

# Developing Tomorrow's Leaders

## Tomorrow's Leaders Convention attracts nearly 1000 delegates

The convention, the fifth of its kind, hosted by Cape Media and sponsored by DHL, saw close to 1000 aspiring leaders streaming in to attend the event.

Opinion leaders shared their knowledge on various topics as they dissected the true meaning of 'sustainable leadership.' Topics included: business, finance, banking, technology, information and telecommunications, retail and management.

Highly esteemed Public Protector, Advocate Thulisile Madonsela delivered the key note address.

The first plenary session was covered by Advocate Madonsela, Sumesh Rahavendra (Head of marketing: Sub Saharan Africa, DHL), Michael Allschwang (Managing Executive, Vodacom SA) and Nobuzwe Mangcu (Divisional Manager: Group Corporate Affairs, Mercedes-Benz South Africa).

Leadership in Africa was the hot topic and panellists engaged the delegates intensely. Perspectives from a global organisation and enhancing sustainable leadership through technology and collaborative sustainable leadership, were the focal areas.

The second plenary session was carried through by means of a dialogue between delegates and panellists on the subject of "Sustainable Leadership, Training is Killing Knowledge". Focus was given to topics which included: the future of people's performance, wellness and your bottom line and leadership branding.

Panelists were: Saki Macozoma (Chairperson, Stanlib), Simone Zanetti (CEO, Allos Consulting) John Tedstrom (President and CEO, GBC Health) and Thebe Ikalafeng (Founder, Brand Leadership Group and Brand Leadership Academy).

The topic of sustainable leadership was broadly addressed as a highly pertinent issue. South Africa's future is in the hands of Tomorrow's Leaders. Yet, the question remains: What will they inherit?

This question is predominantly the reason that the two concepts, leadership and sustainability, were aligned. We have bequeathed to the leaders of tomorrow a broken world.

An inspirational and thought provoking Gandhi laid down the seven deadly social sins for us: Politics without principle, wealth without work, commerce without morality, pleasure without conscience, education without character, science without humanity and worship without sacrifice.

These are the root of the maladies that are found in human societies all over the world.

Our world is broken because we fail to understand what a fragile world we have. Systems theorist, Winston Fuller, called it a 'spaceship earth' as far back as 1969. Bill Bryson stated in a book called *A Short History of Nearly Everything* that humans have been on earth for about 0,0001% of the planet's history yet the damage we have done we cannot even measure.

What are the challenges of our epoch that can create/cause a door to be closed on human existence? The source of the trouble is the

seven deadly social sins identified by Gandhi.

Public Protector Advocate Thuli Madonsela pointed out in her speech that ethical leadership is the lifeblood of sustainable leadership where the end does not justify the means.

Unethical leadership in the integrity sector like the office of Public Protector South Africa, relates to administrative acts that cause injustice to people. For example, gross irregularities in the social housing schemes and lease contract irregularities.

She warned that those intoxicated with power make decisions that hurt ordinary people.

She emphasised the importance of the role played by those who entrusted with public resources. These officials must conduct themselves in an ethical manner and ensure that public resources are used within the law and in the interest of the people.

The Sustainability Leadership Forum sums up our current challenge: Humanity is overwhelming the carrying capacity of the planet.

This is not just an issue of a population explosion - not only because there are 7-billion of us here but because we have completely missed the point when it comes to resource stewardship!

The Sustainability Leadership Forum argues that we need much more than tinkering with the current trajectory of our world. They argue that what is needed is 'a broad and deep transition to a new way of life, a new way of doing business, new kinds of social organisations and a fundamental shift in our awareness of nature and our relationships with each other.'

Recently the World Economic Forum has put into public debate a scenario that it calls Dystopia in which large numbers of young people contend with chronic levels of unemployment, while concurrently, the largest population of retirees in history depend upon heavily indebted governments.

That will mean European economies will remain in the doldrums curtailing exports from all their trading partners, including us. If you apply that analysis to our situation you will find that we could have a reverse but equally dangerous demographic. We have a largely young population with chronic unemployment and increasing dependence on a welfare system that is supported by a diminishing number of productive people and assets. The social consequences may even be more dire for us.

The Sustainability Leadership Forum observes the various protest movements, some without clear leadership and strategic objectives and concludes that Tomorrow's Leaders must channel the passion generated by the issues by leading with "...a sense of history, shaped by continuous engagement, and articulated in a way that is inspiring and compelling, and calls forth the voluntary abandoning of old assumptions in favour of more harmonious and a holistic path"

We need the Leaders of Tomorrow, in fact, today, to understand these issues and to mobilise accordingly and as a matter of urgency because "the economic tide going out has not only shown us who was swimming naked", as Warren Buffett puts it, "but it has also revealed that no invisible hand is behind the curtain guiding our economy to inevitable



Sumesh Rahavendra, Head of Marketing, Sub Saharan Africa, DHL and Adv. Thulisile Madonsela, Public Protector

success".

You may not remember how Trevor Manuel was ridiculed at the beginning of his tenure as Minister of Finance when he referred to amorphous markets. Buffett's comment is a measure of how the world has changed and swept away so many orthodoxies.

Mercedes-Benz is clearly a leader in driving sustainable development through socio-economic partnerships. They believe that collaboration is the key to success. To them - sustainability is also about empowerment. Not only empowering the leaders of today, but also empowering Tomorrow's Leaders. Empowerment is a key focus area for Mercedes-Benz in the South African context. How do they get the balance right to empower the disenfranchised today without setting events in motion that will impact on the empowerment of future generations?

Sustainability is about the greater good of the whole, instead of the benefit of a few. Therein lies the call to collaborative sustainable leadership. In a country often divided by our differences, probably one of the most diverse nations in the world, the concept of unity and collaboration does not always come easily.

As a leader in sustainability, Mercedes-Benz are proud of the fact that they have exceeded the expectations of their mother company, Daimler AG, when they introduced ways of reducing the carbon footprint of the plant long before the set time limit. The environmental implications of the savings in kilowatts

of gas and electricity, translates to a reduction of 28 015 tonnes or 32% of CO2 over the last three years.

Some of the measures that they have successfully implemented, include: The installation of energy efficient lighting, Solar water heating, Re-using preconditioned air and optimising process temperature parameters, improving insulation, optimising plant operating and shutdown times, implementing energy efficient equipment, and improving compressed air systems. As a responsible business, they cannot ensure a sustainable future without having effective environmental management systems in place to shape our operations.

As part of the collaborative approach, they also advise suppliers along the value chain to bring their operations in line with environmental standards. The United Nations has declared 2005 - 2014 the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in line with the Millennium Development Goals. For this reason, MBSA focus half of their socio-economic development activities on education. This directly creates an enabling and empowering environment for Tomorrow's Leaders.

Their education projects are based on partnership and collaboration with the likes of NGO's, the Department of Education, the SETA's and community leaders. These include the STEP project; Rally to Read; School Start-up Programme in the Eastern Cape; St Anthony's Education Centre Technical Learnerships and the

Laureus Sport for Good Foundation programmes. For maximum effect and sustainability our education focus spans the spectrum from pre-primary to tertiary and adult education.

The afternoon part of the convention was set aside for various break-away sessions. These were sector-specific and included sectors such as automotive transport and logistics, skills development, banking and finance, telecommunications, project management, retails, natural resource management and media and advertising.

According to event director Dylan James, "These sessions have proved to be perhaps the most important feature of the convention proceedings; it is here where delegates shared experiences, exchanged ideas and had the opportunity to bond with their peers."

With the generous support of the sponsors: DHL, CNBC Africa, Mercedes-Benz South Africa, Van Ryns Brandy, Dean Catamarans, AIDC, Allos, Vodacom, Siyakha Consulting, Altech Autopage, Airports Company South Africa, ArcelorMittal South Africa, University of Stellenbosch Business School, Woolworths, FP&M SETA, Sci-Bono, Aucor, W&RSeta, SizweNtsalubaGobodo and Database 360, we have put together a convention that addressed issues that aspiring leaders will be facing in the boardroom." concluded James.

For further information please go to [www.tomorrowsleaders.co.za](http://www.tomorrowsleaders.co.za)