclaim for achieving economic, social, and political change. During her two terms as president, she focused on rebuilding the country and mobilizing over \$16 billion in foreign direct investment. She also attracted more than \$5 million in private resources to rebuild schools, clinics, markets, and to fund scholarships for capacity building. She has no plans of retiring. In 2020, Sirleaf will launch the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Presidential Center for Women and Development in Liberia which aims to train women with enhanced qualities for intentional leadership and influence in public service. She will continue to improve the livelihoods of rural villages in Liberia and their residents through education, sanitation, housing and self-sustenance. She tells us more:

What are you most proud of when reflecting on your journey?

I'm proud of rural women of Liberia being given a voice. In the departing ceremonies at the end of my tenure, women openly claimed their right to participate and provide opinions on social issues, including men in the audience who acknowledge this right. In a separate incident, a five-year-old boy expressed his desire to be vice president. When I asked, 'why not president?', he strongly asserted that 'president is a woman's job'. I readily agreed with him.

What does it mean to be a powerful woman in 2020?

I can use my influence, perceived as power, to inspire and motivate women to seek leadership at all levels in society.



YVONNE CHAKA CHAKA, SOUTH AFRICA

AWARD-WINNING MUSICIAN

DAILY MANTRA: *"Life is for the living, so live life to the fullest."*

Affectionately known as 'Princess of Africa', Yvonne Chaka Chaka is a highly acclaimed and awarded musician who has performed for many global audiences, including the Queen of England. Throughout her career, she has shared the stage with musical icons such as Bono, Annie Lennox, Beyoncé, Miriam Makeba and Youssou N'dour.

As her career progressed, so did her humanitarian work. Since 1985, she's been lending her melodic voice to the voiceless.

Throughout her career, Chaka Chaka has used her platform to champion the rights of children and women across the continent as well as advocate for social justice.

"As a conscious African woman, I have a duty of mothering all children out there, to hold someone with my hand and never close a door," says Chaka Chaka.

Through the Princess of Africa Foundation, which she formed in 2006, she uses her influence to advance funding for health. During her 12 years serving as UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, she has advocated for malaria prevention and treatment. She is an advocate of several other global organizations, including the Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

Even though she has received two honorary doctorates and a World Economic Forum Crystal award, it is in fact, the honor of receiving the National Order of Ikhamanga from President Cyril Ramaphosa that has her most proud.

In 2018, Sahle-Work Zewde made an enduring mark in history when she became Ethiopia's first female president and the only serving female head of state in Africa. President Zewde is an accomplished diplomat who was appointed with a unanimous vote by the nation's parliament. She is a veteran public official having served as an ambassador to Senegal, Djibouti, and France between 1989 and 2006. Before her presidency, Zewde was Special Representative to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU). Zewde has devoted her administration to advancing unity and gender equality, and has committed to being the voice for women.



SAHLE-WORK ZEWDE, ETHIOPIA

PRESIDENT OF ETHIOPIA



MAMOKGETHI (KGETHI) PHAKENG, SOUTH AFRICA

VICE-CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN (UCT)

DAILY MANTRA: *"Be who you are, don't take nonsense, work hard, don't apologize for being fabulous and stay the course."*

Mamokgethi Phakeng is the academic leading Africa's highest-ranked university. She assumed the office of vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town (UCT) in July 2018, and is highly regarded with over 80 research papers and five edited volumes published.

Phakeng is motivated to change lives through higher education. She firmly believes that as young people follow and create opportunities for their future, it directly generates a positive ripple effect on the student's or academic's family, clan and community. She is a leader who puts her money where her mouth is.

Phakeng famously declined to have a formal inauguration ceremony to allocate the money budgeted instead to bail out indebted students who had completed their studies but could not graduate because they owed the university. She further pledged 10% of her salary to fund female postgraduate students through the Mamokgethi Phakeng Scholarship fund. Moreover, her Adopt-a-Learner Foundation supports 15 students to get into university degrees, mainly in mathematics, science and information technology. She is a living testimony of the Ghanaian proverb: "if you educate a woman, you educate a nation."

As vice-chancellor, she introduced a "futures" think-tank to get UCT to lead higher education in the changes that universities are experiencing as a result of the fourth industrial revolution. She has plans to turn UCT into a "green" campus and a living laboratory for research on environmental sustainability.

She is a member of the board of the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls; and a trustee of the FirstRand Foundation, the South African Student Solidarity Foundation for Education and the Pearson Marang Education Trust to name a few. She spoke to FORBES AFRICA:

What does it mean to be a powerful woman in 2020?

Power means something different to the millennial generation, who are somewhat suspicious of traditional power in government and business. I believe power is about influencing young people, so I make myself accessible to students wherever they are – on campus, in residence, and especially on social media. My own story is an inspiration for young Africans from marginalist communities, especially women. They need to know that they are ideally placed to change those communities.

What do you enjoy most about being a woman?

I love jewelry, hairstyles, makeup and colorful fashion. I especially love wearing colorful fashion in places where the traditional dark suit has held power in the past. Just by being who I am, I disrupt the patriarchal patterns in society and change how people think of leadership.

REBECCA ENONCHONG, CAMEROON

FOUNDER & CEO, APPSTECH

On a blue-skied day, during the FORBES AFRICA photoshoot, self-proclaimed tech-geek, Rebecca Enonchong dazzled with a youthful bubbly spirit that even the intimidation of flashing lights and staring eyes could not dim. Born to a chief in Cameroon, Enonchong is endorsing Africa's role in the new age of tech. She is motivated by creating a better, more supportive environment to which Africans can flourish and she has no doubt that technology is one of the exponential enablers.

In 1999, she founded her software and information solutions company, AppsTech, which has grown to have customers in over 50 countries.

"I was working for Oracle [at the time], doing what I love and I decided to do it on my own," she says. For the last couple of years, her company has been building their own technology and business systems using artificial intelligence that is licensed to organizations under the intellectual property of AppsTech Lab.

In 2011, she founded Afrilabs, a pan-African network of over 174 innovation centers across 45 countries supporting a community of one million African technology entrepreneurs. Through the network of labs, she seeks to improve the availability of support services for African entrepreneurs to thrive and scale geographically. Enonchong has raised \$3.9 million in 2019 to support these networks.

Empowering more women to become tech creators is extremely critical to her pursuit. She asserts that half of the population cannot be left outside of building and creating technological systems that people use every single day. "Technology is omnipresent and when designed by people that aren't using it, it won't have the full impact as a vehicle and instrument for development," she says. As part of her efforts, she sits on the board of iamtheCODE which plans to close the digital inequality by enabling one million women and girl coders by 2030.

Enonchong divides her time on several boards including the advisory board of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's Digital ID.





BONANG MATHEBA, SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA PERSONALITY, ENTREPRENEUR

We can never take lightly, Bonang Matheba's dedication to hard work. Her accomplishments come as no surprise to her. If she can dream it, she will achieve it. If she desires it, she will accomplish it. That's how you describe Africa's most in-demand media maven.

Arriving at the FORBES AFRICA photoshoot, with every shutter of the camera, it becomes clear why Matheba stands tall in an industry that promises you

nothing. Matheba is intentional about every action and every move – a captured metaphor of her journey. Matheba has spent 15 years building her name, a property synonymous with pop culture that transcends audiences, lifestyles and platforms in South Africa. She has led discussions at the UN General Assembly. She has won several international awards including, *E!* Entertainment African Influencer of the Year Award in 2019 and the 2019 Award for Best Inspiration & Influence at the Global Social Awards in Prague. In her words, the hardest-working woman in entertainment talks about her philanthropic endeavors and growing into a formidable entrepreneur, having also launched House of BNG.

What led you to establish the Bonang Matheba Foundation?

My foundation was inspired by the #FeesMustFall movement, which erupted in South Africa. I thought, 'how can I use my influence and my power to make a difference?' I established the bursary fund in 2017, and we took in our first 10 girls [who] all graduated in 2019.

This year again, we will fund another group of 10 girls.

What is most fulfilling about giving back?

For me, seeing people's lives change. A young girl [Karen] we found staying in Pretoria didn't have a way to finish school, and she wanted to get into the arts industry. We [supported] her through an undergraduate marketing degree and radio course. She moved on to audition for many shows and [landed] a radio job. She is now generating income for her family; buying a new car for her mom and buying school uniforms for her brothers and sisters.

What has your experience been running House of BNG?

It's quite a painful one. It takes a lot of sacrifices, lots of risk and lots of money, but it is all very worthwhile.

What advice can you give female entrepreneurs?

You need to have a clear plan. Be patient with yourself, be kind to yourself, forgive yourself and don't be too hard on yourself.

What does it mean to be a powerful woman in 2020?

It means that you create your narrative. It means that you are strong enough to make your own decisions, to be free and to break the status quo that people have set up for women.

What do you enjoy most about being a woman?

Though it has not happened yet, I think the most incredible thing about being a woman is bringing life into the world. Only women can do that, and that's a great deal of power.



FATMA SAMOURA, SENEGAL

SECRETARY-GENERAL, FIFA

Fatma Samoura made history in 2016 when she was named the first woman, first African and first Muslim Secretary-General of FIFA, one of the most powerful positions in professional sports. She was appointed after spending 21 years in various roles with the United Nations (UN). She was the deputy Humanitarian Coordinator in eastern Chad, where she worked with a team composed of several UN agencies and over 40 international non-governmental organizations to support the return of over 280,000 refugees and over 170,000 internally displaced persons. In her current role at FIFA, she has become an authoritative voice for equality in the footballing landscape. The proportion of women within FIFA's administration has risen from 32% in 2016 to 48% in 2018, as reported by *Forbes*. Under her steer, FIFA has unveiled its first-ever Women's Football Strategy which lays out FIFA's game plan for working together with several stakeholders to give women's football a clear pathway to success. The strategy focuses chiefly on broadening female participation in football, and to bring more women into the upper ranks of the football industry.



IRENE CHARNLEY, SOUTH AFRICA

FOUNDER, SMILE COMMUNICATIONS

DAILY MANTRA: “Thank you divine universe for my life, my health and safety.”

Arriving at a Johannesburg studio for a photoshoot last month, Irene Charnley’s demeanor is courteous and unassuming for a woman who has shattered every glass ceiling and successfully built two African telecom providers – MTN Ltd and Smile Communications.

Within minutes, she has her signature golden locks curled, her makeup applied and steps in front of the camera dressed in a red power coat with her game face on. She conveys the challenges facing women in corporate leadership in this interview:

You recently stepped down as CEO of Smile Communications. What prompted this decision?

When you look at my career, I stay in a place for 10 years and then move on. You have to make space for younger people to take over the reign.

The International Women’s Forum of South Africa (IWFSa) recently appointed you President. What is your focus in this role?

We need to have our finger on the pulse of all key issues affecting women in our country and become an advocacy group for change and ethical leadership. For example, the issue of gender pay parity, gender-based violence and developing the next layer of women leadership is key on our agenda.

What are your thoughts on the state of female business leadership?

We’ve come a long way, but we still have a long way to go.

Wherever there’s a [company] board, we should have 50% women representation. It has been proven that whenever women are involved, the profitability of that company goes up. There’s clear statistics to prove that; [that] EBITDA have increased by 20%-30% in instances when women are involved.

How would you describe a powerful woman in 2020?

You cannot be powerful if you cannot uplift the people around you. In the words of Oprah: ‘you have to be the truth’. You have to be yourself, decisive, a leader and you have to be fearless to achieve what you want to achieve.



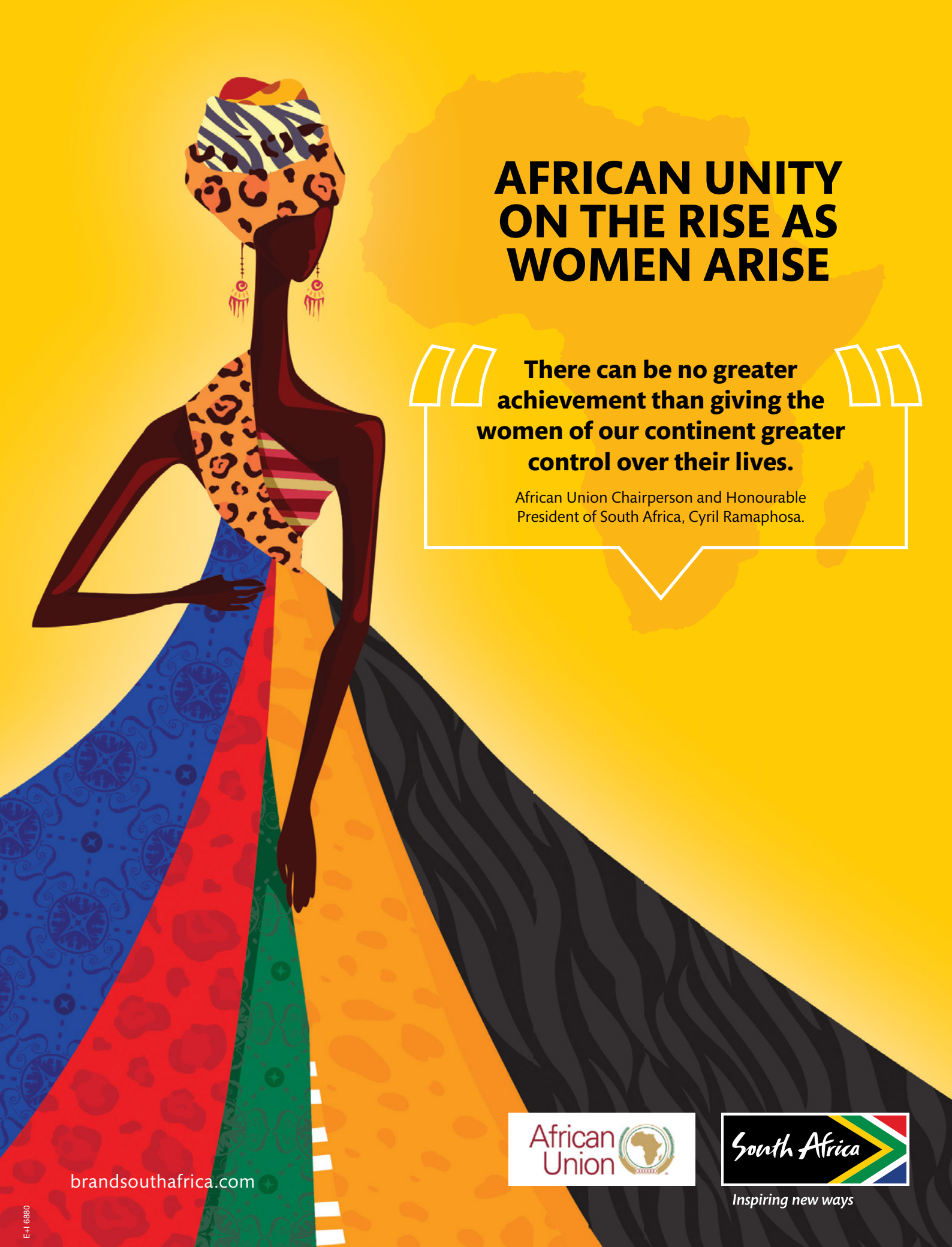
UCHENNA ‘UCHE’ PEDRO, NIGERIA

FOUNDER AND CEO, BELLANAIJA

DAILY MANTRA: “Savor the small joys of each day.”

The woman behind Africa’s leading lifestyle digital media company, Uchenna Pedro, does not only give voice to the stories that entertain and educate us about what is happening across Africa, she is also committed to using the mega-platform that is BellaNaija to amplify the causes that need to be heard. In the last five years, her business has led initiatives to support social issues that need swift action and intervention. In 2019, BellaNaija Weddings was a part of the UNICEF ‘End Child Marriage’ campaign launched on Valentine’s Day. She has collaborated with Wives Roundtable, to support former child brides to rebuild their lives. The entire BellaNaija brand and its sub-brands are deeply invested in the growth of the creative industries in Africa.

“To be powerful is to not wait for ‘perfect’, and to live unapologetically,” she says. She is currently a Ford Foundation Mason fellow at Harvard Kennedy School with the aim to explore the use of digital innovation in government and youth participation in the democratic process.



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ILWAD ELMAN, SOMALIA

FOUNDER, ELMAN PEACE CENTRE

DAILY MANTRA: “The ultimate form of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting a different result.” (By Albert Einstein)

Ilwad Elman is devising methodologies to prevent violent extremism and build peace in war-stricken areas. From a very young age, Elman has been at the forefront of the Somali peace process, when she co-founded the Elman Peace Centre with her mother to champion peacebuilding in the country. Before embarking on this course, Elman and her family were refugees in Canada after fleeing violent extremism that led to the assassination of her father. She has since dedicated her time to disarming and rehabilitating child soldiers as well as reintegrating adults defecting from armed groups. In 2019, Elman was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. She spoke to FORBES AFRICA:

What does it mean to be a powerful woman?

It means redistributing the privilege [you] have. You must always pass that ladder back down so that you are not the exception, but WE are the norm.

What do you enjoy most about being a woman?

I enjoy divine intuition, the ability to multi-task, nurture and lead.

What advice do you have for women in civil organizations?

It is to remember the reason why you started; mean what you say, and do what you say. I never commit to anything I won't accomplish, and I won't champion a cause without it being aligned with every fiber of my ethos.

WENDY APPELBAUM, SOUTH AFRICA

FOUNDER AND CHAIRPERSON, DE MORGENZON WINE ESTATE

DAILY MANTRA: “Go beyond your comfort zone, make a difference and leave a ding in the universe.”

In the realm of the rich and famous, there is a certain woman who stands out, Wendy Appelbaum. Heiress of Liberty Group founder, the late Donald Gordon, she not only grew up with a lot but was taught to give just as much. Women, education and health remain at the epicenter of her philanthropic work. “I think the tragedy of wealth is so many rich people do not understand they have a responsibility to society. Money can be a blessing in that one can do remarkable work for other people. When you go into that little box in the ground, there is nothing you can take with you. For me, it is a mindless pursuit,” she said in a 2017 interview with Global Citizen. She is an active member of the board of Wits Donald Gordon Medical Centre, where she was instrumental in establishing an outpatient Women's Health Clinic.



Many may not know, Appelbaum has dyslexia but it has never stopped her from being a force in the boardrooms. “I’ve never thought of it as a disadvantage, and I have turned it to my advantage. I read slowly, but I remember everything I hear,” she says.

OLAJUMOKE ADENOWO, NIGERIA

FOUNDER, AD CONSULTING

DAILY MANTRA: “It's better to light a candle than curse the darkness.”

Olajumoke Adenowo is one of Africa's most outstanding architects with over three decades in the industry. Adenowo started her career at Femi Majekodunmi Associates and had the privilege of designing the Federal Ministry of Finance Headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria. In 1994, she founded AD Consulting which specializes in master planning of eco-sensitive developments and has since become Nigeria's most awarded architecture firm. “I defy categorization; I am a polymath,” she says.

Adenowo is the founder of the faith-based philanthropy, Awesome Treasures Foundation, focused on the Sustainable Development Goals and serves on the panels of global initiatives such as The Cartier Initiative for Women Awards. “As an architect, I



create tangible form out of intangible ideas and transform spaces, buildings, and cities. At Awesome Treasures, [I have] the privilege of being part of the process of transformation of an entire generation [which] gives me fulfillment,” she says. She is a seasoned writer and has authored several books, including *LifeSpring*.



BETHLEHEM TILAHUN ALEMU, ETHIOPIA

**FOUNDER AND CEO, SOLEREBELS
FOOTWEAR, GARDEN OF COFFEE,
TEFFTASTIC**

DAILY MANTRA: “Dream big, execute bigger.”

One of Africa’s most celebrated female entrepreneurs, Bethlehem Tilahun Alemu rose to international fame after she launched a handcrafted global footwear brand, soleRebels, made by homegrown creative artisans using the traditional ‘barabasso’, Ethiopian recycleable tyre material. Alemu has launched Garden of Coffee beverages as an ode to the famous Ethiopian coffee bean and coffee culture. TeffTastic is also a food brand born from Alemu’s dream to share the fantastic tastes and health benefits of *teff*, Ethiopia’s superfood. Her biggest drive is to build sustainable African businesses that generate value for the people working inside them; the consumers who use their products and services, and for the larger communities where they are based. She tells us more:

What challenges do you face as a female entrepreneur?

Being an entrepreneur itself by definition means confronting ongoing challenges and puzzles which you must solve in real-time. That’s my day-to-day reality.

What motivates you?

My driving passions are sharing Ethiopian cultures with the world and finding exciting ways to keep these cultures vibrant and fully relevant. My goal is to build exciting brands around these unique cultures; brands that become as ubiquitous and impactful as Apple.

Your most recent business partnership?

I am working closely with Jack Ma and ALIBABA on their Africa Netpreneur Prize Initiative here in Ethiopia [and across the continent]. The aim is to catalyze a new generation of entrepreneurial talent across Ethiopia by directly engaging with startup entrepreneurs and also would-be entrepreneurs.

What advice can you give emerging female entrepreneurs?

People, including many so-called ‘powerful’ people, will laugh at you and your ideas, but be unmoved. Everyone can have a great idea, but only the truly determined ones can execute and turn those ideas and dreams into realities.

NKOSAZANA DLAMINI-ZUMA, SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, SOUTH AFRICA

Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma is a qualified medical practitioner who, as a student, became an active member in the underground anti-apartheid resistance movement of South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC). Dlamini-Zuma was one of the few women in the world to hold a ministerial government position in the 1990s. It is her diplomatic efforts to end the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that earned her recognition as the Minister of Foreign Affairs under President Thabo Mbeki’s government. Also, Dlamini-Zuma has served as president of the United Nations World Conference Against Racism (WCAR).

In 2013, Dlamini-Zuma was appointed chair of the African Union Commission, the only woman to fill this role. During her term, she focused on resolving the numerous peace and security threats on the continent as well as youth empowerment. Dlamini-Zuma accepted the 2015 Africa Peace Award on behalf of the commission.

After stepping down in 2017, she had ambitions of becoming the first woman president of the ANC, during its 54th National Conference. Her opponent was President Cyril Ramaphosa, who took up the reins. She is now serving as Minister for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.





WENDY ACKERMAN, SOUTH AFRICA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PICK 'N PAY

DAILY MANTRA: “Don’t procrastinate: if you have something to do, do it now and don’t let it hang over your head.”

Wendy Ackerman is married to business. She is married to hard work that pays off. She is also married to the mega retail empire, Pick ‘n Pay Stores that she co-built with her husband, Raymond Ackerman.

Pick ‘n Pay is currently listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and has a market capital-

ization of R32.2 billion (\$2.1 billion). Advancing the lives of the employees of Pick ‘n Pay drives her social pursuits. She leads initiatives aimed at providing education and housing assistance for employees and their children as well as promoting students in academia and the arts. She has also introduced the distribution of free antiretrovirals for those employees living with HIV/Aids.

When you look at your journey, what are some of the milestones?

At a time when our friends were leaving South Africa, my husband and I discussed our future,

and we agreed we would work to improve the country’s economic conditions, and I would advance education opportunities. This changed our whole business thinking, and together with the ethos of consumer sovereignty, we introduced Pick ‘n Pay’s core value that ‘doing good is good business’.

What is your proudest achievement?

Education has always been my passion and seeing my students succeed, realize their potential and establish their careers are my proudest achievements.



CASTER SEMENYA, SOUTH AFRICA

OLYMPIC CHAMPION

Life is a marathon, and Caster Semenya is fearlessly running her race. The two-time Olympic 800m gold medallist made headlines when she publicly challenged the international governing body of athletics, IAAF’s ruling to have some women reduce their testosterone levels to compete in the 400m to one-mile professional sporting events. Although she didn’t succeed in appealing the ruling, Semenya has inspired many not to conform to stereotypes, and has cemented herself as the global face of gender and racial equality in competitive sports. Semenya is endorsed by Nike and has appeared in several of their campaigns.

As of September 2019, the global icon has embarked on a career in women’s football. She has joined the Sasol Women’s League football club JWW, owned by Banyana Banyana captain Janine van Wyk.



RAWYA MANSOUR, EGYPT

FOUNDER AND CEO, RAMSCO

Born the only daughter in a family of four brothers, who have all become successful businessmen, Rawya Mansour is carving out her path to punch well above the boys. She is the founder of RAMSCO, a producer of high quality organic agricultural products available at METRO, Egypt’s largest supermarket chain. Through RAMSCO, Mansour is contributing to the pressing issues facing Egypt and Africa: food insecurity, water shortage, energy scarcity while at the same time contributing to improving the lives of rural farming communities, creating jobs, improving waste management, promoting gender equality and equal pay.

What advice do you have for female entrepreneurs?

There are five. Firstly, follow through your idea with conviction, perseverance and hard work. Develop a very thick skin in the face of the criticism, obstacles and challenges bound to confront you, or anyone, starting something new.

Secondly, everything in life is a work-in-progress and it is important to reflect on what you have achieved so far and make necessary changes to the model until you get it right.

Thirdly, involve your family as your biggest fans and the ones who want to see you succeed the most. Consider their advice and reach out to them for support.

Fourthly, your team is your greatest asset and best ambassador: choose [them] well, invest in [them], nurture [them] and motivate [them].

Lastly, whatever you do, do it with integrity, ethics, and consideration for others.

Our vision for South Africa in numbers by 2022

R7-billion in total investment

5600 jobs to be created

4 provinces to share investment

1 new manganese mine in Northern Cape

2 new coal mines in Mpumalanga

2 new coal mines in Gauteng

1 new anthracite mine in KwaZulu-Natal

Accelerating SA Investment



MENAR



ARUNMA OTEH, NIGERIA

**ACADEMIC SCHOLAR, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
FORMER TREASURER AND VICE PRESIDENT, WORLD BANK
LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE AFRICA ADVISORY GROUP
MEMBER**

Arunma Oteh has dedicated her 35-year career to leveraging finance and capital markets as a force for transforming society.

Oteh, who is an academic scholar at the University of Oxford, focuses on capital markets, economic development and financial technology as research areas. She was the Treasurer of the World Bank from 2015 to 2018. During her term, she pioneered the first pandemic bond in response to the Ebola crisis in West Africa to avert a devastating loss of life as well as economic losses. In 2018, she led the World Bank treasury team to issue the world's first blockchain bond, which she promotes for transforming society because of its attributes of traceability.

Before the World Bank, she was the Director General of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Nigeria, where she quickly earned a reputation as 'Iron Lady' for her tough stance on fraud and corruption. During this period, she led the rebuilding of the Nigerian capital markets after the global financial crisis.

What does being a powerful woman mean?

A strong sense of responsibility in a world where there is so much to do especially in respect of the world's most challenging problems – poverty and climate change.

What is most fulfilling about what you do?

Enabling future generations realize their potential through impacting knowledge on critical areas of leadership, finance and sustainability.

What do you enjoy most about being a woman?

The idea that where women go is where society goes. Women are the backbones of society.

FATOU BENSOUDA, GAMBIA

PROSECUTOR, INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC)

As the first woman to assume the position of ICC prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda is steadfast in her mandate to investigate and prosecute crimes that shock the conscience of humanity. She was elected by the Assembly of States Parties to serve as the chief prosecutor of the ICC, overseeing more than 120 countries and over two billion people, after being the sole African candidate for election nominated by the African Union.

Having assumed office in 2012, Bensouda is overseeing all of ICC's ongoing investigations, prosecutions and preliminary examinations in conflict and post-conflict situations around the world. Some of the countries she operates in include Mali, Georgia, Burundi and Bangladesh/Myanmar. She is currently appealing the decision by ICC judges rejecting her request for authorization to open an investigation in Afghanistan and has asked judges to rule on a specific question of jurisdiction before opening an investigation into the situation in Palestine.

Through her work, she has strived to advance accountability for atrocity crimes. Nine international universities have bestowed Bensouda with honorary doctorates, and she has received several awards including the American Society of International Law's Honorary Membership award; the UN Association of Spain's XXXV Peace Prize and the Society of American Archaeology's Public Service award.

"The challenges that come with my position do not distract me. I am



motivated daily to do justice for the women, men and children who are murdered, raped, displaced during war and conflict, [including] those who are brutally afflicted by atrocity crimes. As a lifelong advocate of gender equality and justice, I believe that every

woman, every girl, every child, indeed every human being, has the right to live life without violence, and without fear of violence. I will continue to employ the power of the law to its fullest in accordance with my mandate to defend that right," says Bensouda.



HAJER SHARIEF, LIBYA

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE

DAILY MANTRA: “Do not have plan B, do everything to make plan A work.”

Since 2011, youth peace activist and law graduate, Hajer Sharief, has been actively fighting to end the civil war devastating her home country, Libya. Sharief established ‘Together We Build It’ to mobilize local communities into peacebuilding. In 2017, Sharief won the Student Peace Prize and last year, was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. She spoke to FORBES AFRICA:

Who and what inspires your efforts every day?

Watching my mother earning an LLM in human rights while going through chemotherapy treatment for breast cancer is the most inspiring thing I have ever witnessed. [And] waking up in the morning and watching one of Beyoncé’s music videos is my morning coffee. Her unapologetic music is equivalent to a force of nature.

What is most fulfilling about what you do?

It’s knowing that what I do is the right thing to do.

What does it mean to be a powerful woman?

It’s a woman who can walk away from a situation where she is not given her worth; a woman who would not settle for less and a woman who believes she can do and be whatever she wants.

AMINA J. MOHAMMED, NIGERIA

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL, UNITED NATIONS

DAILY MANTRA: “It always seems impossible until it’s done.” (Quote by Nelson Mandela)

Amina J. Mohammed is a leader amongst leaders. Before she was appointed as the United Nations (UN) Deputy Secretary-General, Mohammed was a special advisor to former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2015. She is one of the minds behind the drafting and development of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which is widely accepted and promoted by leaders around the world.

Why is it crucial to have more women in leadership positions?

The full and meaningful participation of women will make economies more dynamic; peace agreements more durable; governance more inclusive and societies more resilient. When women enter spaces once dominated by men, it changes those spaces: bringing in new perspectives, correcting blind spots, and ultimately improving decision-making.

How would you describe a powerful woman in 2020?

There’s nothing more credible than your own story. [We need to] hold onto this identity and utilize it [because] once [we] do, [we] celebrate [our] womanhood and [our] feminism.

What advice do you have for young women?

For the girls and young women I meet, I always say, ‘make the most of your education, make it a good one’. Once you have your story and your education, no one can take that power away from you.



PRECIOUS MOTSEPE, SOUTH AFRICA

FOUNDER, AFRICAN FASHION INTERNATIONAL

DAILY MANTRA: “Gratitude is a powerful catalyst for happiness.”

A medical doctor with a passion for fashion, Precious Motsepe has impacted more lives than those of her patients. She spent years growing African Fashion International into a platform recognized amongst international fashion weeks, in the process launching and expanding the careers of many African designers such as David Tlale and Haute Baso. Through the Motsepe Foundation, Motsepe has, along with her family, awarded over 2,200 bursaries; supported 15,000 schools in areas of sports and arts development as well as supported initiatives in print media, entrepreneurship and leadership development, to name a few.

What is most fulfilling about what you do?

Philanthropic endeavors are long-term investments. When the schools we partner with for development projects report higher matric pass rates, and learners who participated in our schools sports tournaments are selected for national teams, those are fulfilling moments.

What do you enjoy most about being a woman?

[I enjoy] that [we] go through multiple stages in life, progressing from childhood into adulthood that requires, in some instances, the balancing of care for families and children as well as our careers and professional passions. [We] bring diversity, in terms of thought and experiences and [we] always question the status quo.



LUPITA NYONG'O, KENYA

OSCAR-WINNING ACTOR

Born in Mexico to Kenyan parents in political exile, but raised in Kenya and educated in America, Lupita Nyong'o is best known for her role in *12 Years a Slave* in 2013 for which she won an Academy Award. She also acted in 2018's hit *Black Panther*, the first all-African superhero movie showcasing empowered black people living in an African utopia. Nyong'o began her film career

working as part of the production crew for several films, most notably the 2007 award-winning documentary *In My Genes* which she directed, wrote and produced. She also played the lead role in *Shuga*, an MTV/UNICEF-backed series aimed at promoting HIV/Aids awareness. Through her first children's book *Sulwe* published

in 2019, Nyong'o speaks out against colorism. Through the protagonist character, Nyong'o shares a partial memoir of her experience growing up as a darker-skinned beauty. Moreover, Nyong'o's philanthropy work is evidenced by her support of several charities, including African Wildlife Foundation, American Association of Retired Persons and the Motion Picture and Television Fund Foundation.

VERA SONGWE, CAMEROON

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Economist and banker Vera Songwe has built an impressive career contending for Africa's development. Songwe has a strong track-record of policy advisory on socio-economic growth, and in delivering development results for Africa. She joined the World Bank as a young professional, whereby she climbed the ranks to become an advisor to the managing director for Africa, Europe and central and Southeast Asia regions as well as country director for Senegal, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Mauritania. Before her current role, she was the International Finance Corporation's



regional director covering West and Central Africa.

In 2017, Songwe became the first woman to head the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. The commission is established to encourage economic cooperation among African nations. In this role, Songwe is also vocal about conflict resolution across Africa.



MAGDA WIERZYCKA, SOUTH AFRICA

FOUNDER, SYGNIA

Magda Wierzycka is a self-made business executive. Born in Poland, Wierzycka arrived in South Africa when she was 13, after spending a year in a refugee camp in Austria.

Not being defined by her beginnings, Wierzycka built a career spanning multiple financial services companies, including Alexander Forbes. Today, she is CEO of a Johannesburg Stock Exchange-listed asset management company, Sygnia, with a market cap of R1.53 billion (\$103 million). “It does not matter what background you come from. If you do not have to rely on others to take care of you, you are unstoppable,” Wierzycka says.

Wierzycka is well known in South Africa for her anti-corruption stance, both in government and in the private sector. She is very vocal around issues concerning ‘state capture’ and restoring faith in government. “Given the impact corruption has had on the lives of average South Africans, and the fact that it has robbed all of us of a prosperous future, it is a fight worth having,” she says. In 2017, Sygnia launched two new unit classes of the Sygnia Money Market Unit Trust whereby all management fees are donated to non-partisan civil society organizations fighting corruption. These organizations include OUTA, the Black Sash, amaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism, Corruption Watch, the Kgalema Motlanthe Foundation and the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation.

She also serves in the Africa Advisory Board of the Center for African Studies at Harvard University.



TARA FELA-DUROTOYE, NIGERIA

FOUNDER, HOUSE OF TARA INTERNATIONAL

Tara Fela-Durotoye is a lawyer-turned-makeup artist and beauty entrepreneur. She established her indigenous beauty company House of Tara International, at the age of 20 in 1998, when makeup products for African women were few. Today, her company has a ground-breaking network of over 10,000 representatives and 27 branches spread across the country. She has since founded the country’s first bridal directory, makeup studio and beauty academy.

In 2015, Tara Beauty partnered with L’Oréal to be its Nigerian strategic distributor for the international cosmetics brand Maybelline. Through the Tara Beauty Entrepreneur initiative, she has mentored and empowered thousands of beauty enthusiasts. Durotoye has won several awards throughout her entrepreneurial journey, including the 2018 Leadership Award for Entrepreneurship by the Harvard Business School Association of Nigeria.



THERESA KACHINDAMOTO, MALAWI

CHIEF OF DEDZA DISTRICT, MALAWI

Theresa Kachindamoto is the fearless chief, spearheading the abolition of child marriages and banning the sexual initiations of young girls in Malawi. She is the youngest of 12 siblings and is today the traditional leader of Dedza district in central Malawi and her rule spans a population just shy of a million people. Kachindamoto has annulled 2,549 child marriages. She tells us more:

What inspires your efforts every day?

Without [my people] I can’t be a chief. [I am inspired] to help my people solve

their problems like family disputes and abolish bad cultures harmful to little girls and boys.

What are some of the challenges you have faced?

In my culture, a woman cannot be a chief and people challenged me especially when I began to terminate child marriages.

I had to dismiss 54 traditional leaders who did not obey my bylaws. Only after they followed my laws to end child marriage did I reinstate them as chiefs.

What is fulfilling about your work?

I am happy when chiefs from different regions come to my area to learn what I am doing and invite me to go to their district to teach them.

THE TRUST PRINCIPLE

South Africa's KPMG boss Ignatius Sehoole on why ethical behavior must extend beyond working hours to all other aspects of life.

BY KOPANO GUMBI

LONG BEFORE HE BECAME THE CHIEF executive of one of the largest audit firms in South Africa, KPMG, Ignatius Sehoole was a leader. This warm and good-natured man who grew up in the townships of Pretoria, South Africa's capital city, had a vision for his life and executed it. Once he had decided he would become a Chartered Accountant, he didn't just become one, he went on to be one of the most well-respected in the industry.

Navigating this world with integrity is not only a way of life for him, but a way of being. Sehoole was expelled from the University of Limpopo, in the South African province, for organizing a protest against it.

That did not deter him from executing his goal of working in the accounting profession. With persistence, a commitment to excellence and a good sense of humor, he has spent close to 40 years stoically building a name for himself in the profession he proudly exclaims is his passion. Now, as the man in charge at KPMG South Africa, his true mettle is being tested.

"When I had an opportunity to come and be part of rebuilding the profession and repositioning it back to where it should be, it was a no-brainer for me," Sehoole says of his decision to take over as head of the audit firm in June 2019.

KPMG struggled to rebuild its reputation after it was fingered in the damning revelations from investigative reporting known as the #GuptaLeaks. The Gupta family are accused of having had a corrupt relationship with the former President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, and his family. KPMG had been

auditing Gupta-owned companies for over 15 years and had reportedly not raised the necessary red flags.

As a result, the company lost 20 audit clients, many of them large Johannesburg Stock Exchange listed organizations, and millions in potential revenue. More than the money, Sehoole is disappointed in the loss of trust in the audit profession and laments on the wayward path auditors have taken of late.

"We need to get back to serving the public interest," he says. "One of the privileges that we have as a profession is that by law we have been given the right to audit."

Sehoole becomes increasingly animated as he explains that this ability to audit is not a right granted to everybody and that the most important aspect of it is that it should be practised in the public interest. "It seems in some instances, that the profession has lost sight of that."

Sehoole says that one of his first and most important tasks since taking office has been explaining to staff and new recruits that ethical behavior must extend beyond working hours.

He strongly believes that you cannot claim to be ethical at work if you are not ethical in all other spheres of your life.

"The thing that really makes you do the right thing, more than the laws and the regulation is your outlook," Sehoole believes. "It's your behavior, it's your value system, and that's why we are working very hard in KPMG to create a culture of public service."

His passion is palpable and his reputation is of unwavering integrity, which is what made him an attractive candidate for the role, says Professor Wiseman Nkuhlu, chairman of KPMG South Africa.

"Getting Ignatius and a person of his stature to lead KPMG was critical," adds Nkuhlu.

Sehoole has had an illustrious career and has served on some of the highest and most respected auditing bodies, including being



the Chairman of the Developing Nations Committee of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Development Bank of Southern Africa and Chairman of the Audit Committee for the National Treasury, just to name a few.

Schoole completed his articles at Deloitte and worked for several private and public institutions including Fedics Food Services, where he quickly rose through the ranks to

become the MD of Inland Region. He then joined the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) where he was Executive President for two terms until 2009.

During his tenure at SAICA, he created the Thuthuka Programme. The bursary, which he started in 2001, is designed to encourage previously

disadvantaged black youth to pursue careers as Chartered Accountants, by providing support financially and through mentorship. It continues to successfully help thousands of young South Africans get into the profession.

This is not the first time Schoole steps in to head an audit firm. After leaving SAICA, he was appointed deputy CEO of PricewaterhouseCoopers. He is credited with championing the company's transformation agenda. A buzzword to some, but another passion point for Schoole. He has worked tirelessly to ensure that many young black South Africans are given a fair opportunity to join the profession he loves.

Great leaders not only have a passion for the organizations they lead but they, like Schoole, have a deep sense of public responsibility, a knack for human interaction and the ability to galvanize their teams around a central idea.

For Schoole, this idea is simple. Trust and trustworthiness are the central precepts for the KPMG he leads.

"We've got a new vision at KPMG," asserts Schoole. "Our vision is to be the most trusted and trustworthy professional services firm. What that says is that, you can never achieve the KPMG that is most trusted and trustworthy, if the individuals within KPMG, and the teams within KPMG, individually and collectively, are not most trusted and trustworthy."

Part of that means making up for past mistakes.

The company parted ways with eight executives who were found wanting in their dealings with the Guptas, and they have since donated over R47 million (\$3.15 million) to various charities. Bringing back the prestige and aura of integrity in the auditing profession is a personal project for Schoole. He believes it is simply about going back to the basics of service, in honor of public interest. **P**

**“
We need to get
back to serving
the public
interest.”**





THE FRENCH SILHOUETTE IN AFRICA

From glamorous Paris to gritty Johannesburg, Zazi Nyandeni arrived with \$2,700 and updated sartorial skills to showcase haute couture on South Africa's racks and runways.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MOTLABANA MONNAKGOTLA

WITH JUST \$2,700 IN her bank, transferred from her savings account in France, Zazi Nyandeni

returned home to the South African fashion industry with her freshly-minted talent. But if Paris was school, Johannesburg proved to be university. Qualifying was never easy.

About 53kms from Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport is Constantia Kloof, a scenic, upmarket suburb in the

West Rand, where we meet Nyandeni, the up-and-coming 25-year-old fashion entrepreneur whose brand, Zazi Luxury, has showcased in Paris, the fashion capital of the world.

"I wasn't really introduced to fashion, but more so to art," recalls Nyandeni of her early days. "Ever since primary school, I was exposed to paintings, drawings and music by my father when he would come back with artworks from his travels."

She thought she was going to become a

doctor growing up because of her choice of subjects in high school but still pursued design to stay close to art. Thankfully, her parents picked up that she was artistically-inclined and gave her their unstinted support.

In 2013, after high school, Nyandeni took the plane out of South Africa and went on to study fashion at ESMOD, an international fashion design and business school in Paris. She wanted to express herself without saying a word, and found her way. She spent close to six years there, studying full-time for the first three years and partially for the last two, whilst freelancing and interning for various companies in the glitzy city.

“I love to draw and not really to sew. For my first freelance job, I went for a company that would help me work on my weaknesses; I went to Loon Paris boutique and worked on my sewing techniques. They were very strict and meticulous when it came to sewing and I learned a lot about technique,” she says.

The intense training meant that even the inside of a garment had to be as exquisite as the outside and if the hand stitch was incorrect, she had to undo and redo it all over again.

“When I asked ‘aren’t we wasting material’, they would say ‘I’m wasting their time’,” she laughs.

The eager fashionista was juggling two jobs; the other was at a PR agency named DLX Paris, which was sourcing brands for international celebrities like American singer-songwriter Kelly Rowland.

She soon came to a realization that in fashion, there is nothing new, which is when she moved to fabric store Boutique Malhia Kent, a French manufacturer of haute couture.

Nyandeni has a soft spot for weaving. She clearly adores fabrics, and this is apparent in the weaving machine she has at her Constantia Kloof studio, placed in a corner of one of the work rooms.

She says her weaving differentiates her from the other designers, as she compares



Nyandeni (right) with model Boitshoko Mooketsi at her Constantia Kloof home studio

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There are other ways to look glamorous and chic and it doesn't have to be wasteful and terrible to the environment.

herself to South Africa's Laduma Ngxokolo of MaXhosa Africa and Greek fashion designer Mary Katrantzou.

"You can make a silhouette similar to somebody else but the real interesting part is the fabric, so Malhia Kent deals with fabric customization, and this is where I learned that in the world of fabric, you are two years ahead of the industry; like Chanel orders their fabric from Malhia Kent," she says.

That was the space she wanted to be in.

So in between jobs, Nyandeni co-founded Garbage, a business that looked into environment-friendly garments.

"We wanted to speak on the notations of how do we pick up the fashion industry and say that there are other ways to look glamorous and chic and it doesn't have to be wasteful and terrible to the environment."

The business ran for a year and sold a few garments, but sadly, collapsed. That inspired the birth of an idea, one that would solely work for her, a business that would include all that she had learned from fashion school and the stylish streets of Paris. She had also personally worked with Katrantzou, building a portfolio and a first collection. She was ready and had under \$2,700 in savings.

Nyandeni returned home to South Africa and registered her company in 2018.

"In my heart, I thought I was going to be able to buy sewing machines and a small car to travel back and forth for business, be able to get staple fabrics that people would love," she says.

It was not the case, but she started the

DATA POSITIONS AGRICULTURE AS KEY DRIVER OF AFRICA'S GROWTH

African farmers are at the heart of tomorrow's global economy.

The potential to increase Africa's agricultural yields through the strategic use of data could place the continent's farmers at the heart of tomorrow's global economy.

"New technologies readily available to Africa's farmers mean that the continent is finally at the moment where Africa's vast agricultural opportunity can be made relevant to capital, mechanisation and new global markets," says Antois van der Westhuizen, Managing Director: Sub-Saharan Africa, John Deere Financial.

Farmers in Kenya and Tanzania, for example, now transacting on M-PESA can access the formal economy by selling and buying goods online. Since these previously economically excluded farmers now have a digital footprint, "we can start getting a picture of their inputs, suppliers and costs, as well as their yields, off-takers, incomes and payment histories," says Van der Westhuizen.

This new data holds the key to revolutionising agriculture in Africa.

Without even having a bank account, "we now have a detailed view of the input, production and earning numbers of previously financially invisible farmers," says Van der Westhuizen. With GPS technology able to provide accurate hectareage, "we can quickly work out how certain inputs, and their cost, might be affordable to specific farmers given the increase in yield that we know these inputs will drive in that location," says Van der Westhuizen.

In short, with just a handful of data points, the ability to provide credit to a much broader segment of Africa's farmers increases dramatically. For the first time in history, all of Africa's farmers are now potentially able to present the credit, expenditure, production and income records to make them bankable.

The next step will be to, "use the data from multiple farmers collectively, to develop new supply chains and markets," says Van der Westhuizen.

For example, if a grain mill in Kenya requires 2,000 tons of a certain crop each month and John Deere has the data on 100 farmers in that district, each with the potential to produce 20 tons a month, the



Antois van der Westhuizen - Managing Director
Sub-Saharan Africa - John Deere Financial

data can be used to build a supply chain for the mill that also provides the farmers guaranteed off-take. This data-driven view of the broader supply chain also gives financiers the confidence to extend credit, long-lease machinery or fertiliser to these farmers, secure in the knowledge that the farmers will receive an income from the mill and be able to pay.

Moreover, "if we know that the 100 farmers have secure off-take agreements with a local mill, we can provide tractors or harvesters to start-up agricultural service companies to plough these farmer's fields and harvest their crops, only collecting payment once the farmers have been paid by the mill," says Van der Westhuizen.

Using data in this way could justify further investment in irrigation systems, beneficiation plants, canneries or other industrial investment relevant to expanding the agricultural value chain.

Taken to scale across Africa, this kind of data has the potential to make most African countries food-secure, freeing up the billions in hard currency that African governments currently spend importing food.

The technology is finally here, "for Africa's policy makers to use the new data available on Africa's farmers to place agriculture - and Africa - at the heart of tomorrow's global economy," concludes Van der Westhuizen.

business despite a shortage of funds.

“I called it Zazi Luxury because it speaks to more of the inside and outside of a garment and the technique used which is the core of the business. The inside is about matching the outside; I should literally be able to wear it inside out, and if not, it’s not [a Zazi Luxury product].”

Her first client was South African comedienne Tumi Morake referred by a mutual friend, and later actress Zenande Mfenyana, but currently, her clients are also doctors, lawyers and drawn from the corporate world.

“In the beginning, the business was focused on couture and it developed a bit more into

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The inside is about matching the outside; I should literally be able to wear it inside out, and if not, it’s not [a Zazi Luxury product].



business such as television, dressing anchors, and we also have ready-to-wear garments. We are broadening the business to other boutiques too.”

Zazi Luxury recently showcased at South Africa Fashion Week. This year, she will be working on a fourth collection that will be both couture and basic women’s workwear garments but featuring the Zazi aesthetic.

Zazi Luxury currently employs seven young enthusiastic fashionistas; one of who is Lebohang Ketlele, who has worked with Nyandeni for two years.

“I am a dressmaker and stylist. I don’t think I would know the things I know now if I wasn’t working here, we have dressed celebrities and that is a great experience,” attests Ketlele.

Inspired in Paris, but made in Africa, Zazi seems to have made the cut. **F**



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A DECADE OF GERT-JOHAN COETZEE



Gert-Johan Coetzee and
Lerato Kganyago



Oprah Winfrey



Miss Universe 2019
Zozibini Tunzi

A fashion designer who believes you can never dream too big, Gert-Johan Coetzee is revered as one of South Africa's most celebrated designers; synonymous with his signature style, sophistication and panache. Gert-Johan doesn't simply design dresses, he designs relationships and delivers dreams for his dynamic and esteemed clientele of women in Business, Entertainment, Politics and Royal African Families.

Fashion courses through Gert-Johan's veins, and has been his passion since he was eight years old, designing dresses for his pencils, out of tissue paper. Over two decades later, his dedication to dressing women how they'd like to be addressed, has seen Gert-Johan rise to the top of his game in South Africa; dressing newsworthy women like Former Public Protector Thuli Madonsela, Miss Universe 2018 Demi-Leigh Nel-Peters, Miss World 2014 Rolene Strauss, and Media Personalities Minnie Dlamini, Lerato Kganyago and Bonang Matheba, to name a few. His talent has an international scope of significant superstars including the likes of Oprah Winfrey, Kourtney Kardashian, Kristin Cavallari, Lauryn Hill, Kelly Rowland, Fantasia and Tiwa Savage.

A decade of designing is a formidable feat, as the Fashion Industry is fast-paced, and as an Entrepreneur in an ever-evolving environment; in order to achieve the commercial and creative success that Gert-Johan has enjoyed in his ten year tenure, requires passion, perseverance, determination and a delicate balance between business and creativity.

His successful collaborations with global brands such as McDonald's and Ferrari speak of his commercial understanding of business, which is a rarity in the creative world of Fashion. Without self-discipline, success is impossible, and in the enterprise of Fashion, success is not exclusively measured on making profits, but in the creation of brand value; which Gert-Johan has mastered with his eponymous empire. In addition to his Couture and Bespoke Bridal Collections, Gert-Johan has created GERT, his Casual Wear Collection as well as an exclusive Ready-To-Wear Range available at selected luxury boutiques.

His Menswear range adds to his impressive portfolio.

Gert-Johan has become an influential individual in his own right, and debuted his career in television as a mentor on Project Runway South Africa. With a passion for mentorship and sharing opportunities and knowledge, Gert-Johan has established a bursary programme that sponsors two new students annually, with three-year bursaries in Fashion Studies at his alma mater, The Northwest School of Design.

Gert-Johan is also a Social Activist who uses the power of his platform to highlight social issues. From breaking down prejudices to breast cancer awareness, from championing education to addressing violence against women; as well as raising awareness about endangered wildlife and eco-consciousness in fashion, Gert-Johan's bi-annual collections, shown at SA Fashion Week, have sparked conversations with their social focus.

Gert-Johan has won numerous awards, including South Africa's Most Promising Young Designer in 2006, at the age of 19, and South African Designer of the Year in 2010. He's also shown at International Fashion Weeks in Canada, Angola and Nigeria and has a growing following across the African continent.

In his illustrious career, Gert-Johan has created some of South Africa's most memorable masterpieces, and together with opening SA Fashion Week SS20 in April this year; the upcoming Gert-Johan Coetzee Retrospective, taking place in Sandton City's Diamond Walk, from the 19th of March until the 26th of April 2020, will showcase some of his most iconic creations as well as the women who wore them.

In addition to the Retrospective, in celebration of a decade of Gert-Johan Coetzee, comes a passion project expertly crafted in the heart of Grasse, the perfume capital of the world on the French Riviera, in the same perfumery where some of the greatest fragrances such as Jean Paul Gaultier, Maison Francis Kurkdjian, Dior and Balmain are manufactured. A signature scent that is anchored in authenticity, inspired by Africa and reflecting her essence; but artfully constructed by the finest French noses, comes Gert-Johan Coetzee's first foray into fragrance.

Double Platinum Eau de Parfum by Gert-Johan Coetzee comprises a cocktail of



memory and emotion; and is reminiscent of Rustenburg's signature platinum mines, where Gert-Johan grew up. Designed for the diverse South African men and women who wear Gert-Johan Coetzee's Collections, the delicate combination of the softness of rose, which represents feminine fragility, paired with the smoke of masculinity, comes a sophisticated scent offering aromatic abundance in every spritz.

"A signature symphony of success," every detail of Double Platinum is deliberate, and Sarah Langa, the face of Double Platinum

Eau de Parfum, embodies the epitome of a Gert-Johan Coetzee woman – confident, kind, powerful and graceful with a sophisticated soupçon of sex appeal.

This is the beautiful beginning of a brand new direction for Gert-Johan and his Business Partner, Brand Manager and husband Vicky Visagie, as they branch into diverse dimensions for the Gert-Johan Coetzee brand.

Double Platinum Eau de Parfum was launched on the 27th February at Skins Cosmetics in Sandton City, Johannesburg, and will be exclusively sold at this outlet.

SOIL TOIL

A car accident made this graphic designer more grounded, and take to farming, tending to vegetables on a piece of land far from Johannesburg.

BY MOTLABANA MONNAKGOTLA



ABOUT 250KMS FROM THE SANITIZED SUBURBS of Sandton in South Africa's Gauteng province is Randfontein, a rugged gold mining city in the West Rand, where we meet 31-year-old Katlego Pitse on his farm where he is currently producing rows of crisp green lettuce.

A few years ago, the Soweto-born farmer was far from any piece of earth, and closer to a computer desktop, earning a living as a graphic designer.

The only definition he gave himself was as a 'creative'.

"Straight after high school, I studied graphic design from 2008 until 2012. From there on, I pursued a career in commercial arts. Advertising is the number one industry that absorbs creatives," says Pitse of his 'other job'.

He worked for various companies in Johannesburg and his career was well on to greener pastures as he enjoyed a hefty salary with annual increments and a lavish lifestyle, until an unfortunate incident threw him out of gear. Pitse was involved in a road accident in 2015 and the snazzy, pricey car he had been spending so much on, had to be written off. The accident was a facilitator, as he was faced with some life-defining choices, and the prospect of a new direction, one that made him more grounded.

"I had to start over. This was the kind of catalyst that gave me a bit of a wakeup call; going forward, [I realized] if I was to spend money, it had to be on valuable assets that are going to yield returns that can be passed on," he says.

He left a full-time job to freelance at a night club; this is where he was exposed to the day-to-day operations of a business. It helped him take to entrepreneurship, pursuing agriculture full-time; which

“Going forward, [I realized] if I was to spend money, it had to be on valuable assets that are going to yield returns that can be passed on.”

had been a burning desire since his days as an art student thumbing through agriculture magazines.

"I was constantly doing research. It was something I knew I wanted to do but I wasn't sure when I was going to be able to pursue it fully because

you need an actual career," he says.

"There was an article I read about a farmer based in Winterveld. I called to ask if I could visit to see his operation in 2015. Just that farm visit was an inspiration to start my business."

Pitse saved up enough money to buy a vacant two-and-half hectare plot in Randfontein for R200,000 (\$13,400). It took him three years to start production, during which time he pursued his graphic design career on the side.

In 2019, the first year of production, Pitse focused on cucumbers – his pet passion – and did cycles of long English cucumbers. Due to the high costs, Pitse had to re-evaluate and decided to move to a less cumbersome crop, lettuce.

Pitse is currently employing two family members and still does the odd graphic design job to supplement his income.

Surely, a small-scale farmer with big graphic dreams of the future. 

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QUESTION EVERYTHING

Want to make money in the crazy, opaque, inefficient crypto market? Start by challenging every assumption, every nugget of news, every piece of social-media wisdom.

BY JEFF KAUFMAN



Texas Traders

Multicoin Capital's founders and best friends Tushar Jain (*left*) and Kyle Samani. To cope with the stress of crypto markets, Jain meditates; Samani takes spin classes.

SITTING SIDE-BY-SIDE IN A TRENDY Manhattan cafe where a glass of cold-pressed pineapple-and-carrot juice costs \$9, the 29-year-old cofounders of cryptocurrency investment firm Multicoin Capital are ticking off the digital coins they're shorting. They stand to make millions if the virtual coins tank in value. "Two years from now, zcash is worth zero," says Kyle Samani of the three year-old privacy-focused cryptocurrency. Currently, zcash trades for \$66.

Research suggests that few of zcash's users are taking advantage of its core privacy features. Even worse, other cryptocurrency

platforms such as ethereum are copying zcash's privacy technology. A zcash spokesperson counters, "If you want a private medium of exchange, there is nothing else like it."

Samani's cofounder, Tushar Jain, is eager to finger another popular cryptocurrency the duo thinks is worthless. "We've been publicly short XRP," he says, referring to the coin used by San Francisco Company Ripple to speed up interbank transactions.

From offices overlooking Austin, Texas' Lady Bird Lake, they manage a \$100 million crypto hedge fund backed by venture capitalists including Marc Andreessen and Fred Wilson's Union

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DO GREAT THINGS EVERY DAY

“

In the crypto community, these things are religious in some ways. They keep telling you, ‘Believe, believe, believe,’ forever.
— Kyle Samani

play an outsize role in pricing, the pair uses a combination of data analysis and crowdsourced research to inform trades. Above all, Samani and Jain have thrived because they question every tidbit of information they receive. “In the crypto community, these things are religious in some ways. They keep telling you, ‘Believe, believe, believe,’ forever,” Samani says. “We never take it for granted that what’s being said is accurate.” This skeptical approach has been a big winner. According to those familiar with Multicoins’ results, its fund has returned 143% before fees over the last two years.

Jain was born in India and grew up in Astoria, Queens. His parents run a clothing store on Manhattan’s Lower East Side. Samani grew up in a well-to-do Austin neighborhood. The two met in 2008 at NYU, where they studied finance and became best friends despite vastly different personalities. Wilson says the hard-charging Samani “can be a little controversial and aggressive.” Jain is reserved and quiet.

Upon graduating in 2012, both worked at Samani’s father’s medical-records company but ultimately left to form their own startups — Samani’s made apps for the ill-fated Google Glass wearable-computer venture; Jain’s created a data business that helped doctors find patients for medical trials. But in mid-2016 the two immersed themselves in learning about blockchain. They joined forces to launch Multicoins in May 2017 as the buying frenzy began. Almost immediately they raised \$2.5 million from angel investors. Their portfolio, long on highfliers like ether, “0x” and factom, doubled by the end of 2017.

In addition to making noise on social media — Samani now has 36,000 Twitter followers — the pair began publishing long technical pieces, including one detailing how cryptocurrencies designed solely to pay for a specific product weren’t worth investing in. “Sometimes we get responses from people that are 1,000-word essays,” Jain says, referring to the insider feedback their posts elicit. “We have a full-time team of 14, but it can feel like an investment team of 50.”

Multicoins’ blog posts also serve as advertisements for new investors and for entrepreneurs seeking funding. By July 2018, Multicoins had raised a combined \$70 million from David Sacks (a member of the so-called “PayPal Mafia”), Wilson and other investors. The year was a terrible one for cryptocurrencies, with bitcoin falling 74%. Multicoins’ losses were limited to 33% because of successful shorts of litecoin, XRP and ethereum classic.

In April 2019, Multicoins made one of its boldest bets: It wagered nearly 15% of its portfolio on Binance, one of the world’s largest crypto

Square Ventures.

Multicoins concentrates its bets — both long and short — in 11 publicly traded cryptocurrencies. It also owns stakes in 20 private crypto startups.

In a market where disclosures are optional and hype and momentum

exchanges. Many investors have shunned Binance’s coin because unlike Coinbase, its billionaire CEO, Changpeng Zhao, is known for evading regulatory oversight and skirting U.S. money-laundering laws.

Multicoins’ founders were impressed by Binance’s innovative launches, which included a user-run decentralized exchange. The Asian firm was also rapidly gaining market share among crypto exchanges. In June 2019, after Binance announced that a new exchange would comply with U.S. laws, its coin rose to \$40, an eightfold gain for Multicoins.

Jain and Samani are also pound-the-table bitcoin bulls. They closely monitor the number of accounts holding 1,000 or more bitcoins, worth about \$9 million at current prices. That number has risen, and these investors are holding onto their bitcoin for longer durations. Those factors, combined with the upcoming May “halving” of bitcoin — the number of new bitcoins created per day will automatically drop by 50% — convinced them to buy bitcoin call options.

In addition to its exchange-traded cryptocurrency bets, Multicoins invests directly in startups like San Francisco’s Helium, which sells a \$495 Wi-Fi hotspot that allows homeowners the opportunity to share internet access with others nearby — and earn cryptocurrency by doing so. Using Helium, mobile scooter provider Lime, for instance, was able to keep tabs on its bikes without paying Verizon’s Wi-Fi fees.

“I think we’re going to be looking at over a 10x return,” Jain says. A Samani blog post led to their introduction to Helium’s CEO.

One Multicoins investment that has been a bust is EOS, a token created by startup Block.one that raised \$4 billion in an initial coin offering (ICO).

Multicoins invested in EOS in early 2019 after publishing a 31-page analysis of it. The token traded at \$11.60 at the time but sells for \$4 today.

“I wish we had developed a better relationship with the core [EOS] team to understand their vision for the protocol and how they were going to grow and scale it,” says Samani, sounding like a value investor who miscalculated management’s skill.

If there’s a lasting lesson from three years in the crypto-trading trenches, it’s that there is no room for passive investing in digital assets. Says Jain: “The crypto markets are the least efficient markets I’ve ever seen in my life, and that means active management has an opportunity to shine.” 

“

I think we’re going to be looking at over a 10x return.

— Tushar Jain

MARIAM KANE-GARCIA LEADS THE WAY AT TOTAL SOUTH AFRICA

Inspiring women to lead in the energy sector and industry at large to improve the imbalance of representation, is an ambition to be realised by all, according to Mariam Kane-Garcia, the newly appointed CEO and Managing Director of Total South Africa.

She wants to encourage and inspire people to push the boundaries of possibility, regardless of the minority groups they belong to; while at the same time emphasising the importance of not doing so at the expense or the credibility of minority groups, specifically women in leadership.

She lives with the conviction that a diverse workforce and management team drives the competitiveness of the business, the ability to innovate, the ability to attract opportunities and their social license to operate.

“At Total, we enable all our employees to develop their professional skills and advance in their career without discrimination of any kind.”

However, the presence of women leadership in the energy sector is still insufficient, despite progress. The ‘Global Energy Talent Index Report 2020’, found that women make up only 8% of the workforce in the global oil & gas sector, 9% in each of the petrochemical and power sectors, 12% in the nuclear sector, and 15% in the renewables sector.

Furthermore, says the report, only 17% of women (of an already small pool) are placed on leadership training programmes, compared to 22% of men. And the fact that women have shown preference to training, learning and development suggests that they’re still coming up against a glass ceiling and are eager for opportunities to smash through it.

Mariam emphasises that there is an opportunity for all in tackling the imbalance and being catalysts for change instead of casualties for change. Diversity is a key performance lever for success and both men and women have a critical role to play in realising much change to rebalance industries. The task is not to shoulder the typical roles assigned in industry, but for women and men to interlink as



Mariam Kane-Garcia, CEO and
Managing Director of Total South Africa

the connective fibre that will materialise the successful growth of industries in a notable way, as well as the economy.

The reasons for women’s underrepresentation in the sector are complex. There are historical factors. Even today, research suggests that young girls are not encouraged to eye careers in what is considered a technical, or masculine industry.

With that in mind, it’s critical that women pursue and embrace the opportunities that come their way, says Mariam Kane-Garcia, who is the first woman to hold the senior position at Total South Africa. “Total offered me a managed career path and I seized these opportunities successfully,” she says.

This reciprocal relationship with Total has kept Kane-Garcia with the company for nearly 20 years. She grew up in West Africa – Mauritania and Côte d’Ivoire – and attended the ESCP Business School in Paris. She joined Total shortly after finishing at the ESCP in 2001, and has held a series of positions in finance, strategy, and business development at group offices in France, the UK, Singapore and Vietnam. In 2019, she moved to South Africa as Executive Vice President for marketing and services Southern Africa, and as CEO and Managing Director of Total South Africa.

As a vocal champion for diversity and inclusivity, she feels strongly that women should be represented, not as a minority, but because they are deserving. This will ensure that the wrong message is not sent and that it does not dilute the impact of their performance in achieving their status.

Not only do women have to be placed in more leadership positions, but they also need more exposure to technical roles, starting with education and vocational training.

Total South Africa is committed to long term partnerships within the communities in which it operates and has partnered with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Female Entrepreneurship Awards since 2003. Total South Africa also supports other talent linked initiatives like Buskaid and Afrika Tikkun, to create shared value and ensure the development of women at grassroots.

In 2006, the company created its own Total Women Initiative for Communication and Exchange (TWICE) Network as a platform to help women find their way and fulfil their potential in the company, and Kane-Garcia herself set up the Twice Network for Total UK’s upstream operations.

When it comes to gender equality, both women and men have to contribute.

We stand to benefit from women and men’s unique contributions to truly propel the energy sector forward. We need to create solutions with a business model as to not simply place a band-aid on issues but rather create sustainable solutions with a long-term commitment to solve and defy barriers.

She concludes that, “If we are more inclusive, we are more connected; and if we are more diverse, we are more creative in solving the challenges we face.”



TRUST YOUR GUT

NOT FOR SALE

ON THE BRAVEST FRONTIER IN HUMAN HEALTH, SCIENTISTS ARE USING BACTERIA FROM THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM TO CREATE NOVEL MEDICINES FOR A HUGE RANGE OF AILMENTS INCLUDING PARKINSON'S, CANCER AND AUTISM. GATES, BENIOFF AND ZUCKERBERG ARE TRUE BELIEVERS, AND THE RESULT COULD BE BLOCKBUSTER DRUGS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES — AND DELIVER MASSIVE RETURNS FOR EARLY INVESTORS.

BY SUSAN ADAMS AND WILL YAKOWICZ

RODY

1:42pm

FINCH THERAPEUTICS

Borody



$$Y = \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \epsilon$$
$$\beta_1 \gg \beta_2 ?$$

Fecal Forest

Finch Therapeutics cofounder Mark Smith at Finch's Somerville, Massachusetts, offices. "It's only in the past 15 years that we've come to understand the incredible diversity of the microbiome. It's almost like a rainforest inside our bodies. There are 100 times more bacterial genes than human genes."

SHARP PAINS SHOT THROUGH THE PATIENT'S STOMACH, AND HE HAD CONSTANT DIARRHEA. SEVEN ROUNDS OF ANTIBIOTICS OVER 18 MONTHS HAD ONLY MADE HIM FEEL WORSE.

A PREVIOUSLY HEALTHY MAN IN HIS 20S WHO WISHES TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS, HE HAD CONTRACTED A RECURRING CASE OF *CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE*, OR *C. DIFF*, AFTER HAVING HIS GALLBLADDER REMOVED IN 2012. HOSPITAL PATIENTS ARE PRONE TO *C. DIFF* SINCE ANTIBIOTIC TREATMENT FOR OTHER MALADIES DECIMATES THE INFECTION FIGHTING CAPACITY OF WHAT SCIENTISTS CALL THE GUT MICROBIOME, THE TRILLIONS OF CELLS THAT MOVE THROUGH THE HUMAN DIGESTIVE SYSTEM. "IT DIDN'T JUST AFFECT MY GUT," HE SAYS. "I WAS EXHAUSTED ALL THE TIME. I HAD REALLY BAD BRAIN FOG. I COULDN'T CONCENTRATE."

Desperate, he researched possible therapies and discovered articles about fecal transplants wiping out the infection. But his gastroenterologist refused to perform the procedure. So he took matters into his own hands. He asked his roommate to supply a stool sample, bought an enema kit from CVS, pulsed the mixture in a blender, strained it through a coffee filter and pumped it into his gut. As though a wizard had cast a spell, he made a full recovery within days.

Welcome to the most promising new frontier in medicine: poop. By focusing on what's coming out of patients' rear ends, a growing body of scientific research over the last 15 years has highlighted the crucial role the microbiome plays in human health. That new understanding could lead to breakthrough treatments for a huge range of illnesses, from obvious ones

like digestive ailments and food allergies to surprising ones like cancer and autism. A microbiome-derived drug is already in the works to prevent childhood asthma.

Put crudely, the idea is to use gut bugs as drugs. More than 50,000 scientific papers in the last five years have explored the microbiome's effects. Various kinds of gut bacteria appear to stimulate or suppress immune responses in the body, while others seem to fight off disease-causing microbes. A groundswell of cutting-edge research has the potential to deliver a burst of new therapies that will vastly reduce human suffering—and generate huge paydays for the field's pioneers.

When scientists transferred gut microbiome cells from obese mice into lean ones, the recipients gained weight. In one study, melanoma patients with the most diverse microbiomes had the best response to immunotherapy. And mice injected with gut bacteria from marathon runners ran longer distances. A new drug for obesity alone could be worth more than \$20 billion.

So far, the most compelling microbiome-derived therapy is a live fecal transplant for *C. diff*, which strikes half a million Americans annually, killing 15,000. In 2013, the New England Journal of Medicine published a paper that caught the scientific community by surprise and jump-started investment in microbiome drug development. In a randomized trial, 94% of recurrent *C. diff* patients recovered after receiving fecal transplants. To put that in context, cancer drugs with efficacy rates as low as 10% have been approved by the FDA.

Billions of dollars are pouring into microbiome medicine. Gbola Amusa, a medical doctor and partner at Chardan, a health care-focused investment bank in New York, pegs the total amount invested since 2014 at more than \$5 billion. Techie billionaires including Bill Gates, Salesforce founder Marc Benioff and Silicon Valley venture capitalist Vinod Khosla are funding microbiome startups, and Gates, Benioff and Mark Zuckerberg have all made donations to support microbiome research at institutions including Stanford, Washington University in St. Louis and the University of California, San Francisco.

The race is on for FDA approval of the first drug made from gut bacteria. But the science is young and unproven. At Oppenheimer in New York, Mark Breidenbach says investor enthusiasm in microbiome companies is on a downswing because "there is no consensus about what the microbiome can do."

Amusa is more bullish. "The science is turning," he says. "When it comes through with proof, these biotech companies will be worth not hundreds of millions of dollars, but billions."

SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS-BASED FINCH Therapeutics is one of the most promising startups developing microbiome drugs. Cofounder Mark Smith, 33, was a microbiology grad student at MIT when the 20-something *C. diff* patient begged him for help. “I had to tell him, I’m a microbiologist, not a doctor,” Smith says.

The patient’s ordeal motivated Smith to create Open-Biome, the equivalent of a public blood bank for human feces, while Smith was still at MIT in 2013. The Cambridge, Massachusetts, non-profit, the first of its kind in the world, has since supplied stool for more than 53,000 transplants in 1,200 hospitals and clinics.

Inspired by the demand for transplants, Smith cofounded for-profit Finch (named for the diverse group of finches Charles Darwin discovered in the Galápagos Islands) in 2016 to develop an FDA-approved *C. diff* pill. Currently, most doctors perform fecal transplants through a colonoscopy, which can cost as much as \$5,000. The procedure is not FDA-approved or reliably covered by insurance.

Smith and his 80 employees occupy two floors in an industrial park that formerly housed administrative offices and storage space for the Harvard Art Museums. Tall and slender with piercing blue eyes, he welcomes the inevitable jokes that come with being a human-feces entrepreneur. On

Halloween he wore a poop-emoji costume (“I was a pooper trooper”) to the office, where the copiers have names like Squatty Potty and Magic Stool Bus.

But he has raised serious capital. Venture funds have put in \$130 million, and Finch has a partnership with Tokyo-based pharma giant Takeda to develop drugs for ulcerative colitis and Crohn’s disease, which together have 10 million sufferers worldwide. Finch is also working on an autism drug.

Traditionally, scientists start with data gathered through experiments on mice. Finch is taking a “human-first” approach, skipping the rodents and analysing the stool of human patients who have recovered after receiving fecal transplants. “We’re looking at what works in patients and figuring out how to make our drugs from the top down,” Smith says. “It’s called reverse translation.”

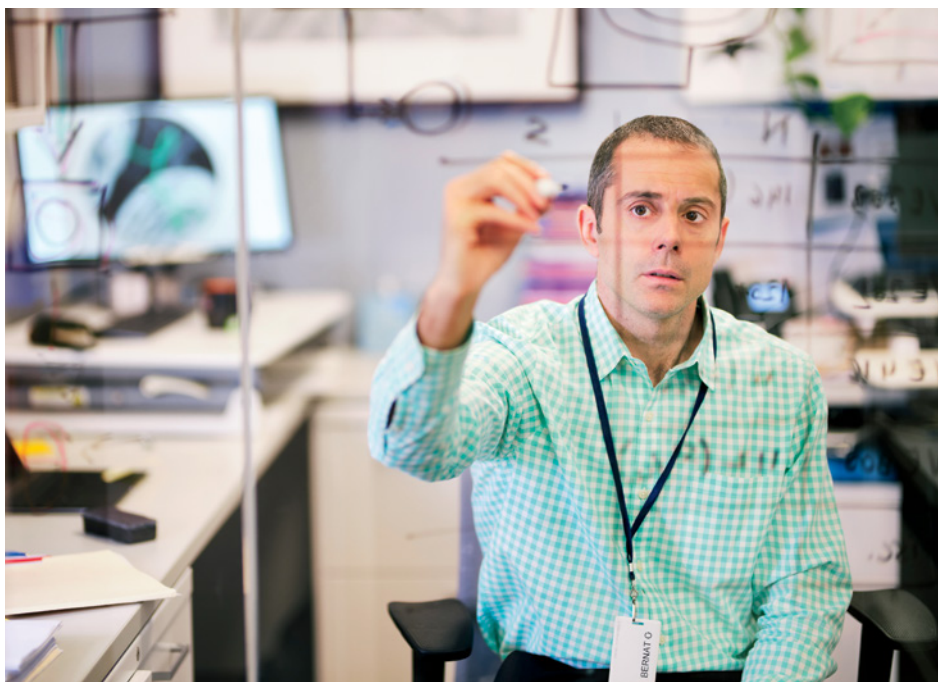
For one of its *C. diff* drugs, Finch is extracting what Smith describes as the “full spectrum” of bacteria in a human stool sample from a patient who has been successfully treated, freeze-drying it and delivering the equivalent of a fecal transplant in a single pill. It’s also working on simpler drugs made from five

to 10 key bacteria. It expects results from its first Phase 2 trial (which demonstrates efficacy) of the full-spectrum *C. diff* capsule by the end of the second quarter of 2020.

“Even if only a few of the microbiome therapies scientists are working on come to fruition,” Smith says, “it will have a huge impact on public health.”

A **NOTHER MIT PH.D., BERNAT OLLE, 40, IS** running Vedanta Biosciences, a nine-year-old Cambridge, Massachusetts-based microbiome drug developer with \$112 million in funding, including \$10 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Gates investment supports preclinical research at Vedanta aimed at developing a gut bacteria-derived drug that would prevent child malnutrition in the developing world. Nearly 200 million children under age five suffer from either wasting or stunting, resulting in at least 1.5 million deaths a year. “Malnourished children struggle to gain weight even when fed enough,” Olle says. “Emerging research suggests that this is because their gut microbiota develop abnormally, and that beneficial gut bacterial strains may help correct this imbalance.”

Vedanta also has two partnerships with big pharmaceutical companies, including Bristol-Myers Squibb, to develop drugs aimed at boosting the effectiveness of immunotherapy to treat melanoma and colorectal and gastric cancers. Like Finch, Vedanta is developing a drug to treat recurrent *C. diff*.



Drugs From Bugs

Bernat Olle, cofounder and CEO of Vedanta Biosciences, in one of Vedanta’s labs in Cambridge, Massachusetts. “I don’t think there’s any other field of medicine today that holds as much promise for the future of medicine as the microbiome.”



Medicine Show

Viome founder Naveen Jain at company headquarters in a Bellevue, Washington, WeWork space. "The goal is to scientifically show that it's not voodoo stuff or a placebo."

Inside Vedanta's maze of labs and storage rooms is an oversized freezer containing fecal matter from 275 donors on four continents, including an indigenous tribe in Papua New Guinea. Vedanta is isolating and then testing bacteria from each sample in the hope of determining which strains make the most effective drugs.

A wiry Catalan immigrant with close-cropped salt-and-pepper hair who bicycles to work, Olle came to the U.S. in 2002 to study chemical engineering at MIT, where he focused on the emerging science of using live organisms like bacteria to produce drugs. In 2007, after earning both an MIT doctorate and an MBA from the Sloan School, he joined PureTech Health, a Boston biotech firm.

In 2010 PureTech backed him in launching Vedanta with five cofounders, all scientists, including big names such as Kenya Honda, a microbiology professor at Keio University medical school in Tokyo. Honda had published a ground-breaking paper on the connection between gut bacteria and regulatory T cells, known to prevent inflammatory diseases. "Think of them as the U.N. peace forces of the intestine," Olle says. "Honda's work suggested that the cells encoded in human DNA are influenced by the bacteria that live within you."

"This work has forced me to rethink what it means to be human," Olle says. "We are not just the product of the Homo sapiens genome."

EVERY GOLD RUSH ATTRACTS ITS share of charlatans and claim jumpers. More than a half-dozen startups are using the microbiome as a marketing buzzword to sell stool-analysis tests. The kits, which require the consumer to mail a small sample to a lab, purport to convey valuable personalized health data and nutrition advice. That despite a consensus among scientists that it's not yet possible to draw useful dietary recommendations from a person's poop. To avoid hostile oversight by the FDA, the kit sellers are careful to make no specific claims about diagnosing or treating particular diseases.

Four years ago, former InfoSpace billionaire Naveen Jain, 60, launched Bellevue, Washington-based Viome, which sells a \$119 "gut intelligence test" online. After analyzing a pea-sized stool sample, it sends customers a customized 60-page report with dietary recommendations "aimed at balancing your overall microbiome." It might recommend, for instance, increasing consumption of "superfoods" like alfalfa sprouts and anchovies or avoiding green beans and kombucha. Jain says Viome has sold more than 100,000 kits and banked more than \$15 million in revenue last year.

"Viome's claims are not supported by any scientific literature," says Jonathan Eisen, a medical microbiology professor who directs microbiome research at the University of California, Davis. "What they're saying is, in fact, deceptive." A dozen

former Viome staffers say they believe the company was selling a product of dubious value. Six of those ex-staffers describe the food recommendations as "pseudoscience."

"Anyone who says this doesn't understand how our science works and how we make recommendations," Jain counters. "It's not my job to convince everyone; it's my job to continue to help make the world a better place."

A nonstop talker prone to enthusiastic, stream-of-consciousness self-promotion, Jain immigrated to the U.S. from India in 1982 and worked at Microsoft from 1989 until 1996, when he founded InfoSpace, also in Bellevue, which delivered internet content to early cellphones. His net worth ballooned to \$8 billion, then crashed to \$220 million when the first internet bubble burst. A flood of shareholder suits followed, and the InfoSpace board fired him as CEO in late 2002. Before he left InfoSpace, he bought a \$13 million stucco mansion on the shores of Lake Washington not far from Jeff Bezos' and Bill Gates' pads.

Despite having no background in science or medicine, Jain has managed to raise \$75 million from investors including Benioff and Khosla. Both declined to comment on their microbiome investments. But Alex Morgan, a Khosla Ventures principal with an M.D. and Ph.D. from Stanford, suggests Khosla's decision to back Viome has nothing to



Leadership in a Disrupted World

Workshop presented by the Graduate School of Technology Management (GSTM), University of Pretoria in collaboration with the Team Building Institute (Pty) Ltd (TBi).

The edge of disruption lies between today and tomorrow.

We are increasingly engulfed by a disrupted world. Our ways of work are irrevocably changed. Our futures will not be the same as what we know now. Disruption and the future go hand-in-hand. How do we prepare for disruption? By making sense of the future landscapes that we will navigate on. How do we lead others into coming revolutions, such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution that we experience at present? This workshop is a learning and participative journey that puts future perspective to themes that leaders need to address to shape, influence and navigate disruptive landscapes that they will guide others on.

The GSTM partnered with TBi's approach to integrate inter-disciplinary concepts which are generally viewed as separate entities to create a learning and participative journey which puts future perspective to themes that leaders need to address in order to shape, influence and navigate the unknown. The journey will unlock the combined knowledge of future aware leaders on what to do in the future, creating an environment where collaboration, teaming and personalisation are used to draw on experience and to lead towards future leadership qualities.

Workshop content

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Workshop Leaders



Dr Anthon Botha holds a PhD in Physics, is a strategist and future thinker. He has more than 30 years of experience in the management of science, engineering, technology, knowledge and innovation. He spends a lot of time imagining the future, creating mental images for leaders of what is to be. He founded TechnoScene as a consultancy and is a part-time academic at the GSTM.



Dr Chris Heunis holds a DPhil. He specialises in Organisational Development and has been consulting locally and internationally for the past 25 years. He co-founded TBi as a niche company that specialises in interpersonal and intrapersonal behavioural dynamics. He believes that the success of business leadership starts with being mindful of the needs of others.

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do with nutritional advice. Instead, he says, the firm invested because Viome hired a team of scientists from the U.S. Department of Energy's Los Alamos National Laboratory. In addition, Viome had made a deal with the lab to license a valuable tech platform that has a unique ability to sequence the biochemical activity in microorganisms.

So even if Jain is selling snake oil, Viome might have significant value. Indeed, British pharma giant GlaxoSmithKline struck a royalty deal with Viome in November 2019 to use its tech to help develop microbiome-derived vaccines. Jain's investors could make out handsomely.

AT CALTECH IN PASADENA, CALIFORNIA, microbiologist Sarkis Mazmanian, 47, is considered one of the foremost gurus of microbiome research. In 2012 the MacArthur Foundation gave him a \$500,000

"genius" grant for his work on the microbiome's role in disease. Since then, he's been exploring one of the most intriguing connections in human health: the "gut-brain axis". The working thesis is that the bugs in your belly have a direct impact on your neurological health, which has profound implications for autism, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

In 2008, two years after joining the Caltech faculty, Mazmanian published a cover story in *Nature* that documented his successful treatment of inflammatory bowel disease in mice with human gut bacteria. A Caltech colleague, Paul Patterson, who was researching autism in mice, saw a possible connection to the digestive problems suffered by as many as 60% of children with autism.

Together they started testing whether human gut bacteria could induce and ameliorate autism-like symptoms in mice. In the midst of their early work, Patterson was diagnosed with fatal brain cancer. In a hospital room at UCLA where Patterson was awaiting surgery in May 2014, Mazmanian signed papers giving Patterson a stake in a company that would develop drugs from their experiments. "I wanted Paul to get the recognition of his contribution," says Mazmanian. Patterson died the following month.

Mazmanian is carrying on their research in his subbasement lab at Caltech, where 1,000 germ-free mice, delivered by Caesarean section in sterile conditions to ensure they are bacteria-free, live inside plastic-encased rectangular bubbles. Grad students douse the animals' food with various gut microbes to test

which bacteria promote tremors and motor problems in mice that correlate with Parkinson's symptoms in humans.

In 2016, David Donabedian, a chemistry Ph.D. who was then a partner at Longwood Fund, a Boston venture capital firm, volunteered to raise the money and research power to move Mazmanian's biotech venture forward. The company, Waltham, Massachusetts-based Axial Biotherapeutics, has \$55 million in backing and 30 employees. Under Donabedian as CEO, Axial is in the early stages of developing synthetic drugs made of small molecules it hopes will absorb the particular gut-bacteria byproducts (called "metabolites") that appear to exacerbate autism symptoms. It's also working on a drug to treat the digestive problems suffered by many people with Parkinson's.

In the U.S., more than a million people suffer from autism, and there are no drugs to treat it; an additional million have Parkinson's. What would be the value of an FDA-approved drug for either condition? "I can't give you a market size," says Donabedian. "But if either one hits, it will be huge."

Chris Howerton, a biotechnology analyst at Jefferies, a New York investment bank, is less shy. "If every single microbiome paper turns into a proven therapy, it could impact the drug markets for most major categories of disease, which together were worth \$350 billion in 2018 in the U.S. alone," he says. "The breadth of the microbiome's potential application is really tantalizing." 



The Gut-Brain Connection

Caltech professor Sarkis Mazmanian in one of his Pasadena, California, labs. In a trailblazing study, he transferred gut bacteria from humans with autism into sterile mice who then exhibited autism-like behaviors. "The most rigorous clinicians and investors," he says, "realize this is a long journey we're on."



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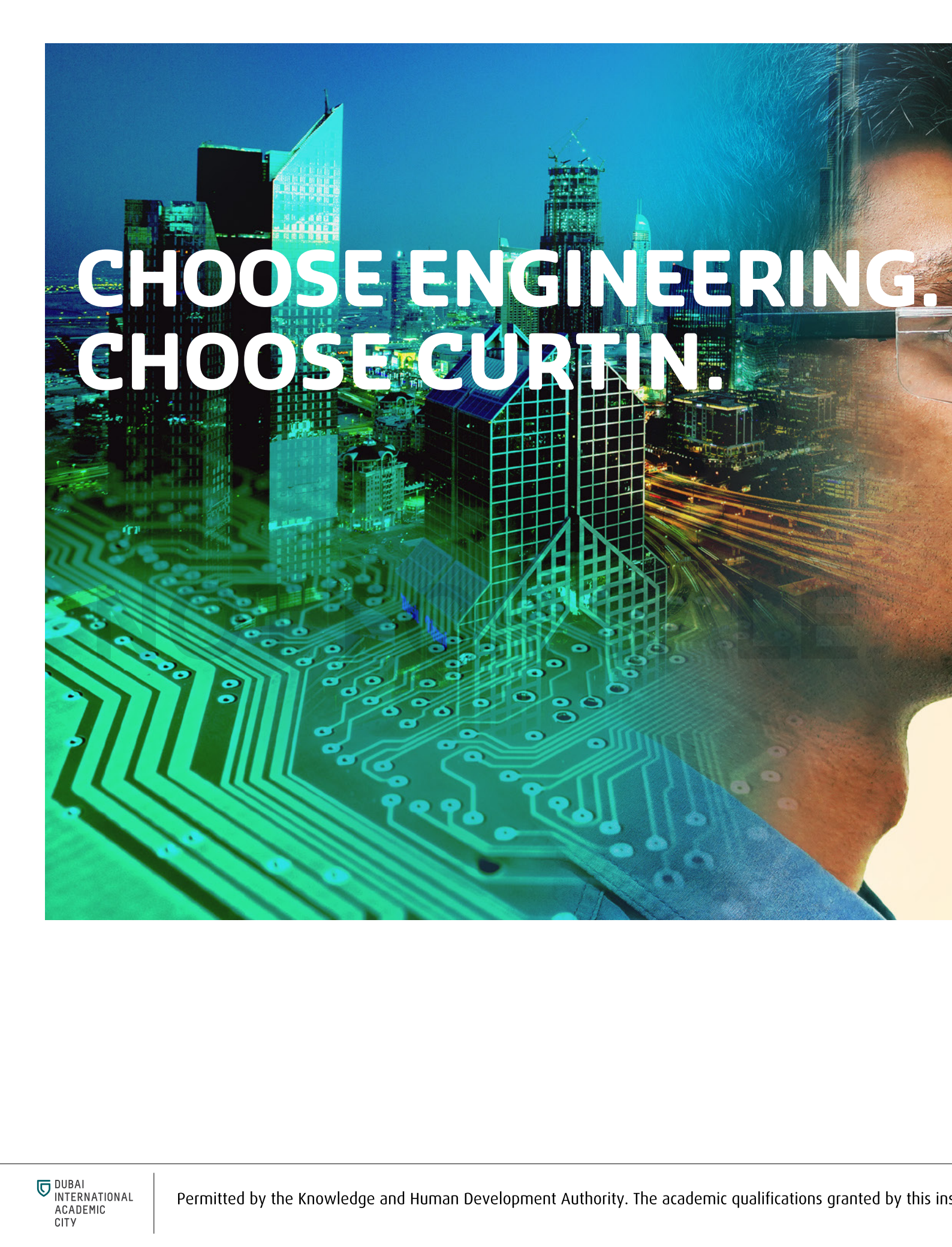
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The background is a complex digital collage. It features a night-time cityscape with illuminated skyscrapers, overlaid with a glowing green circuit board pattern. On the right side, there is a close-up, semi-transparent image of a person's face wearing glasses. The overall color palette is dominated by blues, greens, and oranges.

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NOT THE TALENTED CHOIR THAT NEVER HAD A MUSIC LESSON

From humble beginnings to the limelight in Hollywood, their success is for every ordinary African with big dreams and a bigger mission.

BY MOTLABANA MONNAKGOTLA



FROM THE DUSTY rural Moutse village in South Africa's Limpopo province to the bright lights of Hollywood, the Ndlovu Youth Choir have proven there can be no impediment to global glory if your ambition is great and your passion greater.

When this group of young boys and girls came together, little did they know the world would rise in unison to applaud them. Late last year, their turn as the finalists of *America's Got Talent*, a televised American talent show competition in the United States created by Simon Cowell, earned



them prowess and praise.

So when an opportunity came to meet them at popular South African restaurant Nando's in the suburb of Lorentzville in Johannesburg, during a launch event last month, I seized it with conviction and my camera.

The choir's co-founder and choirmaster Ralf Schmitt started from the beginning, about how he got involved with the group at the opening of the amphitheater in the village of Moutse.

What started out as a mission to serve the community ended up becoming an even greater force – on the world stage.

“This is the same village that raised the Ndlovu Youth Choir powered by the Ndlovu Care Group. The group was doing amazing work with HIV awareness and treatment in the early 2000s and the amphitheater was built for the community to gather, receive information and do drama workshops around HIV/AIDS.”

Schmitt was contacted to do music for the opening in 2008 because of his track-record in the industry, as he was also part of the internationally-renowned Drakensburg Boys' Choir.

“I’ve always loved choir and singing. I went on to study music and it worked from day one. I started conducting school choirs and worked with young people. I love composing, I love conducting, I love performing and I love teaching and the medium of a choir allows me to do them all,” he enthuses.

He had originally suggested they start a brass band but because of their location in Limpopo, far from big city Johannesburg, it would have been difficult for the teachers and trainers to regularly access and develop them.

The choir became the obvious choice as part of the orphans and vulnerable children's program at the Ndlovu Care Group.

The horrific HIV pandemic had left many orphaned and the program was meant as a healing curriculum for the community. It became so successful that when it came for the participants to leave school, they were not willing to leave the program as they were unable to find employment or afford secondary education.

Schmitt says thus an idea of transforming the choir into a platform to generate an income for unemployed youth was born.

Today, the choir boasts about 40 members and includes a job creation program for the older singers who do most of the performances.

The choir has also started a home schooling program for learners – a full-time tutor travels with them locally and internationally.

“When we turned professional in 2018, it took about six months to get us going. I called a few people I knew in the industry and bookings were coming in slow,” recalls Schmitt.

“We needed a product and the arrangement we did of a Zulu version of *Shape Of You* by Ed Sheeran, brilliantly translated by Sandile Majola and Sipho Hleza, went massively viral on social media and had 25 million views and that got the nation's attention and that was the first time we got serious publicity and bookings



“

These young people can be the beacons of what's possible in a rural community.

– Ralf Schmitt



started flooding in.”

Soon after, the choir performed live for a South African radio station and that’s where *America’s Got Talent* heard the Zulu arrangement and made contact and asked for videos.

He remembers he couldn’t get the videos out to the producers because of service delivery protests in the area. The choir conductor was blocked by an angry mob with burning tyres and rocks, but that didn’t stop the choir from performing at the Derby Theatre miles away from home.

“I am so pleased that these young people can be the beacons of what’s possible in a rural community, every single one of them are from that community and not anyone went and studied music at tertiary level, all that is produced is raw talent and they never had a music lesson in their life. As the artistic director, I try very hard at preserving that talent because that’s the magic,” he says.

The first time they got on stage, he recalls thinking that the audience didn’t know them; they probably just saw the group as kids from a rural community in South Africa.

However, the warmth they received was unforgettable. Whereas, in comparison, the experience at *America’s Got Talent* was intense and draining, but exhilarating, he recalls.

“It was nerve-racking when the music went down and the lights dimmed and Gabrielle Union [American actress] screamed ‘you are going through!’ and everyone just lost their minds. It was special we were through to the live finale.”

Thulisile Masanabo is one of the senior members in the choir who also assists with wardrobe. She has been with the choir since 2013 when she was 16 and very shy.

“I used to stand at the back of the row at the beginning. As the years went, I began to gain confidence and moved to the third row, then second, now, I’m in the first row,” says Masanabo.

She opened the song *Africa* by Toto wearing bright yellow garments to a noisy and ecstatic American crowd.

Looking back, she chuckles saying she had auditioned singing the South African national anthem.

“I was on my way back from school and Sandile called me in. He was standing outside and just calling people in to audition. He didn’t want to know if you can or cannot sing,” Masanabo says of her recruitment into the group.

All members of the choir are under the age of 30; among them, is 25-year-old Majola who helped arrange the Zulu version of *Shape Of You*.

He joined when he was a 14-year-old school boy accompanying his sister to the auditions.

“I was invited inside to try my luck on August 23, 2009,” he recalls vividly.

“I first traveled internationally with the choir in 2011 to Holland and the performance was average, it was not as nice as we perform today.”

He says the choir upped his self-esteem and he now can communicate better with people and perform more effectively on stage.

One of the songs instilled in him was written by Schmitt titled *Believe* dedicated to the choir.

“The message was for [only] us, but now, it’s for other young people as well. They should never stop dreaming,” says Majola.

This young group of music-lovers is testament that believing and dreaming big can indeed make you cross borders.

Their journey was from a tiny village, to grabbing the limelight in one of the globe’s biggest talent search shows. The world is now truly their stage. 

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THE FIVE TRENDS TO FUTURE-PROOF YOUR BUSINESS

Some of these fads were slowly building in the previous decade, others are still nascent, but need your full attention to prepare your business for the times ahead.

BY SAMANTHA STEELE

1. AI AND MACHINE LEARNING

Key takeaway: Automate repetitive tasks, but be wary of automating inefficiencies and biases.

You're surrounded by artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning: from the recommendations Netflix makes based on your viewing history to those pesky adverts that track you around the internet. As Bronwyn Williams, a trend analyst at Flux Trends in South Africa, explains, "Most of what you think is AI is actually machine learning." Williams emphasizes that fears about AI "stealing jobs" are overrated, and most businesses will see the arduous, repetitive tasks given to machines, freeing up humans for analysis and critical thinking. She warns businesses to remember it's the human interaction that differentiates one offering from another. "Don't automate away your value. Look under the hood and make sure you understand why you are automating something – and be careful not to automate inefficiencies." Looking at automated HR processes, companies

have discovered that even unconscious human biases are learned by machines (for example, CVs belonging to certain genders and races are discredited. Machines are not born neutral – especially if they're learning from humans.) Embrace machine learning, but do so with a pinch of salt.

2. DRIVERLESS CARS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Key takeaway: Autonomous cars are still about 15 years away, but it's best to prepare your fleet and supply chain choice now.

The automotive industry is going through some major changes: electric cars, the growth of services like Uber and Lift, and lastly, the development of autonomous vehicles. Though the first two will impact everyday consumer experiences, it's self-driving cars that will massively alter businesses and their supply chains across Africa in the next decade. "As convenience and efficiency are the cornerstones of the fleet industry, there is no doubt self-driving vehicles will start making a play for their



share of the fleet industry sooner rather than later,” explains Sudesh Pillay on fleet management company EQSTRA’s online platform. The supply chain will no longer be affected by driver fatigue and human error. Driverless cars will also dramatically impact accident rates (lowering them by 90%, according to some estimates) and supply chain efficiency. As Innovation Group’s *Future Now* report indicates, autonomous cars face some serious challenges across Africa before they can become a practical alternative to human drivers. “There is a vision, in the not-too-distant future, in which self-driving cars hold a lot of promise.... Others are more skeptical about the practical feasibility, especially in Africa where the infrastructural limitations (roads, electricity etc.) hold back the vision, at least in the foreseeable future. Our research indicates that self-driving cars may only become a reality in South Africa in [15] or more years and that this may spur innovative advances in infrastructure, energy services and ultimately the look and feel of roads and cities.”

3. CLIMATE CRISES AND NATURAL DISASTERS

Key takeaway: Hire a Chief Sustainability Officer to start building climate resilience into your business.

“Now is the time to start thinking seriously about resilience,” says Hugh Tyrrell, Director at Green Edge, a corporate mentoring initiative in Cape Town that helps businesses develop sustainably. “The big brands have Chief Sustainability Officers (CSO). This role is in the C-suite and is forward-thinking,” Tyrrell explains. CSOs look at how businesses can start developing their own power, lower their eco-footprint and manage their resources better. Looking to the big corporate trendsetters, there are some major shifts in corporate strategy focusing on a sustainable business model instead of growth at all costs. Unilever, for example, is holding their suppliers to the same eco-friendly standards that they themselves are working at, says Tyrrell. Natural disasters associated with the climate crisis are already affecting African businesses too. Explains Tyrrell, “In

agriculture, which is a big sector in Africa, we are seeing the effect of droughts or floods. Others have to work more closely with their suppliers to ensure supplies come in good condition and on time.” Mining is another industry heavily impacted by the climate crisis – and the push by consumers for more environmental-friendly solutions.

4. THE AGE OF CYBERATTACKS AND DATA BREACHES

Key takeaway: Make sure your IT department includes skilled data protection specialists.

As businesses innovate and rely less on physical hardware like servers, and start instead relying on the cloud, they can expect to see a massive uptick in cyberattacks and subsequent data breaches. This trend increased exponentially in 2019 (even the City of Johannesburg in South Africa was held by ransomware) and is set to explode in the coming decade. Added to this, businesses are collecting more data than ever before, particularly for marketing purposes and to tailor their product offerings. Because of this, businesses should prepare themselves for the onslaught by firstly, taking their online security very seriously, secondly, training their staff (employees are the weakest link in any security chain) and thirdly, putting more budget behind appropriate security measures. “The demand for narrow cybersecurity expertise is driven by a constantly changing threat landscape, as well as evolving technologies, such as cloud or IoT. As a result, we see the bigger demand in, for example, threat intelligence analysts and dedicated threat intelligence services, and experts for cloud platform protection. The call for data protection specialists is seen in both technical and regulatory and compliance aspects,” says Alexander Moiseev, Chief Business Officer at online security software Kaspersky.

5. THE REMOTE WORKFORCE

Key takeaway: Flexi-hours and working remotely are practical ways to combat challenges like loadshedding and traffic.

With intermittent power supply (particularly in South Africa), increasing traffic and less reliance on physical IT infrastructure like servers, the remote and flexible workforce is becoming a norm. Says Moiseev, “The working model is already being changed, with 40% of small and medium companies regularly allowing their employees to work at locations outside the office – from home or while traveling.” In addition, health scares like the coronavirus are amplifying these trends. “Apps that enable remote working are having a moment,” explains Williams. “You now get filters to add makeup to video conferences so you don’t have to dress up when you’re working from home.” Many employees expect the flexibility of remote working when job hunting, and businesses reap the benefits of agility. 



AN EVENING WHEN THE STARS DESCENDED WITH RACQUETS

The world's biggest names in men's tennis today, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, faced-off on African soil for the first time at a celebrity charity match also attended by Bill Gates. FORBES AFRICA was witness.

BY BUSI LETHOLE

THIS IS THE STORY OF HOW ON A BALMY summer day in February, a billionaire, a late-night talk show host and two sporting legends came together for the mother of all tennis matches in The Mother City.

In the coastal city of Cape Town in South Africa, a sea of admirers at Cape Town Stadium on February 7 waited with bated breath for the men with racquets they had booked tickets months in advance to see. And this for an exhibition match titled, 'The Match In Africa', which drew a record crowd of 51,945, all for a good cause.

Security was tight. And the crowds were building up.

And in they walked, for the practice session first.

Roger Federer appeared from the players' tunnel, wearing his Uniqlo black shirt and shorts, a white headband and white Nike shoes bearing the 'RF' logo.

Next to the 20-time Grand Slam men's singles champion was his mother, Lynette Federer, in a distinct green top and black pants.

Shortly, Rafael Nadal, the 'Spanish Bull', the world number two in men's singles tennis, made his grand entry on to the hard court sporting pink and white Nike shoes with the word 'Rafa' written on them, a pink Nike shirt, and a white Nike baseball cap with his trademark 'bull' logo.

And the two players gave the crowd a taste of what

Cape Town Stadium;
(below) Federer and Nadal



they would see later on in the day: world-class tennis.

Earlier, Lynette, who hails from Kempton Park, a small town in the East Rand of Gauteng in South Africa, had spoken to *FORBES AFRICA* about the legacy she thinks Federer and Nadal are leaving for the next generation, in particular those in South Africa.

“I really do hope that it leaves a certain message because South Africans are known to be passionate sportsmen. I do hope that tennis can pick up once again as it has been – South Africa was once upon a time a big tennis nation – and that it maybe does inspire more children to play the sport and that would be marvelous because that’s one part of the message we would like to leave. But the main message is that we’re also here to help the children of southern Africa.”

Lynette is on the board of the Roger Federer Foundation that has managed to uplift the lives of over a million children in southern Africa.

In June 2019, tennis fans in South Africa couldn’t contain their excitement when Federer had disclosed in *Vogue*’s highly-popular video feature, *73 Questions*, that his greatest rival, the 19-time Grand Slam champion Nadal, was going to help him again for the Roger Federer Foundation.

“We’re going to try to break the record for most attendance, in Cape Town, South Africa, for my foundation... I’m so looking forward to it, so thank you



Rafa,” Federer had said.

This was the sixth edition of the match, but the first to be played on African soil.

The previous day, Federer had taken to Instagram, posting a video saying “hello everybody, I’m in Cape Town, I just got to the tennis court or football stadium, have a look, it’s amazing,” as he panned the camera for a full view of the stadium. “And we have got the orange color for Rafa so he feels like he’s on clay but it’s hard court.”

Federer was referring to Nadal being dubbed the ‘king of clay’ for winning 12 of his 19 Grand Slam titles on the orange clay courts of Roland Garros (French Open) in Paris.

The media stood on the courtside as the champions displayed some of their famous moves. Federer’s dad, Robert, was also present.

The mood in the stadium was beginning to get ecstatic.

The ‘Swiss Maestro’ and ‘Spanish Bull’ are undoubtedly the biggest rivals the sport has ever seen.

Yet, despite their fierce on-court rivalry, the two have managed to form a close friendship off-court.

More importantly, they have managed to inspire fans from all walks of life in different parts of the world.

And South Africa was no exception.

In the audience, a middle-aged woman named Sylva, dressed like Federer, gushed: “The moment is just too big because you don’t know what to expect and you have all these images that [Federer and Nadal] are going to shake your hands and you’re going to pass out.”

Theresa, another woman dressed as Nadal, sporting the player’s signature pink headband, enthused: “It’s actually long overdue that we’ve had some nice international tennis players in South Africa and it’s for a good cause as well.”

Jim, a 63-year-old tennis fanatic from Stellenbosch, originally from Zimbabwe, said he paid a fortune to witness this moment. “The fact that [Federer and Nadal] have been able to maintain their stature, physicality and competitiveness is absolutely amazing. You can have a good day but they have had a good 20 years of playing tennis. It’s just their spirit... Tonight is a good night to forget about all the bad things and concentrate on the good things because there’s a lot of good things in South Africa.”

One of the most rapturous moments on that packed night was when the ‘Mexican Wave’ was achieved in a metachronal rhythm by fans, and captured by thousands on their phones.

And then the world’s second richest man staged an entry.

Bill Gates appeared from the players’ tunnel with his doubles partner Federer, in matching outfits. Federer now swapped his Uniqlo black shirt and shorts for a white shirt and green shorts. He also decided to exchange the white headband for a green one. Gates opted not to wear the headband but had his glasses on.

Shortly afterwards, Nadal and South Africa’s very own Trevor Noah too appeared from the players’ tunnel in matching outfits to screaming fans and a thunderous applause. They wore pink Nike jackets featuring Nadal’s bull logo, pink shirts, pink and white shoes, and white shorts. Noah walked on to the court with the confidence of a multiple Grand Slam winner.



Above: Trevor Noah and Rafael Nadal
Below: Bill Gates and Roger Federer

“I feel incredibly excited. So happy! I spent a lot of my childhood here. It’s been 20 years since my last time to Cape Town. It was worth the wait. I didn’t expect this kind of a welcome,” said Federer to *SuperSport* even as fans held up signs that said ‘welcome home Roger’.

He said some of the best things he experienced coming back to South Africa were the food and lifestyle. “It’s a beautiful country. It’s so scenic. The safaris, and you name it. The people at the end of the day have the warmest hearts. It’s a wonderful place.”

On playing Noah for the first time, he said: “I have never seen

“

Play aggressive and very well, that's the most clear way to success.

– Rafael Nadal

him play tennis in my life so that's a good advantage for him but I'm not sure how good he is. But he's got the best partner he could find in Rafa so it's going to be very special. Trevor is a great guy, great person, so funny as well, and I think that could throw us off a little bit. And Rafa, obviously the legend he is, we know how great he is.”

The Swiss maestro then went on to tell the crowd: “I hope you all have a blast. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you!”

Gates had previously played in a doubles team for two ‘The Match For Africa’ tournaments prior to ‘The Match In Africa’ finale. Together with Federer, they called themselves ‘Gateserer’, and were unbeaten.

On teaming up with Federer for the third time, Gates said: “We’ve had a lot of fun. The events have been a blast to do. And they’ve raised great resources for his foundation so it’s a thrill to be here; the biggest crowd ever!”

And Nadal, on being back on South African soil, said: “It’s amazing. I’ve never played and felt like this... Just thank you everybody for supporting this.”

The crowds cheered louder.

“It’s very very special. We’re here supporting Roger’s foundation event. It makes me super happy.”

Noah nodded profusely.

“We’re going to create good team work for sure. No doubt,” said Nadal. “I said to Trevor the strategy is clear. Play aggressive and very well, that’s the most clear way to have success.”

Ten years ago, who would have thought that a young man from Soweto, a township in South Africa, would be playing tennis with two of the world’s greatest male tennis players, and also tech-billionaire and Microsoft founder Gates?

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"We've got a strong strategy. I think Roger's at a disadvantage. We're both half Swiss, half South African, so I'm in his head. I know what he's going to do. I won't use it too much against him. I've got one of the greatest players that the world has ever seen next to me so we're going to make it a good match. It's going to be a really good match," said Noah.

He said playing alongside Nadal was a great combination because "the World Cup 2010 was in South Africa. Spain won that World Cup. So we've got a special connection right here. We're bringing that magic back today."

Noah brought his trademark humor to the court but that wasn't enough to pull an upset despite having Nadal on his team. Team 'Gateserer' beat Team 'N-Squared' 6-3 to hold onto their unbeaten streak. Federer said on Noah's tennis game: "I couldn't even see the feet, they were so fast."

Before the players headed back into the locker rooms, Gates spoke about the work the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is doing in Africa. "A lot of the work we do in South Africa is to help fight HIV and tuberculosis. And so, going and meeting the doctors, seeing the patients and understanding the drugs; how we can make them better. It's inspiring to see the people who do the work in the field. Things have improved in those areas but there's a lot more to do."

Preluding the main match of the night, the Ndlovu Youth Choir, a South African singing group that recently appeared on *America's Got Talent*, performed Shakira's foot-tapping *Waka Waka* song.

The atmosphere was reminiscent of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The players once again appeared from the players' tunnel, returning to court and a frenzied crowd.

Spotted in the front-row were South African billionaire Patrice Motsepe and his fashion entrepreneur wife Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe, as also the country's rugby legend Brian Habana.

Federer spoke about Nadal trailing behind him for the record of the most Grand Slam wins.

"The good thing about tonight is that he cannot catch me. Tonight, I'm relaxed." Federer further said he wouldn't mind if Nadal caught up with him, however, he would like to win one more Wimbledon title.

Siya Kolisi, the first black captain of the South African rugby team, which won the Rugby World Cup late last year, also made a special appearance. He came on court bearing a gift for the rugby team's special fan, Federer. From one champion to another, Kolisi handed over a Number 8 green Springboks jersey with Federer's surname written on it to symbolize his South African roots.

Federer wore it and the two champions hugged.

"Thank you to all of you beautiful people of South Africa. We appreciate everything you do. Roger has been telling me how amazing it's been since he's come back here. It just shows how many great things we can achieve as a country; for these two gentlemen to come out here and want to play in South Africa is really an awesome thing. And I hope it inspires a lot of people to come here and do this because we've got beautiful facilities like these and we can fill up the stadium which is amazing," said Kolisi to *SuperSport*.

In the end, tennis fans were treated to a thrilling match that saw

Federer hitting his famous backhand, a shot that has been instrumental in his career. He won the first set by 6-4. Nadal didn't hold back either. He unleashed his lethal curling forehand shot on Federer as if it was one of the many 'Fedal' Grand Slam final classics that tennis fans have witnessed over the years. Nadal managed to scoop the second set 6-3. In the final set, he made some errors that ushered Federer's victory, as he won the match by 6-4 3-6 6-3. The two hugged it out by the net.

'The Match In Africa' raised \$3.5 million, the highest amount the Roger Federer Foundation has ever netted from a single exhibition match. The proceeds will help support children's education in Africa as the exhibition is all about empowering children, in particular, in the area of early childhood education. The event also set a world record for the most attendees at a single tennis match.

So the numbers beg the question: is South Africa ready for a tennis Grand Slam, or at the very least, ready to be added on to the calendars of the ATP and WTA tours?

At least on this night, it was clear South Africans love sport. Maybe the game has only just begun. **F**

WHAT FEDERER THOUGHT NADAL MUST DO IN SOUTH AFRICA

"I think Rafa has to go to Table Mountain, and then also of course to the Cape of Good Hope, maybe some of the vineyards, and Bo-Kaap – I went there this morning... I think [this trip] is going to make him want to come back to have a proper time with his wife and maybe his kids, in the future, and really travel South Africa and Africa extensively. He came here for the 2010 FIFA World Cup finals when Spain played at Soccer City in Johannesburg so he's got a little taste here already and I think this one is definitely going to motivate him for many more returns," said Federer to FORBES AFRICA.



Photos by Christiaan Kotze; Photo by Reg Caldecott



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BREAKING NEW GROUND

The Mining Indaba in Cape Town called for deeper and significant partnerships between government and the private sector.



The mining industry of South Africa has been through difficult times over the last decade and needed support at this year's Mining Indaba more than ever.

Mining is certainly a mainstay of the South African economy. The industry employs 454,861 people and in 2019 exported R348.2 billion, according to figures released by the Minerals Council South Africa. It paid R24.3 billion in company taxes and R8.6 billion in royalties for the minerals extracted.

The Mining Indaba in Cape Town is

the biggest mining gathering in the world. This year, it brought together nearly 7,000 delegates, including more than 900 mining company executives and 600 investors. The idea was to support South African mining and Brand SA – set up in 2002 to promote South Africa's image around the world - lent its weight to the effort to win over global investors by presenting a positive image of the industry. There is a lot at stake.

“What I think we need to bear in mind is that South Africa's base of minerals, when you look at the 4th industrial

revolution... if you look at the value and quantity when you look at the global reserves that we hold of particular minerals for fourth industrial related technological development... I think there are some tremendous opportunities,” says Petrus de Kock, Brand SA's general manager of research.

Power, or the lack of it, is one of the problems that the South African mining industry has to overcome. In 2019, power cuts cost the mines production and investor interest.

One of the positive moves that came

out of the Mining Indaba was a pledge by South African mining minister Gwede Mantashe to open up a public private electricity generating company.

“If there is more competition we can pull down the price of electricity to the mines,” Mantashe told a packed press conference on the first day of the Mining Indaba.

The move was welcomed by many at the Mining Indaba, including Brand SA.

“One of the big announcements was the establishment of the new energy generation company as Mr Mantashe indicated, to help us work through some of our energy challenges in the country and the bigger question of the future of Eskom. I think more importantly Mr Mantashe emphasized, for this sector to grow in South Africa we really need deep and significant partnerships between government and private sector. I think hearing that from the minister of minerals, after several years of stalemate between government and the industry on the policy environment etc. we are beginning to move in the right kind of direction so I think that’s something important to emphasize,” says de Kock.

Many major mining companies presented their vision, in packed auditoriums, for the future of the mining industry.

“Anglo Platinum presented on the global growing...not just on the demand but on growing new technologies that involve platinum for example...of which we have 87% of the world’s reserve. So I think if you look at the ease of doing businesses, it’s very important how the president is driving this strategy of improving the ease of doing business in the country, I think those elements are some of the key points so far, for us, from the Indaba,” says de Kock who was impressed by the narrative around platinum group metals.

“Fascinating presentation on the utilisation and new technologies and also for example one of the pieces of data that was shared with us, 17 countries that account for about 70% global GDP are at a policy level, beginning to look at fuel cell technology for public transport, for big



South African mining minister Gwede Mantashe

infrastructure, shipment, trucks etc. So I think it’s a case of ‘watch this space.’

Often these presentations to foreign investors can be promising, as the African National Congress member Paul Mashatile found out when he sat in.

“In fact, there were a lot of companies from Canada that were saying in that session that we are here to invest. South African companies come, those who want to partner with us in different areas of mining – whether it’s about new technologies or it’s about new vehicles and machines etc.’ – because there is a whole value chain out there in mining. So, I saw that those who are here from different parts of the world are here because they want to invest. So that’s positive!” he says.

The ruling ANC has the job of helping to ease business and make the South African economy more attractive to investors. How is it tackling the job?

“Firstly we’ve decided that the government must do structural reforms. Make sure that all the state owned companies are operating properly...good governance and have boards that are working properly...have CEOs and management that are working properly. Root out corruption from state institutions. I think if we do that we will succeed in turning around the economy and see high levels of growth because the institutions will be produc-

tive,” says Mashatile.

Mining and Brand SA also want more South Africans to be included in the mining industry, especially women. A prominent South African woman in mining is Daphne Mashile-Nkosi who owns manganese operations in the country’s Northern Cape.

“I think if you look at the school of mining at the University of Witwatersrand from about seven years ago, they have produced more than 50% young women engineers. The problem with mining is that women are never given the space. Even if they’re appointed they’re appointed because people want to comply, but they’re actually not committed allowing them (women) into their spaces. If you look at boards – for instance - they allow women to sit on boards but there are those cultural and traditional stereotypes where people actually feel that women don’t belong there and therefore from their own subconscious, they actually make them feel uncomfortable. And until such time that we claim our space, that mining is for us as women, because for as long as women are not in the mining sector society will never improve,” she says.

A long way to go in many respects; yet so much could improve this year for South African mining with commodity prices improving and new investment on the way.

Luvo Manyonga competes in the Men's Long Jump Final during day two of the 17th IAAF World Athletics Championships





THE LONG JUMP TO FREEDOM

A reformed drug addict, South African long jumper Luvo Manyonga is now aiming for gold at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

BY NICK SAID

SOUTH AFRICAN LONG JUMPER Luvo Manyonga has overcome incredible hardships and sorrow in his life to emerge as a genuine gold medal prospect at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, where he will be among the favorites to stand on top of the podium.

Manyonga's rise, fall and rise again serves as a lesson to many that the desire to succeed can burn stronger than all else.

The 29-year-old emerged as one of the most promising athletes in South Africa when he won gold at the World Junior Championships in 2010, and the following year was victorious at the African Games in Maputo, Mozambique.

But what followed was a downward spiral that was as shocking as it was quick, as he

began to use the recreational drug tik, a type of crystal methamphetamine that ultimately led to a positive test and a suspension.

Manyonga went through rehabilitation after admitting his addiction, and was handed an 18-month ban from competition.

More heartache followed in 2014 when, just as he was planning his return to competition, his long-time coach and mentor, Mario Smith, was killed in a car accident on his way to visit the athlete at his Mbekweni home in South Africa.

It proved another devastating blow and a return to drugs, before the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) finally stepped in to provide assistance, setting Manyonga up at the High Performance Centre in Pretoria,

away from Cape Town, which by his own admission was, “where I hook myself up with the devil”.

“I do want my life to be an example to others that regardless of your past, you can still reach your dreams if you work hard and have the right people around you supporting you,” Manyonga tells FORBES AFRICA.

“It’s not that I see myself as a role model, but more that I want to be able to inspire kids out there that come from tough backgrounds to find something they are passionate about and follow that. “I am so blessed to be able to provide for myself and my family now through athletics, and I want others to see that they don’t have to be victims of their own circumstances, and that

they are in charge of their destiny.”

Five years on, Manyonga has won a silver medal at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games, and claimed gold at the 2017 World Championships in London and the 2018 Commonwealth Games on Australia’s Gold Coast.

He will be a top contender in Tokyo, where he could claim his greatest achievement of all if he can become an Olympic champion.

“It’s every athlete’s dream to win Olympic gold and certainly going into the event that is a target, and I am confident I am doing all I can to try reach that goal. It’s going to be a tough competition though,” he admits.

“There are at least four or five guys that could compete for the title (in Tokyo). This makes it a very exciting event.

“I am focused on making sure I am ticking all the right boxes and leaving nothing up to chance. Together with my team, I will choose the right competitions (and times of rest) to make sure I am 100 percent ready for the Games.”

Manyonga has been plotting gold essentially since the last Olympic Games in Rio, and he is happy with preparations in the last 12 months.

“Over the past few years my coach and I have figured out what works for me and my body, and have kept Tokyo in mind since last year already in terms of my training and competing.

“I was very happy with my form in 2019. The long jump has become very competitive, which is fantastic for

the event, and so on the day, at least five of us could win the gold – this means I just need to keep focused on myself and doing my best, not getting caught up in what others are doing.”

Manyonga is well aware that he almost let his dream die through his drug use, but if anything, that period has made him mentally stronger and provided more fuel for his passion.

For a young boy who just loved to jump, he says the sport chose him rather than the other way round. “I just always loved to jump! When I was younger I would entertain my friends by jumping over cars. So in many ways long jump chose me.” 

THE CORONAVIRUS THREAT TO THE TOKYO 2020 OLYMPIC GAMES

The deadly coronavirus that has spread through China and beyond has emerged as a big threat to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games just months out from their July 24 start.

By mid February, there had been nearly 60 confirmed cases in Japan, leading to major concerns that the flood of athletes and spectators from around the world who will descend on Tokyo could be in danger.

“I am extremely worried that the spread of the infectious disease could throw cold water on the momentum toward the Games,” Toshiro Muto, chief executive of the Tokyo Olympic organizing committee, told Japanese broadcaster NHK. “I hope that it will be stamped out as soon as possible.

“We need to make sure the public, the athletes and stakeholders feel safe and secure. We have to be objective and cool-headed as we don’t want to instigate a sense of fear.”

Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told the country’s parliament that the Games would go ahead as planned.

“We will take appropriate measures so that the preparation for the Olympic Games will proceed without affecting them.”

What is not in Japan’s control though is how the virus spreads around the world, and what restrictions they may have to place on visitors in the future.



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BY TSHILIDZI MARWALA

The writer is a professor and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg. He deputizes President Cyril Ramaphosa on the South African Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution

How To Be A Major Player In Global Food Markets

LAST YEAR, BILL Gates named his 10 breakthrough technologies for the year. Among the technological developments he outlined were robot dexterity, new-wave nuclear power, customized cancer vaccines and the cow-free burger. It was the first time that the list, usually compiled by *MIT Technology Review*, was created by a guest editor. It is no wonder that Gates rightly predicted that home computers and the internet would infiltrate much of our lives. Yet, when I went through this list, it was not necessarily universal. Many of these breakthrough technologies made sense through Western lenses. We have to ask, which of these breakthrough technologies will have the most significant impact on the African continent?

Perhaps the most pressing issue for Africa now is agriculture. Climate change

has had a devastating impact on the agriculture sector, which is particularly concerning when you consider that most African economies still heavily depend on it. A study by McKinsey & Company found that more than 60% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa is smallholder farmers, and about 23% of sub-Saharan Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) comes from agriculture. Yet, increases in temperatures, changes in precipitation patterns and extreme weather events not only disrupt entire industries but reduce food availability and impacts food quality. This, of course, is coupled with the fastest-rising population, which places more strain on resources.

We have already observed in the last few years how devastating a drought can be. South Africa has become a significant food importer, while Kenya and Zimbabwe are on the verge of starvation. This has seen the regional and national economic growth take a severe knock. Yet, as the United Nations put it, "the continent has enormous potential, not only to feed itself and eliminate hunger and food insecurity but also be a major player in global food markets." So how do we go about this? I would argue that tapping into the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) does not just serve as a way of revitalizing the agricultural sector but also realizing its potential. As the American financier Bernard Baruch once put it: "Agriculture is the greatest and fundamentally the most important of our industries. The cities are but the branches of the tree of national life, the roots of which go deep into the land. We all flourish or decline with the farmer."

I have just bought a farm and have been looking at ways in which artificial intelligence (AI) can make farming more efficient. Farmers can tap into AI to combat disease and pests, which have been made worse by climate change and pesticide use. Drones and other robots equipped with computer vision can collect data

points from the farms' existing crops. If you were to ask me to spell out some breakthrough technologies, many of them would be inextricably linked with the agricultural sector.

For instance, it is estimated that humans would need to plant over 1.2 trillion trees to combat climate change. Here, we could use AI to automate this process.

Airlitix is a South African AI software that is currently being used in drones to automate greenhouse management processes. We could take this a step further. Airlitix can collect temperature, humidity, and carbon dioxide data as well as analyse soil and crop health.

Elsewhere, similar technology has been adopted. The Third Eye project in Kenya uses near-infrared cameras mounted on drones to survey and diagnose the plants for pests and diseases, water stress and nutrient deficiencies. This requires a combination of historical data and the use of AI. Last year, IBM developed an AI-powered app to test the quality of their soil and water on location, in real-time. The AgroPad is a technology that can rapidly perform chemical analysis of water and soil samples. In California, Ceres Imaging has mapped fields using images of farms, which are analysed using AI to ascertain whether crops are getting enough water. This technology helps farmers decide when to plant, water, spray and harvest their crops.

This conversation crops up as we scrutinize what it means to have a green economy. The 4IR does not merely provide tools for efficiency, but it presents a unique opportunity to interrogate how we can transform the industry as our natural environment deteriorates.

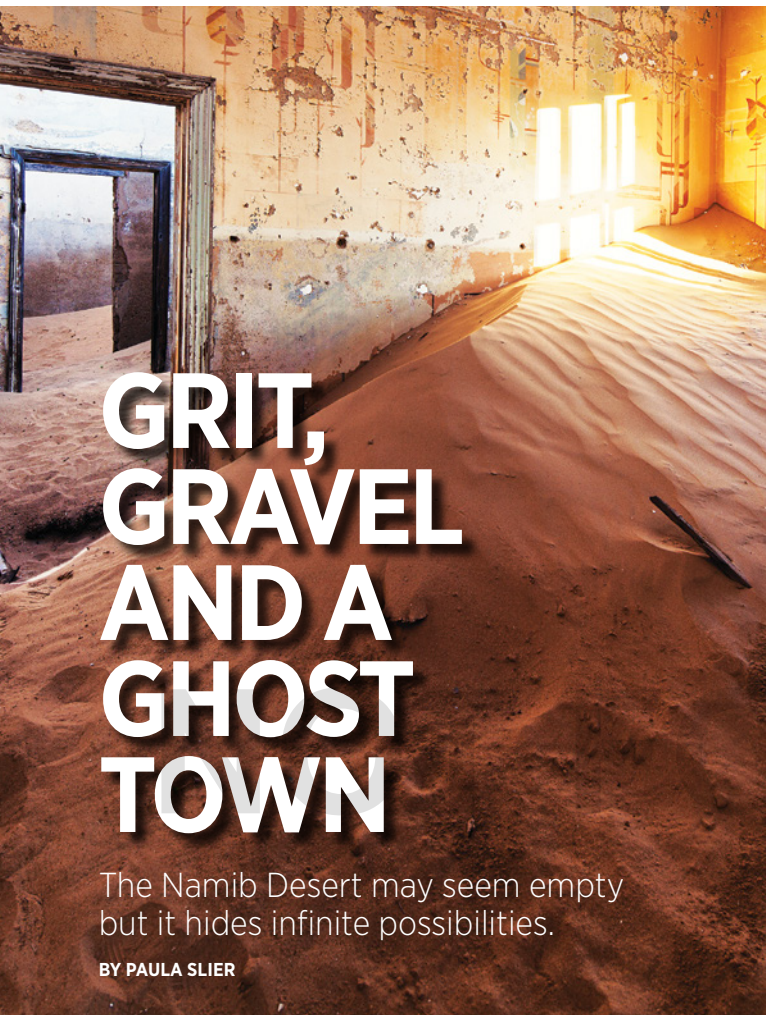
To a large extent, we underestimate the importance of the agricultural sector. Yet, without it, we would not have food security, we would see our economies crumble and there would be untold job losses. **F**



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GRIT, GRAVEL AND A GHOST TOWN

The Namib Desert may seem empty but it hides infinite possibilities.

BY PAULA SLIER

I CURSED UNDER MY BREATH FOR THE THOUSANDTH time as another clump of red sand landed on the cracked car windshield. The taxi driver was navigating the Namib Desert at a hundred miles an hour with Chris Rea singing somewhat prophetically *Road To Nowhere* at full blast through the sound system.

Locals in Namibia laughingly call the experience of grit meeting gravel beneath one's car wheels "an African massage". Red sunrays kiss sunburned sandbanks, the highest in the world, as the Namib Desert straddles the Atlantic coast.

But the elderly driver behind the wheel was clearly out of control. My desperate shouts of 'slow down' seemed to incentivize him to go even faster. Two hours into this roller-coaster ride from hell, he suddenly registered my pleas for a toilet and so we juddered into a dejected-looking gas station forgotten somewhere deep inside the desert dunes.

Every so often life presents one with critical decisions that require deep introspection. This was one of those moments. I entered a toilet cubicle with flies swarming all over the place. Just how badly did I

really need to go, or could I hold it in, was suddenly the most pressing question of my existence.

A few hours later, we screeched into a ghost town abandoned in the 1930s. Kolmanskop was once a rich mining village but today its empty buildings are flooded with sand – an eerie reminder of the violent storms that sometimes sweep through this corner of the world.

For decades, Kolmanskop hummed with prosperity thanks to its diamond-yielding soil. But over time, its fields began showing signs of depletion and by 1928, new diamond deposits discovered elsewhere encouraged its residents to leave.

As the sands blew in, the doors of buildings fell off their hinges and windows flew open to welcome in the desert dust. Soon, the prehistoric wasteland reclaimed the once vibrant village and the inhospitable remoteness of the Namib Desert enveloped it once again.

Formerly named 'South West Africa', Namibia was under South African administration from 1915 until it became independent in 1990. With more than 300 days of sunshine a year, it is the driest country in sub-Saharan Africa. Unfortunately its long distances pose real logistical problems when it comes to needing a toilet – unless of course one is content to disappear behind a sand dune which I learned to do with increased abandonment.

My first view of the capital city, Windhoek, was a patch of green grass hidden behind some bushes with my trousers around my ankle and a roll of toilet paper in my left hand. I don't know who got more of a fright – me or the bewildered kudu that jumped across my path. A few meters away, a group of giraffes and elephants grazed quietly in the afternoon heat.

The Namib Desert may seem empty but it hides many possibilities. An ox wagon appears in the middle of nowhere – probably once used to carry diamonds washed downstream. I view it from a helicopter ride – during which I am focused primarily on trying not to throw up breakfast.

In the late 1980s, a traction steam engine was imported from Germany to try replace the tedious ox-wagon traffic. A mechanic, who was also to serve as a driver, arrived, and after taking one look at the desert, went home. Eventually, the engine was pushed to the country's former main harbor at Swakopmund and for a short time did surprisingly well before it blew a tube that could not be replaced.

Today the so-called 'Martin Luther monument' with the inscription "here I stand and I cannot do otherwise" – pays tribute to those early efforts at industrialization.

If you do make it to Namibia, you must go sandboarding. I did the 'lie down' version that the brochures proudly advertise requires no experience. They're right – they just forget to add to expect clumps of sand in one's mouth. So there I was on my stomach, arms at 45 degrees with fingers desperately wrapped around the corners of the paraffin-based sandboard, wondering what the hell I was doing.

Soon, a gradual decline down a sand dune makes the taxi driver's antics pale by comparison and I'm shooting head first into the unknown. There's no better way to get acquainted with the desert than this. Grit blowing into your face as the desert skies hug you. 

Photo by Michael Toye via Getty Images

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