



A School with a View

Under sponsorship of IEDC Coca-Cola Chair of Sustainable Development

Women Leaders, Agents of Change in Africa — Proceedings of the international conference, Cape Town, November 7-8, 2017



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# Women Leaders, Agents of Change in Africa

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
Cape Town, November 7-8, 2017

Proceedings sponsored by



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# **Women Leaders, Agents of Change in Africa**

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## Conference Chairs

**Prof. Mollie Painter Morland**, Coca-Cola Chair of Sustainable Development; IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia / South Africa

**Ms. Melanie Burke**, Partner, Leading Women of Africa (LWA), South Africa

DAY 1, NOVEMBER 7, 2017



## Opening Addresses

**Ms. Melanie Burke**, Partner, Leading Women of Africa (LWA), South Africa

**Prof. Mollie Painter Morland**, Coca-Cola Chair of Sustainable Development; IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia / South Africa

**Ms. Kumeshnee West**, Director, Executive Education, Graduate School of Business, UCT, South Africa

**Ms. Madelein Mkunú**, President, Leading Women of Africa (LWA), South Africa

**Prof. Danica Purg**, President, IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia

### ***Perspectives of Women as Change Agents***

Special Guest of Honor Address: **Queen Mother of Royal Bafokeng,**

**Ms. Semane Bonolo Molotlegi**

**Rev. Gifty Akushika Lamptey**, CEO, Sidalco Group, Ghana

### ***Panel: Megatrends and Main Challenges Facing Women in the Region***

Facilitator: **Prof. Mollie Painter Morland**, Coca-Cola Chair of Sustainable Development; IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia / South Africa



**Dr. Bukola Bello Jaiyesimi**, Founder/International President, African Women Foundation for Nation Building, Nigeria

**Ms. Portia Masimula**, CEO & Co Founder, KarisaniIT, South Africa

**Ms. Cézanne Britain**, Founder and CEO, Britain Renecke, South Africa

Questions & Answers

### ***Cross-sectoral Women Leadership Roundtable***

Facilitator: **Prof. Danica Purg**, President, IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia

*Role of Women Leaders in Business:* **Ms. Marion Volk**, Manager TÜV SÜD international business development, sales and marketing team, and Founder and Chair of the Business and Professional Women (BPW) Danube Net, Germany

*Role Of Women Leaders as Change Agents in NGO:* **Ms. Mpho Sekwele**, Mandela Washington Fellow 2017, Bantu Hikers Co-Founder, profiled One of the Top 200 Young Leaders of 2016 in SA, South Africa

*Role of Women Leaders in Academia:* **Prof. Elisabeth Fröhlich**, President, CBS Cologne Business School, Germany /Austria

Questions & Answers

### ***Preparing Women to Lead: Key Elements in Women Leadership Development***

**Prof. Susan R. Madsen**, Utah Valley University, Woodbury School of Business, USA

### ***Closing Remarks***

**Prof. Mollie Painter Morland**, Coca-Cola Chair of Sustainable Development; IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia / South Africa

DAY 2, NOVEMBER 8, 2017

### ***Women Inspiring their Communities***

**Dr. Danisa E. Baloyi**, President, Black Business Council, South Africa

### ***A Dialogue with Inspiring Women***

Facilitated by **Prof. Mollie Painter Morland**, Coca-Cola Chair of Sustainable Development; IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia / South Africa

**Prof. Danica Purg**, President, IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia

**Ms. Lelemba Phiri**, Chief Marketing Officer, Zoono, Zambia

**Ms. Kelly de Kock**, Chief Operating Officer, Private Client Securities, Treasury and Fiduciary Services at Old Mutual Wealth, South Africa

Questions & Answers

### ***Leadership Roundtable: Making Collaboration among Women Work***

Facilitator: **Ms. Penelope Jones Mensah**, GWIIN Ambassador, Ghana

**Ms. Bookie Monica Kethusegile**, Group Managing Director, B-WOM Holdings Inc., South Africa

**Ms. Barbara Jaftha**, Director, Anchored Roots, South Africa

**Ms. Pauline Lambou Epse Ngouanfouo**, Coordinator, Leading Women of Africa (LWA), Cameroon

Questions & Answers

### ***Closing Keynote: Building, Bridging and Blazing Pathways for Women and Leadership***

**Prof. Susan R. Madsen**, Utah Valley University, Woodbury School of Business, USA



## **Concluding comments**

**Ms. Melanie Burke**, Partner, Leading Women of Africa (LWA), South Africa

**Prof. Mollie Painter Morland**, Coca-Cola Chair of Sustainable Development; IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia / South Africa



*Barbara Cukjati, Nontwenhle Mchunu, Danica Purg, Mpho Sekwele, Queen Mother, Gifty Akushika Lamptey*



*Madelein Mkunu*

## Welcome Addresses

### **MELANIE BURKE**

Good morning, Excellences,  
Good morning, distinguished guests,

Thank you all for traveling from far away to attend this great conference. We are looking forward to two days of celebration of women leaders in our continent. I am very pleased to extend a warm welcome to you all on behalf of the organizers of this event. You are welcome in our city, which is a great tourist attraction. We hope that you will take some time to explore it, enjoy its beauty, and return home with nice memories to share.

On behalf of our partners - Leading Women of Africa, the IEDC-Bled School of Management and its Coca-Cola Chair of Sustainable Development, and the Graduate School of Business of the University of Cape Town - you are all welcome.

### **MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND**

Good morning everybody. I am here in my capacity of head of the Coca-Cola Chair of Sustainable Development at the IEDC-Bled School of Management in Slovenia. You can probably tell by my accent that I am South African and I am very proud of that. I was born and raised in Johannesburg and I take every opportunity to come back to this country. Thank you for welcoming me back to South Africa. I also want to welcome you to a great experience that we are going to share these two days. Let us energize each other.

### **KUMESHNEE WEST**

Good morning ladies! I have the pleasure of welcoming you to UCT's Graduate School of Business. This building used to be a prison but we are in the business of removing shackles from people. In a little while you will watch a video demonstrating the achievements of UCT Graduate School of Business and the impact we wish to have on anyone who enters our doors.





Today, I am excited about the partnerships that have brought all your beautiful faces here, and that has created the energy that we feel in this room. We are going to share some great experiences together over the next two days. We want you to relax, enjoy yourself and make new friends.

I think that each of the participants of this conference is a change agent in their particular environment. This collaborative event aims to energize you and catapult you further. The intention is to set up networks for collaboration because we can achieve so much more when we pool our efforts.

### **MADELEIN MKUNU**

It was a great honor and privilege for Leading Women of Africa (LWA) to collaborate with the IEDC - Bled School of Management, Slovenia, Graduate School of Business - University of Cape Town, South Africa and Global Women Inventors and Innovators Network (GWIIN), UK, to stage one of the most impactful conferences in South Africa. *Women Leaders, Agents of Change Conference* brings together high profile women from political, business, professional and academia spheres from three continents: Africa, Europe and USA. The exchange of best practices and experiences from highly influential women leaders is at the top of the agenda of the conference.

The Leading Women of Africa (LWA), the association that I lead, is a Pan African Forum that promotes the inclusion of women in the mainstream economy by ensuring that more women emerge as successful and influential leaders in business, political and professional spheres.

I just want to tell you that when the women of Africa get together, we can achieve amazing things. We can write history together. Thank you so much for being here. Welcome!

### **DANICA PURG**

Dear colleagues and friends, I have come to South Africa to celebrate women's leadership. I am sure we can achieve a lot together. This should be a great forum for exchanging and learning from each other.

Whenever I am asked what I would advise women so that they achieve more, I never forget to say that they should network more. They should travel

and be curious. Therefore, this event is very important and I am very glad that you have come to participate in it. I have been to South Africa several times and this is also for me one of the most exciting places in the world. It is a very dynamic society. And all Africa is a dynamic continent. It is here that we should celebrate equality of people and talk about offering opportunities for women to take initiative and to lead.

I am very glad that we have Susan Madsen with us as a keynote speaker. She is one of the world's leading experts in the field of women leadership. She has written five books, one of which is *Women and Leadership Around the World*. We are going to make her books available as we can learn a lot from them. We are also recording this conference and the proceedings will be published as a book that will be distributed all around the world.

The idea for organizing this conference was suggested by Bola Olabisi, the founder and chair of Global Women Inventors and Innovators Network in the UK, during the conference "Women Leaders, Agents of Change in Europe" at IEDC-Bled School of Management in Slovenia. Slovenia is the country I come from. It is a small country, with two million inhabitants, but quite big if you consider the position of women (one of the best in European Union). If women can have a social impact in a small country like Slovenia, then imagine how much impact women could have in a big country like South Africa and everywhere on the African continent.

I am very happy that this event is taking place in partnership with LWA and this great school. I am very proud to share my experience with such a group of powerful women and learn from you all.



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# PERSPECTIVES OF WOMEN AS CHANGE AGENTS

## Guest of Honor Address

### **SEMANE BONOLO MOLOTLEGI**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, I would like to thank you all for inviting me to this historic event, bringing together representatives of different continents for this conference on the role that women play at different levels in society.

Since we are in Africa, it is appropriate to draw a parallel between the role of a lioness in a pride and a woman's leadership role. I use the lioness as an African symbol. It is the only feline species that forms social groups. Leopards for example hunt on their own and are known as "lone hunters". The role of a lioness is to feed and raise her young. In particular, she teaches them how to hunt.

When we think of leadership among lions, we usually think of a male lion with a big mane. Likewise, among human beings, leadership is associated with manliness. Women who manage to become leaders and join this men's world, often dress like men in order to display power. They lose their authenticity.

Various studies have found that women possess leadership skills, such as intuition, integrity, initiative, honesty, collaboration, and drive for results. If women have so many leadership skills, why should they change so as to fit in the men's world? Like lionesses, women raise children by showing courage, resilience, and an indomitable spirit. They often ride out crises without even realizing that they were dealing with a crisis.

In Africa, we are raised in the spirit of *ubuntu*: you are what you are because of what we all are. We are what we are because of the influence of our families, communities, and broader societies. We can lead by using our authenticity in the environment that we wish to influence. Our continent needs to make

use of women's leadership attributes by recruiting more women in leadership positions. Whatever position you are in, think and act like a woman without losing your authenticity. I think that both men and women bring something valuable to the table and we need to look at it positively. If we do that, we will thrive and grow together instead of fighting all the time. To make the African countries better places and to make them more governable, we need harmony, justice, and peace.

What matters is not whether a leader is a man or a woman. Regardless of their gender, we need leaders who possess integrity and remember that they are in a leadership position because of the people and for the people. This applies to all leaders, be they in business or government. You cannot be in a leadership position if people do not trust you. You must always remember that you are working for them. It takes only five minutes of your time to greet them every morning and find out why some of them are not doing well. Maybe there is something wrong. Maybe this woman has a sick child at home and that is why she cannot concentrate on her work. If you know your followers' issues, you will be a successful leader.

To be a good leader, you need to have a conscience. The court of your conscience is more important than a court of law. You always know when you have done something wrong and you do not need a court to prove it to you. In that case, you need to have the courage to apologize and say that you are sorry.

We may achieve lots of things, but unless we have love, we are not going to have peace. And when there is no peace, there is no justice. As women, we can do a lot in this respect if we are united.

In conclusion, I would like to read to you a literary piece known as *The Paradox of Our Time* by George Carlin:

"The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers; wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints; we spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy it less. We have bigger houses and smaller families; more conveniences, but less time; we have more degrees, but less



*Semane Molotlegi, Queen Mother of Royal Bafokeng*

sense; more knowledge, but less judgment; more experts, but more problems; more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get angry too quickly, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too seldom, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom. We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often. We have learned how to make a living, but not a life. We have added years to life, not life to years. We have been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbor. We have conquered outer space, but not inner space. We have done larger things, but not better things.

We have cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We have split the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We have learned to rush, but not to wait. We have higher incomes, but lower morals. We have more food, but less appeasement. We build more computers to hold more information to produce more copies than ever, but have less communication. We have become long on quantity, but short on quality.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, tall men, and short character, steep profits, and shallow relationships. These are the times of world peace, but domestic warfare, more leisure, but less fun, more kinds of food, but less nutrition.

These are days of two incomes, but more divorce; of fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throw away morality, one-night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer to quiet to kill. It is a time when there is much in the show window and nothing in the stockroom, a time when technology has brought this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to make a difference, or to just hit delete..."

Think about these things. Think where you fit. When you see something that is not right, correct it. Thank you very much for your attention.

### **GIFTY AKUSHIKA LAPMTEY**

I think we have gathered to discuss an important topic for this time and I want to thank the organizers of this conference. We are joining forces for Africa and I am glad to be speaking to you here. I recognize this as a unique platform for female leaders. It gives us an opportunity to come together, reflect collectively, and strategize. It is an opportunity to show solidarity and I am delighted to

be here. The issues that we are going to discuss are of great importance to our countries and their economies.

This conference will highlight opportunities for women to become entrepreneurs, business leaders, and political leaders. I hope it will encourage women to become politicians. I am not a politician but I would like to see women elected as presidents of states. How can we, as leaders, help our countries that continue to carry the burden of underdevelopment?

My message is simple. Let us, as women, use the extraordinary opportunities that we are blessed with. We have to appreciate and take advantage of these opportunities. In these troubled times, it is a smart solution to have more women in leadership positions so that we achieve more inclusive social development and economic growth. We really need that, especially in Africa, and we have a long way to go. As African women, we need to push this agenda forward. We need to join forces in order to implement our transformational agendas.

Danica said, we need to network in order to help Africa and change it politically, socially, and economically. As agents of change in this part of the world, I would like us to re-educate ourselves and keep the movement alive. On my part, I commit to investing in my re-education and mentoring younger women who are going to be the next generation of female leaders, business executives, and entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, women's representation in government and business in Africa is still far below 50 percent. We need to work harder in order to do better.

To make an impact, mentor a young lady in your environment. Teach somebody how to finance a new business and sponsor a girl in your community to go to school.

I use every possible platform to talk about the empowerment of women in Africa. That is the only way to achieve change and break the status-quo. That is the only way to move up to a higher level.

I wish the leading women of Africa great success. I know that if we work together, we can achieve our dream of a beautiful continent. Together, we can make the change. Together, we can move Africa forward. Together, we can change the world and bring peace to it.

Long live the women of Africa! Long live the women of Europe! Long live the women of America, as well! If we all work together, we can change this world and make it a better place. Thank you so much.

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# MEGATRENDS AND MAIN CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN IN THE REGION

## Panel Discussion

### ***MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND***

The next session is going to be on megatrends and the challenges that women encounter in Africa. We would like to hear your thoughts on that. Please think of one major challenge in business or any other area and share it with everybody. It can be a personal challenge or something that you have to deal with as a leader. You can discuss this with others around you and do some brainstorming. Then, please write down your notes. Remember that this exercise is anonymous. We are going to collect your notes and address them during the panel discussion.

Meanwhile, I invite the panelists to take their seats. I am really privileged to have these three ladies with me. I am amazed at their caliber but I will not read out their CVs. Instead, I will ask each of our wonderful panelists to introduce herself by talking about herself and her career. Then, I would like to hear the main challenges that she is facing. We start with Dr. Bukola Bello Jaiyesimi. She is founder and international president of the African Women Foundation for Nation Building in Nigeria. She is also executive director of a realtor agency. Please tell us more about yourself and your challenges.

### ***BUKOLA BELLO JAIYESIMI***

Good afternoon distinguished ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity to be with you today.

I am so glad that I have started the things that I am doing. I could have gone in different directions in my life but I am very happy that I have chosen to do

what I am doing. I am interested in motivating people around the world. After living in Scotland for several years, I decided to return to Nigeria where I believe I can make the greatest impact. I set up a family business in the real estate sector. I have also been a trainer in the field of cultural awareness. I decided to set up an international foundation that is present in five African countries. It is called African Women Foundation for Nation Building. As I told you, I started out as an entrepreneur. There is always another side to what you do.

We do many things through our foundation and we intervene in any activity that has something to do with nation building. Yet, our fundamental tenet is that the most important factor is education. If you are not educated, you cannot participate in nation building. Once we focused on gender parity. I had to spend five months educating women what gender parity means.

Thank you very much.

### **CÉZANNE BRITAIN**

Thank you all for organizing this conference and being with us today. I am a corporate commercial lawyer. My name is not Susan but Cézanne. My parents named me after the French painter. Having been raised in the Cape Flats, a suburb of Cape Town, my journey has not been easy. It is not a unique story as it is typical to the whole continent. What is unique is the imagination, faith, and pride. One of the challenges that I have faced has been retaining this imagination and faith, and combining them with hard work.

I became a lawyer with a big South African firm because I felt that I could make a difference for women. It is a challenge but it can be overcome. I want to be part of the transformational journey. Other speakers stated that we needed to re-educate ourselves and redirect our thoughts. Those are some of the things that I carry with myself. Part of my journey was to become an entrepreneur. In a few days, my business is going to be 1001 days old.

I was impressed by the symbolism of the lions that the Queen Mother talked about. I was glad that I caught that spirit. I hope it will stay with us during the two days of this conference.

Everybody in this room has a story to share. The fact that I am sitting here does not mean that my story is more significant than yours. Each of us has a special significance.



## **PORTIA MASIMULA**

First of all, I would like to thank you for being in this company of dynamic women. I am not used to talking to a large audience. Last year I had a couple of speaking engagements but the audiences were not as massive as this one. I will try to be brave and share my journey as a chief executive officer of a company.

I was raised by my grandparents. They were academics, not entrepreneurs. My grandmother was a principal and my grandfather was a regional inspector. When I was a child, I would look at pictures of successful business women in magazines and I was very impressed by the great things that they did. I wanted to be like them although I did not know exactly what it meant to be a business woman. My grandmother disagreed. She wanted me to get some kind of professional training, like being a doctor, because she did not understand business.

I studied entrepreneurship for three years because I wanted to learn the basic concepts of business. Entrepreneurship gave me an in-depth insight into business. I also studied information technologies and worked for three years.

My business partner and I approached Microsoft and explained our business concept to them. They liked it and they sponsored it. We developed a new technology. That was one of our great achievements.

The next challenge was to decide which of us - my business partner or I - would market our business and tell people all about it. Of course it had to be me because I approached him and asked him to start our business together. I attended lots of information technology conferences and I discovered that all decisions in that world are made by men. And they do not necessarily view you as a young ambitious business woman. They just want you to be their girlfriend. This makes it a big challenge for a young woman to succeed in business. You need a lot of courage and confidence. You need to know exactly who you are and what you expect. If you go astray, you may forget why you started your business. I met some great people along the way but others were not that good.

Then, we met somebody from the UK who had come to South Africa because he wanted to tell us about the existing opportunities in the information technology business and was looking for a partner in our country. I shared our business idea with him and he liked it. We started a project together within a week. That was a major breakthrough for us. I could not have achieved that

without patience, resilience, determination, and self-confidence. You need all these things in business. If you lack these qualities, you will have a problem. These are the four fundamental skills. And, as I said, you need to know who you are.

***MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND***

This is a very exciting story. And you can do public speaking any time of the day.



***PORTIA MASIMULA***

If I have time for that.

***MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND***

Let us now dig a little bit deeper into the things that we started touching on. Cézanne, can you share with us your thoughts on gender discrimination? How much of a challenge is that?

***CÉZANNE BRITAIN***

Discrimination can take many different forms. Portia mentioned one of them. Decision-makers are men and they like each other. It is not a phenomenon that is restricted to Black or White women or to South Africa. It is a worldwide phenomenon. People prefer people who are like them. That is just how it is.

Discrimination may start from the moment that you enter a room. How do they look at you? Do they see you as a potential business partner?

Another example is sexual harassment. Recently, a male client asked me out to dinner and when I declined he was upset and wrote to me that I did not know how to deal with a client and maintain a relationship. We should ask ourselves what we can do to educate people about these matters.

Sometimes, this is not overt at all. It is not always a man sitting across from you at a table, making faces at you. It can be a compliment, such as “You look wonderful today” or “Your hair looks great”. What does that have to do with the term sheet? It is the term sheet that should look great.

It is noteworthy that it is not only the men who initiate this. There are young single female lawyers in some companies. They are aware of the fact that 80 percent of the bosses are men. They are also aware of the fact that the older females are married and have children. How do they get ahead? They get ahead by wearing provocative clothing and sitting on a boss's desk. What can we do about that? I think that we need to keep each other accountable.

There is another issue that I would like to address. There are women who wish to get to the top and adopt masculine behavior. I will not get into details because I am sure that you know what I mean. It has to do with the way that they dress and behave in order to suppress their femininity at the workplace. I think that this comes out of fear and a feeling of insecurity more than anything else. "If I do not fit the mold, I am going to lose out". It is a pervasive thing that happens in every situation. It has to do with societal pressure.

I realize that fighting sexual harassment is difficult because it involves risks. I risk losing a client. But we have to be prepared to take that risk. If we want to achieve gender parity, we need to set examples and accept some risks.

### ***MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND***

I think that sometimes there is some interface between ethics and etiquette. They can be related as sexual harassment is clearly unethical. But cultural differences also create a lot of challenges for women.

Bukola, can you share your thoughts on sexual harassment?

### ***BUKOLA BELLO JAIYESIMI***

We need to be clear about the differences between megatrends and trends. The former can last for decades, whereas the latter may be gone after a couple of years. The clothes that you wear and your hairstyle may depend on short-lived fashions. But megatrends may persevere for 30 years and create challenges for you. We have to make sure that sexual harassment does not turn into a persistent trend that has become so common that we stop paying attention to it.

Megatrends are about powerful women like you and me, as well as gentlemen, living in an imperfect world. If the world was perfect, there would be no trends, no conferences, no political leaders. We would just wake up in

the morning, get out of bed, and enjoy life. But the world is imperfect and we must accept this. Yet, although we cannot achieve perfection, we can strive to get close to it.

Megatrends are powerful forces that define the future. They impact businesses and whole industries and economies. They are just another English word used to describe something big. When you say that something is “mega”, it could mean different things. You can be “mega rich”. And, of course, there are mega trends. They are the dangers and challenges for the future. But I can tell you that we must work together as much as we can so that we turn these challenges into opportunities.

Mollie mentioned cultural differences. If I tell you some of the things that are going on in my country, some people in this audience might say, “Why are you saying this? In my country, it is taboo”. I used to allow myself to be a victim of sexual harassment. Do you know why? I am a very beautiful African woman. There is no controversy about that. You can give me compliments if you want. But I am not going to live my life by your compliments. Because this is something that I know. What matters is the legacy that I will leave behind.

Speaking of cultural shocks, I can hardly describe the one that I experienced in Scotland. Some people did not know that Black people exist. They could not understand why I was so dark. Then, I discovered that one of the few things that kids know about Africa is that it has been granted debt relief. That is what they know. They also know that there are no jobs in Africa. I have also been asked if African children go to school.

We have our culture in Africa and we need to protect it. One of my favorite quotes is “Africa has so much to teach you all”.

### ***MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND***

Thank you very much. Now, I would like to have Portia tell us something about information technologies. What are the new challenges in this field?

### ***PORTIA MASIMULA***

Information technology is developing very fast. I think that female entrepreneurs should promote their businesses. We should promote ourselves. I see

that the social media are often used by women to talk about shoes and clothing. I have nothing against that. But we should use them to promote ourselves as well. That is how I use the social media. The only thing that I do is to promote my company. I do not have to be in the UK to sell something. I can do it from here. Somebody in the UK can see me and get in touch with me. Our businesses do not need to be restricted to our local markets. We can cast the net wide and take our business across the world. That is the effect of technology. And the best thing is that you do not need to be particularly high-tech-savvy. You can be in the fashion business and use technology to promote your dresses.

We want to see more women in business. That is the only way to end gender discrimination. The reason that there is so much gender discrimination is the fact that there are not enough women in business. We also need to empower those women who are coming after us. It is our responsibility to reach out and support those coming behind. In this way, we will create a sustainable environment for them. If we do not do that for them, they will encounter the same problems as those that we have to deal with now. But if we start addressing them now, the next generation will find themselves in a better environment. We need to support each other. If a particular woman offers some service, refer a client to her. We need to do business with each other. If you know somebody who needs a lawyer, refer him to Cézanne.

We give birth to girls. If we do not create a proper legacy for them, they will run into problems. We have so much power. We just have to use it. Remember that our girls are watching us. We must create sustainable businesses. We have to watch each and every step that we take and create a real legacy so that the next generation can tap into it.

#### **MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND**

Cézanne, can you talk a bit more about women in emerging economies?

#### **CÉZANNE BRITAIN**

I think that one of the most important megatrends is mobility in the workplace. Innovation, technology, and being able to work from home are making things easier for us, particularly in business. This is one of the megatrends that I am researching at the moment.

The other megatrend is that women are emerging in different industries. We see this well in South Africa. We see empowerment and transformation. We see the government providing incentives for businesses to work with women, especially companies owned at least 30 percent by women. This encourages women to emerge in different industries. There are plenty of opportunities.

There is something that is a trend and a challenge at the same time: funding. It is fine to have determination, and patience, and resilience. But if you do not have money, you will have a hard time.

The South African government is now focusing on sectors like construction and manufacturing where you do not normally see many women. This is both a megatrend and a challenge. If you can seize the opportunity, and mobilize and organize yourself to get into a particular industry, the funding is available for small businesses. It is amazing to see what they can create.

#### ***PORTIA MASIMULA***

There are opportunities, indeed, but funding is still a challenge. We will solve that problem some day but we are not there yet.

#### ***CÉZANNE BRITAIN***

I would like to point out that knowledge is power. Without knowledge, we will remain in the background and will not be able to get to the foreground. We will not know how to move forward and emerge in the leading industries. If we combine knowledge with our African culture and a good understanding of the existing challenges, we can wield enormous power.

#### ***PORTIA MASIMULA***

One of the greatest challenges that we have as women is fear. Let us get rid of it. Do not be scared to visit Dubai or Nigeria and look for business. Take that leap of faith. God has created us in a wonderful way and has given us so much capacity.

At the event that I attended in Dubai recently, the chief executive officer of an information technology company said, "If we are looking to disrupt the

world, it will be disrupted". So, let us come up with something that can disrupt the world. Let us show the world what we can do. We have amazing natural resources in Africa. We have talent. We have dynamic business leaders. Let us get together and create great things. And let us use technology to solve the social problems that we are facing. I sincerely believe that we can use technology and entrepreneurship to fight poverty. But to do that we need to take action rather than sit behind a table.

***BOOKIE MONICA KETHUSEGILE***

What is going on here is typical when women get together to discuss their issues. We feel energized and we feel the potential and the opportunities that we have. I have worked a lot on issues like empowerment and gender equality and equity, as well as the instruments that facilitate these processes. I have a question for you. What kind of woman does it take to be able to do all the things that you said we need to do?

We will walk out of here full of energy and motivation to transform the world. But after a while we will notice that the world is still not transformed. At African women forums and meetings of the United Nations, we talk about sustainable development and millennium development goals. Yet, we fail to achieve what the speakers said was achievable. What is it that is lacking? We want to achieve these noble goals. We desire them and wish for them. But that is not enough. We obviously need a paradigm shift in our thinking. You said that we need not allow discrimination to impact us. Is that a simple personality pattern? Is it a collective, communal pattern? I am asking this because I would like to know what we need to tell the women back home. We desire this change but how do we achieve it in practice?

***BUKOLA BELLO JAIYESIMI***

It all starts with yourself. If you are not self-confident, if you are not aware of yourself, you cannot change others. You have to have a personal platform. Otherwise, others will be telling you what to do: get married, have kids. Those are the things that are deemed appropriate for an African girl. The reason that I got married was not that it was time for this African girl to get married. I did it because I was sure what I wanted to do. I knew what I wanted to get out



*Portia Masimula, Cézanne Britain, Dr. Bukola Bello Jaiyesimi*

of life. Then I made a list of eligible men and I picked the one that suited me. I am telling you: you have to know who you are and what you are worth. You must first of all win your personal battle before fighting a battle at the state level or national level. If you win your personal battle, you can do much more than you thought.

### **CÉZANNE BRITAIN**

We all have different qualities and nobody has everything. Our strength comes from solidarity and unity. I told you that I was inspired by the lions metaphor. The most inspiring thing is that lions are social animals, living in a community. That is something that really touched me. It is something that I will take away from this conference.

I am new in this fight. But we can fight it together and move things forward. Every little step counts. What kind of woman does it take to be successful in this battle? A woman that wants to be successful. A woman that believes. In my personal opinion, it is not numbers that matter, but quality. It is the journey that matters.



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# CROSS-SECTORAL WOMEN LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE



## **MELANIE BURKE**

Our next session is a roundtable on cross-sectoral women leadership. All speakers this morning stressed the importance of collaboration. We have to find ways to set up connections and work together. There are formal and informal spaces where things happen. Being women, we have a gift for bringing together these seemingly disparate opportunities into a space where magic is possible. We all know how it feels when magic happens in the room. When women get together and work together, the things that are supposed to happen just happen.

I am delighted to introduce the next three speakers. They will briefly share their life stories, focusing on the challenges and opportunities of cross-sectoral leadership. I hope that as we listen to their personal stories, we will all start thinking about the opportunities for us to collaborate across sectors and, sometimes, across issues. The issues that women have to deal with are not narrow. They are broad societal issues. If we reposition ourselves as system change agents, this cross-sectoral conversation will start getting easier for us. Working in the cross-sectoral space will also become easier.

## **MARION VOLK**

I am very proud to be here with you great women, the speeches that we already heard were amazing.

I work for TÜV SÜD Management Service in Munich, Germany - a company, which is active around the world. It makes me especially proud that the CEO of our company here in South Africa attends this event.

Part of our Division is also a training institute - the so called Academy - and the recently established Cyber Security Services unit. My responsibility within the company is coordination of international business development, marketing and sales worldwide. I am member of an international business women's

network called Business and Professional Women (BPW). We have 80,000 members in 100 countries, including South Africa with a club in Johannesburg.

Also, there are clubs throughout Western and Eastern Europe, including the Balkans. Especially there, many educated and ambitious women are active. This is important to note as the Balkans do not have a good reputation in Western media. In order to contribute to change that, I founded the BPW Danube Net in 2006. The Danube region is large and an important economic area. The Danube is one of the longest rivers in Europe uniting 10 countries of different cultures and history reaching from Germany to the Black Sea. Each year we organize a forum in one of these countries. Focus of the conference this year, which took place in Vienna, Austria, was Women in the Digital Economy.

Originally, I did not intend to become a leader. I just wanted to prove myself. I always wanted to work in an international environment. So, my first job was at Disney World in Florida. I also worked in Jakarta, Indonesia at the German Chamber of Commerce, and studied in France. I am now for 15 years at TÜV SÜD. My first job was assistant to the chief executive officer. In a job like that one is involved in different projects. At that time, the company did not have a position for international business development and I was the one who launched this idea. Consequently, I was put in charge of this section.

It was a lot of hard work. In Germany, like in other countries, there are many young girls who wish to become rich and famous. But they have to understand that success does not come easily. It takes a lot of effort and sometimes patience. You also need a sponsor who believes in you and realizes that you deserve to be entrusted with an important position. As the previous speakers pointed out, you must have self-confidence and be convinced that you can do the job. Be focused and clear. Be a diplomat and do not lose sight of your goal.

### ***MPHO SEKWELE***

My journey began in a small township outside Johannesburg. As a result of political violence at that time, my parents decided to relocate to a very small village in Tzaneen (Northern Province in South Africa). There was no electricity there and no running water at the time. As a little kid, I was one of those children who carried water in a bucket on my head. In 1994, apartheid ended and we started building a democratic South Africa. I started integrating into the new society and relocated back to Johannesburg City where I now lived in

a previously "whites only" neighborhood. As you know, we South Africans call ourselves "the rainbow nation". I also considered myself a part of that rainbow now that I was exposed to diversity.

I studied financial accounting but I started a career in retail business planning. At that time, the only thing that I knew about retailing was that it had something to do with people selling products in stores but I had no idea what was going on behind the scenes. As the largest retail companies are based in Cape Town, I relocated to the mother city.

There were a number of challenges that I had to deal with. I was young, a female, and Black. I had older people reporting to me. In our culture, you have to show respect to older people and cannot reprimand them, which may seem strange to people of other cultures. As I moved up the corporate hierarchy, the challenges became even greater as I had to deal with various types of diversity. Being a young Black female in that position is not easy. This journey made me somewhat of an ambassador to those dealing with similar situations but cannot speak up for themselves. My journey has made me empathetic and enabled me to understand people better. It has made it easier for me to understand their lifestyles and their cultures.

A friend of mine and I once discussed the scary statistics of the South African education system: "only about 18 percent of school graduates enroll in universities and 60 percent of those drop out during the first year". We decided to co-found an initiative called Bantu Hikers, a mentorship and networking program. We literally climb mountains! We do that to illustrate the fact that a mountain seems challenging until you have climbed it. Once you reach the summit, you are overwhelmed with the feeling of success. We hope that our members can take this feeling to their professional environments.

My work is an illustration that it does not take a lot of money or other resources to do something in order to change the plight of women. You just have to ask yourself what part of your life experience can be used to produce a positive impact on the lives of other people. It starts with you raising your own voice to speak on behalf of other people. In that way, you can help them improve their situation and be the bridge that they need.

***ELISABETH FRÖHLICH***

I would like to thank Danica Purg for inviting me to this forum. I am the president of a business school in Cologne, Germany. It is a very international

school. We have people representing 72 nations. Most of our programs are in English. I do believe that this is important to be aware of, and be able to deal with, the challenges of international business. We have to consider cultural differences and accept them. For example, my daughter is studying at an international school where she experiences lots of differences and is learning how to deal with them. There are some youngsters who drink whenever they get a chance and there are Muslims who are not allowed to drink. Then there are some people who are somewhere in between. When students get drunk at a party, they know that somebody will stay sober and take them home. And my daughter tells me that she does not drink much because she has a Turkish friend and does not want to embarrass her. This is an example of cultural diversity management. That is how we learn to focus on the good stuff and learn how to deal with the global challenges that we face.

When I was 16 years old, I listened to a speech by the then leader of the United Nations, Kurt Waldheim. I decided to get a job at the United Nations. My father objected. He said that no husband would follow his wife to go all around the world. He convinced me that I should study business. He promised to support me even if I traveled around the world. He said that I should learn Russian and even Chinese if I was an optimist. He also convinced me to sign up for a PhD program because he was convinced that, coming from a family of teachers, I would make an excellent teacher as well. I told him that this was my idea, not his. After I got my PhD, I discovered that I was a good teacher indeed and I felt a passion for my profession.

German law does not allow you to become a professor at the university where you got your PhD. As I did not wish to leave Cologne, I took a job at Cologne Business School. The reason that I got that job immediately was the fact that I am Austrian and I have a foreign passport. It is an international school and they need international faculty. A year later, I became vice-president for research. The then president had to quit his job because he did not have a PhD and that had become a requirement for that top position.

So, that is my career story in short. To be honest, I have always been supported by men. Consequently, I like working with men. I have two male and one female vice-president and I have male and female deans. This has always worked fine at our school. Once there was an interesting incident though. I have a vice-president who is from Norway. You may know that Norwegian society is very egalitarian and women play a very important role. Once she saw that I use

the male form of the German word for “president” and objected to that. She thought I should use the female form. I thought this did not make any sense as my name is clearly a female name and there is no need to indicate that I am a woman. I have never attached a great importance to these male-versus-female issues. Many of them have been solved in Germany, yet some still exist. For example, I am a professor of strategic procurement marketing and I am the only female professor in this field. Still, I have managed to turn this disadvantage into an opportunity. The men around me thought it would be nice and even charming to have a woman in this field. In principle, I always get what I want from men. It is only a matter of time and consistency. I have learned to live with this.

I have had to deal with a more serious challenge: being a single mother and working at the same time. Germany is still traditional in this sense and people ask you why you are single and how you can justify that. Anyway, dealing with single motherhood is a matter of getting organized. I claim that I am a better mother than many mothers that are staying at home. Because I have to spend half of the day away from my daughter, I feel motivated to make it up for her the rest of the day. I always tell my female students that they should not abstain from having children in order to have a good career. You can always find a way to have both. Low birth rates are a major issue in Germany these days and we need to do something about that.

### ***NONTWENHLE MCHUNU***

It is great that you have been able to play this game well and have obtained support from men in your endeavors. But they often do that just to claim a woman’s success as their own. Have you experienced that?

### ***ELISABETH FRÖHLICH***

So far, it has never happened to me. However, I must point out that this has to do with our culture. In Germany, you do not have to be afraid of men. It is true that they can make your life a bit hard and in that case you have to work a little more. You need to make an extra effort to get the same remuneration for the same job but, generally speaking, you need not be afraid of men. I have been able to achieve my current position using my personal skills and qualities.

I am hard-working, organized, reliable, and structured. I can work on several tasks at the same time. This is an important skill that men do not possess. If I want to make them a little dizzy, I start doing several things at the same time.

***NONTWENHLE MCHUNU***

My experience is different. I was once told by a man that if I wanted to do business with him, I had either to bribe him or sleep with him. He was upset that I offered neither of the two. He found that unacceptable.

I think that our mentoring function is very important. We have to mentor young girls. I would suggest to the organizers that they invite young girls to forums like this one as they need to be educated. And they need to go back to a different society, where men are different.

***MARION VOLK***

A situation like that is unacceptable, after all some of these men also have daughters. Would they like it, if someone of their colleagues would treat their daughter like this?! Companies and States need to have a code of ethics. Violence against women means violence against mothers and sisters.

***MELANIE BURKE***

We live in very patriarchal societies in Africa. Perhaps that is what explains these phenomena. We need to run awareness programs and discuss these issues. Women need to be aware of these issues because, after all, we are the ones who raise boys before they become men.

***OBIYAI EBIUWOU***

I have worked with men all my life. It may not be easy but if you carry on toward your goal, they will go along with you. We are not weaker than them. We have the same brain cells.

As mothers, we have a big job to do. Discrimination starts from the day a child is born. We have to fight this. Bring up your children in such a way that

they are not afraid of each other. Teach them the right mentality. If you teach them that boys should go out and take jobs, whereas girls should stay in the kitchen, that is the mentality they will grow up with. We have so much to do as mothers in all our countries. If we do our job properly, before we know it, we will have changed the world.



**MELANIE BURKE**

Any final comments from the panel?

**MPHO SEKWELE**

This is a very interesting conference and we have exchanged very interesting experiences. But there is a danger that it will end like many other conferences. Once it is over, we will go home and there will be no follow-up. Let us use our experiences in such a way that we create impact in our environments.

**MARION VOLK**

We have incredible potential here. Couldn't we build a community out of this group? We could support each other in this way and it would be very valuable for us. I have already learned so much about African cultures and I would like to continue this exchange. Danica said that a book would be published after this conference. Let us discuss how we can use this book. I could circulate it throughout my network. Let us use the potential of this valuable conference.

**ELISABETH FRÖHLICH**

I realize that little girls in African culture need to overcome their fear. They need mentoring. This has to be done step by step.

What you can learn from other cultures is very important. We should continue to work together and discuss what is necessary to be a leader and make a business grow. We should try to build this capability system together. We are on different levels of development but women have to face more or less the same problems all around the world. You do not have to make the same mistakes as those that we did.

### ***SEMANE BONOLO MOLOTLEGI***

To correct a problem, you must first of all recognize it as a problem. That is essential. Also, if you keep doing the same thing it will never change. We keep talking about men who do this and that. We hate them and we love them. We have to decide what we want. After listening to you, I see that what you want is to work together. I would like to see a conference with men and women talking about these issues. Do not assume that men are knowledgeable about all the topics that were discussed here. They need to be enlightened through a conference like this one. To achieve change, we have to start somewhere. Number one is communication. We have to start communicating with our husbands and sons.

### ***DANICA PURG***

If you do not mind, I will say something about myself, too. I was born and raised in Yugoslavia, a socialist country. This was a disadvantage when I traveled abroad because people in the West said it was a communist country and looked down on it. Second, I come from a poor family. Third, I was a woman. I would tell people that I had these three problems. Instead of complaining, I made a joke out of it.

I know what it is like to be from a country that people have not heard about. I used to carry a map to show people where Yugoslavia, and later Slovenia was. It is possible that people in Europe and other parts of the world do not know much about the African countries. We need to travel around more, learn about our countries, and help each other more.

I am also one who was supported by men. My father was a worker and he taught me honesty. That is one of the most important qualities that I learned from him. He did not have formal education, but a lot of practical knowledge and high moral values.

I always liked challenging projects. This is why I accepted to set up a management school. It was the first management school in a socialist country in Central and Eastern Europe. That was an unusual thing to do in those times. Influential people were saying that I was trying to import imperialism because a management school was for them a symbol of manipulation with people. We have to admit that this is true to some extent because management is also in certain aspect about manipulation. This is why we need critical thinking.



Now, I like to support people, especially women, from other countries that are less privileged. We give them an opportunity to study at our school.

My concluding remark is that we have to continue to fight for equality. Fight and never give up!

Half a year ago, I was invited to Japan. I was invited because Slovenia's ambassador to Japan is a woman. She needed a woman from Central and Eastern Europe to represent the European Union and talk at an international conference about women in Central and Eastern Europe. I discussed some numbers. In the European Union, only 15 percent of top managers are women. This may look good if we compare our situation to the one in Africa but it is still not what it should be.

I am a member of the association of Slovene managers. We have been discussing already for some time quotas for women, like in Iceland and Norway, where at least 40 percent of supervisory board and top managers must be women. In Slovenia, women are well represented in the government and in parliament, but not in business, although on average better than in EU.

I thought about quotas in my country when preparing for the conference in Japan and continued to think about them back in Slovenia. I went to the minister of labor and asked her to prepare a special law and propose it to the parliament. She suggested to help her to get bigger support for this action. I talked to responsible people at Chamber of Commerce and at the Association of Managers and I was told that I needed to talk also to one of the ministers because he opposed to quotas for women. And I did talk to him. He did not like the existing legislation on men and women. For example, we have the divorce law in Slovenia that appoints the mother as the children's custodian by default. After an hour and a half, I managed to convince this minister that I was right. I talked to one minister after another. And by now the stage is all set and we are hopefully finally going to have women quotas in corporate governance.

My point is that you should never give up if you want to achieve the goal. Thank you.

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# PREPARING WOMEN TO LEAD: KEY ELEMENTS IN WOMEN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**SUSAN R. MADSEN**

Good afternoon. I am the Orin R. Woodbury Professor of Leadership and Ethics in the Woodbury School of Business at Utah Valley University in the U.S. I really appreciate this opportunity to be here and participate in this forum.

Through the years, I have done quantitative and qualitative research on the lifetime development of women as leaders. I have interviewed university professors and women in government in the United States. I have also interviewed educational leaders in China. I have worked in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, studying the lifetime journeys of female leaders there. I have been interested in finding out how these women became leaders, starting from their homes, parents, schools, teachers, and other influences. I have tried to trace their whole professional journeys. I am interested in stories like the one of Dr. Purg. How did she develop her tenacity and persistence? I was smiling earlier today when she described how she approached different ministers in the Slovene government and insisted that they implement quotas for female managers in Slovene companies. This aligns well with what I learned about her childhood and youth.

I am a scholar and a practitioner. I look at what has been found in the latest research and then I put it to practice. I run women's leadership programs. I take the latest research and try it out on people. The most important question that I deal with is "What is the best way to develop women leaders?" Today, I will talk more about adult women in the workforce. Tomorrow, I will talk about raising girls to be leaders, which is my passion as well.

It is nice to sit and talk about women's issues, but we also need research.

It is simply more efficient to have other people tell us what they have found in the data so we don't waste time on trial and error. Therefore, I will tell you a little about some research findings.

My first question is "Where do you develop women?" A lot of times, when talking about leadership we think of for-profit companies. But there are also not-for-profit organizations and governments. There are multiple domains in society where we could benefit from having female leaders. Of course, home is one such place because women coach and mentor children. Community work is another example. Women who lead community projects can achieve grass-root change. Education is another field. Women are well represented as students in colleges and universities, but there are not as many female leaders in the ranks of faculty and administrators on campuses. In my School of Business, there are few female faculty members. As a consequence, male students do not get exposed to feminine styles teaching and the insights that female teachers can provide. I cannot think of a single area in society where it is not important to have female leaders and influencers.

During this session, I would like to go through some leadership development initiatives. At the end, we will spend some time on areas that have been found to be important for strengthening women's voice and confidence, thus helping women lead.

I want to start with developmental experiences. Have you heard of the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)? They are recognized across the world for their research on leadership and gender. They have a chapter in my 2017 book titled *The Handbook of Research on Gender and Leadership*. They have found that "challenging assignments" is one of the five important elements in the development of leaders. This can refer to enlarging an existing job or giving a person a new task, such as turning around a company. These challenging assignments make us grow. The research has shown that men get more challenging assignments than women do. Both male and female leaders hesitate before they give a challenging task to a woman. It is a subconscious tendency. It is really more unconscious than conscious. Men sometimes do not want to push women too hard. But if we do not get challenging assignments, we do not get the opportunity to push ourselves to develop. Unfortunately, women sometimes pull themselves out of assignments, and men often don't give women these assignments to begin with. For example, women may be reluctant to accept a job in another country because they have families. As a result, a

manager may assume that a woman does not want to do that and then he or she won't invite women to do so in the future.

Handling difficult people is another good way, for both men and women, to develop leadership. If I give you a difficult person to manage, that can be a positive thing if you use it to develop and refine your related skills.

Another important element that CCL found in their research is feedback and coaching. The research suggests that women struggle with feedback. It seems that receiving feedback is more difficult than giving feedback. There is also research that shows that men hold up giving feedback to women. As a result, men get more feedback than women. This impedes the growth of women as leaders. These findings can help us in designing effective leadership programs.

Coursework and training is also a vital element within the CCL model. Women's enrollment in MBA and executive programs has increased enormously all over the world. Yet, leadership programs are still designed by men.

The next element of the CCL model related to developmental experiences is hardships. Women's hardships are more personal. They are more likely to be associated with career obstacles and setbacks. Men's hardships are more organizational. That influences the way that leadership programs are designed.

Finally, both men and women develop as leaders from personal experiences.

I have studied the ways in which women have developed as leaders. According to the accounts of the women that I have interviewed, "new positions" and "new assignments" are the most important factors. Interestingly, number three is "failures and challenges". Apparently, they learned a lot when things went wrong. People who do not wish to reflect on their failures and talk about them do not learn from them. The lesson is that when things look hard or bad,



*Susan R. Madsen*

you might actually benefit from that because it can be a learning experience. That might be better than just shift these problems aside because in that case you do not learn from them.

In terms of feedback, the female leaders that I have interviewed indicated that the most important contribution to their development did not come from friends and relatives but from people who gave them honest feedback. These were people that they trusted. These were the people who helped them strengthen themselves. I do not know if this applies to African culture as well, but in the United States girls in high school like to exchange compliments: “Oh, you are so cute!” This is not the kind of feedback that helps you become a leader.

Mentorship can assist in the development of leadership for women. It usually takes a lot of time and a lot of effort. And the research shows that a lot of mentoring programs fail. The most common reason for this is a personal mismatch. You need to be able to open up to your mentor for your relationship to be successful. In terms of an executive coach, a really good coach will feel that there is a mismatch and will say “I am not the right person for you”. That is an ethical issue. You have to do what is best for the client.

Sometimes informal mentor programs work better but if you do not have a lasting connection, they can fall apart. If you are going to start a mentorship program at your organization or in your community, I recommend that you do some research on it. That can give you some ideas about best practices.

We need mentors, and we need to be mentors to other people. If we do not provide mentoring to others, we will not help them grow. I am a pretty gutsy person, and I have coached people in superior positions: my dean, my president, and even the governor of my state although he did not necessarily appreciate that. I told my president that he was getting stronger in specific areas two years into his presidency. He thanked me for that and later on asked me how he was doing in the same areas. There is research showing that we can develop further by helping other people develop.

Let us talk a little about leadership development programs. Do you think that there is value in women-only leadership programs? The available research findings suggest that there are things that you can do in women-only leadership programs that cannot be done in mixed-gender programs. There are issues that women will not talk about when there is a man sitting at the table. What are some of the things concerning your development that you would discuss with

other women but you would not mention in a conversation with men? One such topic is gender bias and another is work and family integration challenges.

I have had workshops on women's negative interactions with each other. The female participants were very excited and at the end of the workshop said that they finally understood what was happening in their minds. There was a man who wanted to participate, but I did not let him. I told him that women participants would feel that they were being judged if men were in the room.

There is research looking at the different ways in which men and women look at success. Women's aspirations are broad. Men's resemble a ladder that needs to be climbed. Women's ambitions are not just to climb a career ladder in their organizations, but also to have a good life in general. Women are more perfectionistic than men and perfectionism keeps you from having a lot of self-confidence. This holds women back from making decisions. When something does not turn out right, women tend to say, "You see, I knew I was not good enough". Women have a tendency to feel inadequate. This halts action, and action is needed to strengthen confidence.

Women spend far more time than men overthinking and ruminating. They have an instinct to dwell on problems rather than solutions. They wonder why they did something, what they did, and what other people thought about it. This is associated with an increased risk of anxiety and depression. It can freeze decision-making and action. Ruminating drains women's confidence.

This year, I designed a leadership development program for 30 women who were university presidents. We started discussing this slide and half an hour later one of the participants exclaimed "We are still ruminating!". These were university presidents who had never had a discussion on rumination. They had never had a space to talk about it. This is something that you cannot do in a mixed-gender space. When there are only women in the room, I discuss these topics and I know that they are empowering the concepts and conversations.

We are taught that we are sisters and should be equal. On American playgrounds boys play win-lose games, whereas girls want to stay equal and often hold hands and wait for others in competitions. Now, when a woman becomes a leader, she is seen as somebody who has broken the sisterhood. Women who rise to leadership positions often have fewer friends, not only because there are fewer women in these roles but also because they have broken social norms. As a consequence, they are judged differently by other women and men. Women's

relationships are often grounded in emotional and psychological processes, such as love, envy, and competition, which emerge when women perceive differences between themselves and other women.

Although women are not necessarily less prepared than men, they are less self-confident and need more encouragement. Therefore, I often tap my students on the shoulder. I tell them for example that they are good thinkers and should go to graduate school. Many of them are later very grateful to me, saying that they believed in themselves because of that tap that I gave them. But the encouragement needs to be accurate and sincere. It does not take a big effort. It can be just a moment and that moment can change somebody. Likewise, somebody can change us.

I would also like to mention the power of some assessment tools. I do not do much coaching because I have many other tasks but when I do it, I use assessment tools precisely because they are so powerful. The Gallup Strengths Finder is particularly powerful as is the Leadership Circle Profile. These are the two I would recommend. There are a lot of assessments out there, but most are not designed nor are they effective for leadership development.

Have you heard of Eleanor Roosevelt? Here are some good quotes from her: “Do what you feel in your heart to be right because you will be criticized anyway”. “You would not worry so much about what others think of you if you realized how seldom they do”. “Do one thing every day that scares you”.

I also like this quote from Robert F. Kennedy: “Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance”.

I believe we as women must become leaders. We must lead in whatever ways we feel called, and that could be in our homes, our organizations, our churches, or our communities. We are the ones that the world is waiting for. But to be successful we need to reach out and help each other. Thank you so much.

## Closing Remarks

### **MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND**

I do not want to test your patience too much, but it would be a pity not to reflect on some of the challenges that we shared today. What we did today will be a springboard for what we are going to do tomorrow.

We have identified a number of challenges based on your input. The first one is men. This includes sexual harassment, sexism, and all other issues that have to do with men.

We also identified issues that stem from other women. One of these is the lack of mentorship by women for other women. We discussed the mental blockages that we seem to have. The work-life balance is a big category. We talked about the lack of appropriate education. Tomorrow we will dwell more on the ways to address this problem.

It was upsetting to hear that there is such a prevalence of unethical work environments. I do not want to call them “hostile” but it is close to that. There is a lack of honesty and there is intimidation. This kind of work environment is obviously a serious problem for a lot of us.

The fear of risk-taking was also a big category. And several speakers mentioned difficulties accessing funding for female entrepreneurs. We are going to spend more time discussing this issue tomorrow.

I want you now to think about these problems until tomorrow and that we then move towards finding ways to deal with them. However, these should not be abstract ideas. We need personal pledges: things that you personally can do. We will ask you to share with us at least one thing that you can do to address at least one of these problems.

I thank you all for your participation.



*Mollie Painter Morland*



## Introductory Words

### **MELANIE BURKE**

We had a very stimulating day yesterday. We did a lot of networking and we can hope that some action will come out of these new relationships. We are going to work hard also today. And, again, there is nothing to stop us from connecting with each other. We do not want to leave this place without a sense of connectedness. We want to continue to work with each other after this conference.

I am now going to ask Kumeshnee West to take the floor to help us reconnect and remind us who we are in this learning environment.

### **KUMESHNEE WEST**

Good morning, ladies. I hope you are feeling fabulous today. There is something that stuck with me quite strongly yesterday: what the Queen Mother said about men and the role of men in our success, the part that men play in helping us achieve success in our lives. I want to tell you briefly about the role of my father in my life. When I finished school, he did not have enough money to let me study at a university. He promised me that I would do that eventually but initially I went to a local college for three years and worked at the same time. Then, my father lost his job and got a compensation paid out. He said immediately that he wanted me to go to university. That was a defining moment in my life. I knew that he was making a huge sacrifice. He did that for me. Since then, he has been behind me every step of my life. So, today I would like us to talk about the men that have helped us on the journey and get where we are today. As the Queen Mother said yesterday, we cannot blame the men and claim that they are the ones who are stopping us from achieving what we want. We need to figure out how we can leverage our relationship with men so that they can help us get ahead. Let us have a chat about the men that have impacted our careers and our success in life. Let us also think of other ways of leveraging the men in our lives.

There will always be examples of how men have impacted our lives. And there will be issues that we need to address. We must have these conversations in the future and change the way that we do things. We have to change the way that women lead and the way in which we get men to support us in our leadership.

**MELANIE BURKE**

Thank you very much. Now I have the pleasure to invite our keynote speaker Danisa E. Baloyi, President of the Black Business Council of South Africa. She is well known for leading change in Africa. This morning she is going to talk about women leading change in their communities.

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# WOMEN INSPIRING THEIR COMMUNITIES

## Keynote address

**DANISA E. BALOYI**

Good morning. Thank you very much for organizing this wonderful event and giving me this opportunity to be here with you and share some of my thoughts and experiences. I also thank all the organizations that have worked together to produce this memorable event. And thank you all for stressing the need for us to help each other. We celebrate women every day. We wake up and toil to deal with the challenges that we face.

I also want to thank all the gorgeous women sitting here for attending this wonderful forum. It allows us to reflect on who we are, where we come from, and where we are going as Africans. We can dissect the issue of women's empowerment and use this conversation to propel women to greater heights. Conversations like this one can enhance our empowerment. But they are also a reminder, to Africans in general and women in particular, of how far we have come and how much further we still need to travel. Unfortunately, the percentage of women whose achievements are recognized and those who are given opportunities is still low. We can blame it on the economy to make it more palatable but it is a fact. We need a will in our society to focus on its disparities and bridge its gaps permanently.

Women are a huge number in our society, by far outnumbering men, no

matter where you are, in any corner of the globe. Yet, the lack of empowerment undermines our progress in all spheres of life. We, as women, must use our numbers to our benefit. We need to remember how powerful our numbers are.

Like many other countries, South Africa has wonderful transformational policies. They look great on paper. However, we need to have the courage to implement these transformations in reality. As a mother of twin girls, I wonder if the legacy that we are leaving behind today will be sufficient to ensure that the gains made today grow bigger for their sake and to ensure that until my last breath that they do not regress to their detriment.

Let us look across organizations of any kind. We will see that women rarely choose and appoint other women. I think that somehow we believe that we are not capable. We must also carefully choose our narrative as we go forward to ensure that women's empowerment becomes an important task in our society. Here, in South Africa, we have achieved so much when we have worked together. I believe that we can accelerate this empowerment of women if we join forces. We do not need just to change. We have to change those things that will make South Africa and other countries a greater nation. We can do it together but we have to continue to be diligent in highlighting the disparities around us. We need to continue to name and shame companies that have not seen the light. The capacity to work and excel, intelligence, and tenacity are gender-neutral. Those who have seen the light have reaped the benefits by including women and utilizing everybody's skills. I think it is amazing that although women are under-resourced and undermined, they have managed to achieve so much and even surpass some men in what they do. Let us capitalize on this.

Some of us will continue to toil along despite the barriers. I imagine what we would achieve if we enjoyed the opportunities that are afforded to men. The world would be very different.

We need to work together and not against each other. Unfortunately, most of the time we do not. We must work with men, but also to our benefit. As we elect male presidents, we must also calculate what is in it for us. We must empower each other and engender confidence in one another. We need to remember that to be recognized, we must unfortunately be 10 times better. We must be skilled enough to compete at all levels so that there is no excuse. Let us teach our boys and children to show respect for each other in our society. Otherwise, our society is doomed. Let us build a fortress of reliance on other women to help them build

nations. Let us learn from each other how to achieve upward mobility and stay there while helping others rise like us. Let us struggle for change and transform our countries and the entire world. Yes, we are marginalized, overlooked, and underappreciated, and yet we understand our power.

We account for 57 percent of the world's population, but how many women presidents have been elected? And who is to blame for the fact that we are not properly represented? Us. To paraphrase a quote "No one, male or female, can use or abuse us without our permission". So, we surrender our power. We must first of all empower ourselves in order to be able to empower others. We can achieve that by recognizing the power that we possess in us.

We are afraid to do the right thing because we know that sometimes it can be costly. But if we have enough empowered women, we can advance our common agenda. Even if they strike one down, another one will rise. But we have to have a plan.

I genuinely believe that we count. Otherwise, as they strike one down, we will retreat and even join in the striking down and our agenda will get derailed irreparably. We must fight the notion that people are considered guilty until proven innocent, particularly if they are women. If we live in democracies, our countries should act as democracies.

You cannot mentor anybody successfully, without getting a great deal in return. That is why I usually do not like the term "skills transfer". I prefer "skills interface". I get something from you and you get something from me.

I tell the people that I mentor that it is not "cool" (to use their language) to be the only one at the top. Personally, I am humble and grateful that I have had an opportunity to lead in many organizations and big companies in this country. I have always used that opportunity to empower other women. Most of the time, leadership comes with tools that we can use to empower others. But we have to have a vision and a will. We must be bold and gutsy to use those tools.

In 1995, there were no Black women in executive positions. That is our history. We have to correct this to go further. As chairman of Denel Aviation, I urged the company to change the fabric of South Africa's air force. We started a School of Aviation for cadets and we now have Black pilots and female pilots. When the minister appointed me to that position, I admitted that I did not know anything about the defense industry but she believed in me and said,

“I know you will swim and will not sink”. I took the appointment and the rest is history.

Absa Bank is one of the biggest banks in South Africa. When I was asked to sit on its board, I found that all other board members were men. I was the only woman on a board of 21. None of the executives were women. My condition of acceptance was that, after the current members retire, the next round of appointments should be given to women. To my surprise, they agreed. That is how more women came to that board. When they asked me which sub-committee I wanted to sit on, I chose the transformation committee. I considered it the most important. The reason for that were the disparities that I observed. That issue needed to be addressed. Even Blacks were categorized. That is the history of our country. But we fought and brought about change. At the outset, there were no women in the executive but when I left it was completely different.

I am president of the largest business organization in this country. It is a very powerful organization, with chambers of commerce, business companies, professional associations, accountants, people in security, investment banks, and so forth.



*Dr. Danisa E. Baloyi*

Africa cannot rise without decisive leaders. We must thank the women in leadership positions but we need a systematic strategy to keep them there. Our existing strategy is loose. We need to tighten it. We can do that because most of the time we are the strategists. We have three female presidents in Africa but we do not know if this success will be sustained. They are all going to be replaced at some point.

We need to use the platforms given to us to change the environment and empower others, be they men or women. “We must not look the other way when we see injustice” [Voltaire]. If you want to know who controls you, find out who you are not allowed to criticize. We must speak up. If we do not, we must accept our lot. We must support each other genuinely. Otherwise,

we will never have female leaders. We will continue to be marginalized and we must not complain if that happens. Women leaders may just disappear from a leadership position and we may accept that. We must not do that. We must find out why they are under fire. This should not happen on our watch. Some women are tough enough to be successful on their own but others need support. We cannot call ourselves leaders if all we care about is ourselves. If I can do something, another person can also do it, and probably even better. If we miss the big picture, if our agenda starts and ends with us, that is a recipe for disaster. We must work not only for ourselves but for generations to come. Africa cannot afford selfish leaders. The legacy of our children deserves more. We must remember that for us to be here somebody has kicked the door open. Let us leave it ajar for others to come in, rather than slam it shut. If you do that, you may wonder one day why you are not getting their support. What do you expect? You left them outside and locked the door.

Remember that nobody will give you power. You have to take it. Once you have power, share it. We can always learn from each other "There is a special place in hell for women who do not empower others" [Madelein Albright]. In our country today, women are 56 percent of the population, yet they are left behind. If that continues across the continent, Africa cannot rise. We must create opportunities for others.

In conclusion, we must feel good about our society because feeling good is the key to success. We must be true to ourselves. We must live our lives to the fullest. We must measure up to our tasks. You remember that I said that you must criticize. However, we must end our disagreements. We must continuously update our skills. We must broaden our horizons like the women who traveled from all over the world to come here. This applies to everybody, no matter if you are in academia or business. You will never have any opportunities if you sit in your own corner. You will be surprised when others rise, and will wonder how they achieved it. They were open to the world while you were sitting at home. If you want to be successful, develop your network. Spread your wings beyond your organization. Do not allow others to walk all over you. Do not succumb. Fight! And do not forget to do continuous overviews of yourself. Introspection is essential. Change the things that you do not like. Enhance those that are good. The state of professional women may not be good in South Africa but we must not lose hope. Never lose hope!

We do not have to get to the top at any cost. If we compromise, sooner or later that will catch up with us. We are often blamed when we are not wrong. Should we accept that? No. Challenge it! We do not fight hard enough for our right to be here. We must continuously fight for our space. We tend to blame other women for what they have done. Instead of that, if they have done something wrong, let us work with them for their rehabilitation. But, most important, we must fight for our space in the professional world. We are not there because we have received favors. We deserve to be there because we are up to the task. We are strong and powerful but we need to know it and believe it. We have the ability to stamp our authority and we need to have the confidence to do it daily. Keep your head up!

Let us work together and form alliances across organizations and across borders, all across the globe. Let us give support to those who are coming behind us because they are going to take over from us. We must create space for others to thrive and not suppress other women. We must serve and help each other, not grudgingly but genuinely. In that way, we can build a huge resource that we all can tap when we need it.

We must never be silent in the presence of injustice. We must defy the myth that some things cannot be done by women. Let us stamp out the myth that women hate each other and cannot work together. We have to demonstrate that, indeed, we can be our sister's keeper.

Lastly, let us never allow anybody to deny who we are. We must fight anyone who does that. We must fearlessly promote ourselves on our own term. We must not sacrifice our children. I admit that I am guilty of that. When my children were small, I sacrificed them.

Do not let anybody put you in his pocket. When you try to get out of that pocket, it is not going to be easy.

May Africa continue to propel the advancement of everyone, especially women and the downtrodden, to ensure a better future for our beloved continent!

I close with a quote from Angela Davis, an American human rights activist: "I am not longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things that I cannot accept".

Let us continue to show women that we have power! Thank you.

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# A DIALOGUE WITH INSPIRING WOMEN

## Panel Discussion

### ***MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND***

We are going to use the same format as yesterday. The idea is not to read CVs. Instead, I will have the panelists introduce themselves to us by sharing some of their stories. It is going to be a dialogue and I will start it by asking these ladies some questions. First, let us have them tell us what inspired them. The word “inspiration” comes from a religious term, meaning “to blow a breath of air into a clay vessel”. This is what God supposedly did when he created us and made us human beings. The notion of leadership has the same connotation of a life-giving force. I have asked these ladies to prepare for the panel by thinking of moments of inspiration in their lives. Let us start with Danica.

### ***DANICA PURG***

Thank you. You heard quite a lot from me yesterday. I mentioned my father. Later, there were other men who supported me, more than women. But there were also women in my life who inspired me. They were teachers. Most teachers in my country are still women. My teachers made me ambitious. When we had problems, we did not discuss them with our parents but shared them with our teachers. This was right after the Second World War, when the economic situation was very difficult, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. I dreamed of being a teacher, helping and mentoring others. This was one of the main inspirations in my youth.

### ***LELEMBA PHIRI***

Good morning, everybody. When I was a child, I thought that being a boy was much more fun than being a girl, as boys were more empowered and had



more freedom. When I was five, I wanted to be a boy but I did not have a choice about it. I did not like to wear dresses and I walked around the house without a top. When I was eight, my mom told me I could no longer walk around without a top. I asked why. She said that I was growing up. I answered that Dad was the most grown-up person in the house and he still walked around without a top. I cried for two days in a row.

I think that the reason for this was that I was surrounded by disempowered women living a life full of constraints. They were financially disempowered and did not have opportunities to provide for themselves or contribute to their communities. My main motivation was to get into the financial sector. What inspires me each day now is seeing women getting empowered through our work. We enable entrepreneurs to provide financial services in their communities. We also work with women and help them become businesswomen. The stories that come out of our customer base inspire me every day. Recently, we appointed a new managing director. She had joined us when she was 20 years old. In five years, she set up 27 outlets where she employed 43 people. It is really a privilege and an honor to see something like that. It is very inspiring.

### **KELLY DE KOCK**

My first inspiration came from my parents. They were teachers. In South Africa at that time this profession was one of the few opportunities for colored people.

My next source of inspiration was my first boss. I was surrounded by white males in this business environment. My boss taught me self-confidence. He also taught me how to inspire confidence into other people.

Finally, I am inspired by my peer group. Luckily, I have been able to meet many inspirational women. I think that by sharing our stories and giving each other confidence, we can achieve a lot.

### **MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND**

Inspiration is one of the dimensions of vision according to the literature. We started a conversation about what we mean by vision last night when I mentioned this *Harvard Business Review* study that says that women have no

vision. Let me tell you a bit more about that because I think that it is related to having inspirational dialogues with each other.

There is a study of the competencies of women in leadership positions and those of men. They discovered eight dimensions of which vision was one. On the other seven, women outscored men. Vision was the only one on which men did better. That is what led to that title according to which women apparently had no vision. I have a research paper in which I argue that they mystified vision and that is why they got that result. I think it is interesting to ask these inspiring women what their definition of vision is.



### ***KELLY DE KOCK***

You are probably right that the question was wrong. What we as women do every day is try to make the world better. We try to make life better. Vision is something out there in the distance. It is something quite hard to define. But, broadly speaking, it is an ability to see a better world. In this context, it is a world where women are treated better and are empowered. It is a world where we have an equal standing. That is our vision. As women, we strive to achieve that every day.

### ***LELEMBA PHIRI***

In my view, vision is the ability to see something that is not there yet, and work like a crazy person to make it happen. That is something that I have been trying to do throughout my career.

### ***DANICA PURG***

The concept of vision is very strongly connected to the concept of mission. Women have a great mission to make society better by making it more equitable. So, it sounds very strange to me that women have been found not to have vision in the research mentioned by Mollie.

I think that vision is the selection of particular direction. I also think that it is closely related to ambition. Based on your experience, you articulate a mission and forge a vision. Perhaps the problem is that we do not always express

our vision clearly and do not realize that we need followers. You have to have people behind you to achieve and implement your vision. You need their help.

When I set up a management school 31 years ago, even the word “management” could not be used in former Yugoslavia. Management back then was actually a set of bureaucratic, technocratic tools to govern people. My goal was to use the school to make managers more professional. For political reasons though, I had to avoid using the word “management”. Therefore, I called our school International Executive Development Centre (IEDC). Thus, originally, we did not have the word “management” in our name. When it became more socially and politically acceptable, we added it to our name and we are now IEDC-Bled School of Management. So, the word “management” is there although we focus more on leadership.

Later, I realized that because we were a small country, we were too inclined to borrow models from the United States and other cultures that are different from our society. This was not helping us to achieve our vision of making our society a better place through the development of management skills. Then I asked prominent people from Central and Eastern Europe if they were interested in setting up an association together in which we would support each other. It was not an easy task, but eventually some of those leaders in management education saw the great opportunity that this association would afford. Today we have 227 management schools in our membership, coming from 55 countries, including some African nations. This was my vision at the outset. I realized that this association would help us produce a much bigger impact, not only in our own societies but also around the whole world.

I think that a vision is something very important and it needs to be connected to your mission. And, as Lelemba said, you have to work very hard to realize it successfully.

### ***MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND***

I hear a pragmatic, problem-solving direction. As Danica put it, the end goal is to make the world a better place. She said that we need to build relationships that will then allow our vision to become much more explicit and much more focused.

Does anybody in the audience wish to share something?

### ***BABITA MATHUR-HELM***

At business schools, we help students develop a vision. We also help them connect it to an action plan. We teach them in a very practical way how to develop a vision and how to act on it. We teach strategies that they can use so that the vision is linked to specific practices. And we teach them how they can relate interpersonal relationships to vision and action. If you share your vision with others, your team will act together on it. That is one of the things that we do that works very well for our students.

### ***MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND***

Indeed, the action component is very important. A vision must always be linked to action. It must also be linked to some kind of belief in a better existence. In that sense, it must be linked to your values. This reminds me that we have not had any conversation about values in this room yet. This is actually my field of expertise and if you get me started we can dwell on it all day. But I think that this perception that there is something wrong with the world and you need to fix it comes from a feeling that your values have been violated. I am going to ask the ladies on the panel to share with us some of the difficulties that they have encountered in their respective fields. What were the problems that had to be solved?

### ***LELEMBA PHIRI***

Our company was selected as one of the top-10 best positioned companies in the world to lift people out of poverty. I was very excited about that and I went to a three-day accelerator in San Francisco and came back even more excited, hoping that I would change the world. When I came back, I discovered that 70 percent of business owners were men. I wondered what makes women feel that they cannot be entrepreneurs and can only work for somebody else? Underneath that were a lot of cultural issues. They affected women's self-confidence. Another issue that we identified was that women felt that if they were too successful nobody would marry them. They also felt that if they became successful, they would have too many responsibilities and these would be completely different from the kind of responsibilities that men have when they are successful. A successful man will buy a nice car and get a new girlfriend. A successful woman must give money back to her family.

Changing that requires a big system change. We need a system in which women feel that they can be business owners. One of the things that we did was forming peer groups where women can see other successful women and share experiences with them. This took a lot of action but now I am glad to see that 60 percent of our entrepreneurs are women.

My second example is from the time that I was managing director of a company in Zambia. I was invited to a meeting with one of the big banks, one of the big four in South Africa. It had just come to Zambia at that time. I was told that the chief executive officer wanted to meet me. I thought it would be just the two of us but there were three men in the room: himself and two of his assistants. He asked a lot of questions about the business, trying to understand everything that we were doing. At some point, he asked me, “Are you really the manager of this large operation here in Zambia?” I said, “Yes”. “My goodness”, he said, “You are a smart girl! How do you make men listen to you?” I said, “If this partnership goes through, you will be listening to me, too”.

### **DANICA PURG**

I have the same story from the time when I was young. Today, I do not have to fight to be equal to men. They come and ask me for advice. Now, I try to help other women who are too passive and are not ready to go for it. For example, I heard from a head-hunting company that when they approach a man about a position, they usually get a response after the second call. But they have to call a women nine times before she reacts.

I have different challenges at present, such as how to make my school more international, how to innovate it, and how to implement new programs. I have positioned my school in the international arena. We have to do something related to our mission that makes us recognizable: working for sustainable development and keeping the environment clean. Another important thing is what Mollie teaches at our school: making leaders more ethical.

When I became the manager of the school, I had a PhD in labor relations. That gave me a good perspective on what employees needed. I wanted managers to do something for them. I realized that they had enormous powers and they could change the world in a positive or negative way. Therefore, I thought I had to provide the kind of education that would make them more responsible leaders. This is my other challenge. I am trying to spread this throughout the

association of management schools CEEMAN that I mentioned already, but management schools around the world are still assessed by different accreditation agencies on the basis of how much the graduates earn and other similar criteria, because ranking systems carry a lot of weight and that is how they evaluate schools. It is all about money, money, money. We all want ethical leaders but the ranking systems ask you how much money you made in your first job after graduation, and by how much your income increased compared to your income before your studies. Now, our association has prepared a first draft of a white paper on management education as we want to impact management education around the world so that it promotes the most important values. We teach ethics but we see a lot of unethical behavior.

I have to tell you that 40 percent of the deans of the CEEMAN schools are women. That is why I always say, “Come join us! We are going to dance!” We do dance at our gala dinners at annual conferences. That means that we build personal relationships.

### ***KELLY DE KOCK***

My biggest issue in South Africa’s investment industry is that I do not fit. I have a technical background and I have completed an MBA program. Still, I have been boxed as a relationship person. It is very difficult for a woman to get out of that box.

I have noticed that other women have the same problem. They may be analysts but there is a complete aspect of their personality that is going to waste. They could achieve amazing things if they were allowed.

I think we need to find ways to develop more multifaceted roles for women. We have to change the way that the investment industry is structured. It is dominated by men. You find women who work as support staff and finance managers but there are no investment professionals. I am a member of the Association of Black Securities and Investment Professionals. One of the things that we do is mentoring for women. I think that this is a very important part of the process. We sponsor women and consider their careers our responsibility. We try to push boundaries. You can be anything that you want. You can work in relationships but still be a technically competent person and be seen as such. This is the biggest challenge for me because it is so hard to be seen as anything but a relationship person.

### ***MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND***

This was very inspirational. And we heard about some very tough challenges. Now, this is the pre-final round of statements by these inspirational women. As Kelly said, we are multidimensional and can be many different things. If we do not rethink job descriptions, we will not allow people to realize their full potential.

Since Danica is leading a global management development association, I would like to ask her if she has ideas how women can be supported in management education.

### ***DANICA PURG***

I think we must support everybody. The big leaders in Africa will be those that really change society by giving equal opportunities to everybody. This is especially important when children are young. Elementary school and secondary school should be free of charge. University should also be free. Politicians throughout the world must recognize education as one of the most important factors in development. Business has recognized that factor and business companies send people to management schools. But even in a developed country like ours, you will hardly get any politicians in your programs. I always invite the prime minister to give opening addresses at our international events but he comes for an hour or two. Our former president was an exception. Once he came and stayed almost a whole day and that way he learned something.

Another challenge worldwide is the development of an open mindset. This means a mindset for learning and for change. At management schools, we should make greater efforts to stimulate creativity by working with people who have diverse ideas. We have to open our minds to diversity. This is important for men and women alike. It is not good enough for women to have an open mindset if men do not.

### ***LELEMBA PHIRI***

I think that in the financial services at present it is really impossible to implement change for women. We need to redesign all our systems, all our products. Women could help a lot in that respect.

We teach entrepreneurs how to do transactions. We show them how to use platforms and how to serve their customers. But that is not enough to be a successful entrepreneur. The challenge now is to create appropriate role models. We need to create business-to-business learning so that entrepreneurs feel more comfortable.

Another issue is that in various African countries women want to do banking as a group but the system does not allow that. Women want banking to be a social event, like meeting every month, having a drink, chatting with friends, and putting money in the bank together. This would enhance the fabric of women's connections. We need to redesign our system and make it more welcoming for women.

**KELLY DE KOCK**

You can set up women with mentors and you can offer them all sorts of education but that, alone, will not be enough to turn around the situation. There are studies showing that men apply for a job when they meet 60 percent of the criteria, whereas women apply only when they meet them 100 percent. Our problem is that we are not knocking on enough doors. We are not seeing enough faces. We are not putting ourselves out there. We have to do that even if we get rejected. The most important thing is to teach women to start knocking on doors. Only then will the doors open.

**MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND**

I will ask the panelists to prepare one last sentence but before that, let us open the floor for questions or comments.

**BARBARA JAFTHA**

For a day and a half, we have been repeating that we need to change things. But to do that, we need to raise our voices. That is the real challenge. We know the answers, but we have to find the voice.

**DANICA PURG**

You need courage. If you try too hard to be likable, you may be underestimated and even mistreated. I do not have such problems anymore, but when



I was young I was like the other women here who spoke about these issues. I felt very frustrated. But later on, when I became successful, I felt that I could do something for other women. Now, my fight is on a different level. Now, I am trying to change things through legislation, by seeing one minister after another. I have some power in the country and I can do it. It is a matter of courage.

**LELEMBA PHIRI**

When we find our voice, we can use it to achieve change. My background is finance but now I am chief marketing officer because I have decided to create my own role. You have to be active to make things happen. You have to make a proposal: “This is what I would like to do and here is why it matters”. You have to do it in a language that both men and women will understand.

**MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND**

I have heard this statement about the importance of voice on many occasions. There is a pedagogy on this and I teach it at Stellenbosch Business School in South Africa. It is about finding mechanisms for giving voice to your values. Sometimes it involves saying courageous things. But sometimes you have to build an alliance. If you can convince the important people that you have a good business case, you have won. Giving voice to values seems to me to be as much about that as it is about courage. It starts with courage and then goes on with finding the right way very pragmatically.

**ELISABETH FRÖHLICH**

As Danica said, age matters. When you have fought 20 fights you are not afraid of the next one because you know that you will win it. So, we have to stand behind young leaders and make up for the missing courage. At my age, I am not afraid of arguing with men because I have had a lot of arguments with them and I know I can win them.

### **LELEMB A PHIRI**

I have had difficult conversations with men, wondering “Should I say this or not?”. I found a way around this, though. I made an agreement with one of the founders of the company that we would create a circle of trust. That meant that we could trust each other and I would be able to say anything. Once I have said it, it is finished and we move on. This is important because I may have an interesting vision but if I am afraid to share it, the company is not using my full potential. It is using 70 percent of me, which is still OK for the business, but it could use more. To be able to contribute fully to the organization, I should be able to express myself fully at any level. An agreement like this can create the courage that you need to be bold and candid about what needs to be said, and propose a direction in which we should be going.

### **BUKOLA BELLO JAIYESIMI**

Indeed, you may wish to rebrand yourself. But you better be prepared for your new initiative. It is not enough to have courage for that. You need competence as well. We should not mislead people into believing otherwise. I am saying this because I have heard people confidently talk about some things without having a clue about them. You do not leave a good legacy behind if you do that. We need to be schooled. We need to live up to our roles every day. Institutions offer short courses to those who cannot take long ones. So, we can participate in short courses and prepare for the position that we wish to take. That is the way to go. Education is the key. And these days it is available everywhere.

### **KHANYA SOSIBO**

Sometimes you may wish to assert yourself but suppose you are a young graduate, fresh from school. You may be afraid of losing your job. So, it is important to have the right structure. For example, I once had to deal with sexual harassment but I did not put up a fight because I knew that the female leaders in the organization would not support me. And, as for the men, they would not see it as an issue in the first place. So, it is important to know that we have support from our senior female leaders. Even if they are not leaders, but at the same level as you, their support is important because they can help

you win the fight. However, I knew that I could lose my job if I took it further. Therefore, I think that it is very important for us to know that we will get support rather than rely on a trial-and-error strategy.

***KELLY DE KOCK***

That is why it is important to have networks. A network can introduce you to somebody who can support you even if you do not know anybody.

***KUMESHNEE WEST***

I have been thinking a lot about how we can create a supportive a safe environment. We have the skills and knowledge that we need to impact our environments. But it is not always easy to have courage. You can have all the skills that you need to execute the tasks of the job that you have, but it is less easy to stand up for yourself.

At our school, we have academics and professional staff. I am quite opinionated and will stand up for other people at the school. But on a couple of occasions this year, I was approached by women who said, “We understand that you are a leader but you do not need to be so aggressive”. The first time it happened to me, I was completely shocked. I had been speaking up for other women, trying to support them. The second time it happened, I was in a meeting and a person said this to me in front of everyone. However, another woman on our committee stood up and said “No, I do not think that Kumeshnee was aggressive. I think that she was just asserting her opinion. And I think that it is important for us to give women an opportunity to do that”.

When that happened, it made me realize that sometimes you take courage from another person. We need to create alliances within our immediate environment. The outcome of this incident is that now, each time we need to say something bold, we look at each other to see a clue that means acceptance. That is what one can get courage from. This is important because I know that I have moments of courageousness and moments of helplessness. So, let us think how we can create more courageous moments for each other.

**LELEMBA PHIRI**

What Kumeshnee said is important, especially at the beginning of a young person's career. Sometimes it is enough to talk to just one person in a leadership position. Approach that person, have lunch together, and create an alliance. From that moment on, you will feel a lot more comfortable when you need support. I gave you this example of me and one of the company's co-founders. He is a man, not a woman. Nevertheless, we created a circle of trust and now we can talk about anything. You start from there and then you go to the next person.

**MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND**

This panel is almost over. I would like to give the panelists the opportunity to make some last comments. During the next panel, we will have time to answer some of the outstanding questions.

**KELLY DE KOCK**

Find one person, help her, and lend her the support that she needs.

**LELEMBA PHIRI**

As women, we wear so many hats and play so many roles. Whether we are mothering or leading, let us not forget ourselves and let us live the moment as well.

**DANICA PURG**

Do not ever compromise on quality. Also, I think you can learn how to appear less aggressive. I had this problem, too. I used to push people around a bit too hard. But my husband told me that I could be a little softer and achieve better results because when you say it softly people listen to you. Otherwise, you immediately build a wall. In addition to building alliances, I would also consider some training in negotiation skills and communication. It can be very helpful.

**MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND**

Let us thank the members of this panel and move on to the next.



*Danica Purg, Mpho Sekwele, Nontwenhle Mchunu, Tony Gum*



*Kelly de Kock, Kumesheene West, Lelemba Phiri*

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# MAKING COLLABORATION AMONG WOMEN WORK

## Leadership Roundtable

### ***PENELOPE JONES MENSAH***

Thank you for the opportunity to facilitate this session on collaboration among women. I would like to invite the panelists to join me: Barbara Jaftha from South Africa, Bookie Monica Kethusegile from Botswana, and Pauline Lambou Epse Ngouanfouo from Cameroon.

We are going to discuss real-life issues and we need to be very interactive. Let us get started. Here is a thought for you. “Women are their own worst enemies”. I would like the panelists to think about that and tell us their stories.

### ***BOOKIE MONICA KETHUSEGILE***

I am privileged to have this opportunity to talk to leading women from Africa, Europe, and America, and share my thoughts with all of you.

My sisters here pointed out the importance of sharing stories. I am going to share my story with you. It is the story of Botswana. It is a story of a leader in Botswana in various areas. It is a story of a woman in Botswana who is dealing with business challenges. I extend an invitation to the partnership that has brought us all together here to think about bringing this process to my country so that we can impact developments there through our presence.

My nation is considered the epitome of democracy. It is a real example of success. We have made substantial economic progress and we have a strong democratic system. We have the right processes and a legislative system that is very enabling. I am saying this as a person who is very intimately associated with these processes.

I sit on a number of committees at the national level. I have joined them through my social activism and my activities as a business woman. Therefore, I wear a number of hats. Among other things, I chair our NGO council, which brings together non-government organizations, the government, businesses, and independent representatives of the people. This council is meant to facilitate partnership between non-state actors and government. Without anyone pushing Botswana to do so, it is a country that believes in bringing people together and giving them an opportunity to participate effectively and meaningfully, together with the government, in the pursuit of societal development.

I also sit on the National Committee for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. The issues that we discuss are eradication of poverty, achievement of gender equality, and everything that we have discussed during this conference. I also sit on a committee that deals with gender issues. I am one of the 16 gender commissioners. In addition, I sit on a committee that deals with combatting crime, including human trafficking. I am a member of other committee that tries to enforce fiscal transparency and eliminate corruption. I am not employed by the government but I have been brought into these processes and I can confidently tell you that my government is willing to involve the citizenry. It is willing to create an environment that is conducive to growth and wealth creation.

Nevertheless, I have had serious problems in my business. When I needed financing, I was told that I had net worth but was effectively broke, so I could not be supported by any bank. I have had to fight legal battles and go to places like the president's office. I have engaged all sorts of government officials, asking for an explanation of this phenomenon. I wanted to know why this was happening. Where was the implementation of the policies and commitments of the government? For some reason, it was not happening.

If I have such difficulties, despite all the access to the government that I have, and all my power, imagine the situation of an ordinary woman. Imagine a woman that does not have the education, knowledge, and other privileges that I enjoy.

I did not want any other woman to go through what I have had to endure. So, I conceptualized an organization for women called Mosadi Khumo - Socioeconomic Empowerment Forum for Women. "Mosadi khumo" means "woman [is] wealth". I am its president and founder of that organization. We

create socioeconomic opportunities for women to become empowered, become engaged, and have a voice. We want women to be able to participate effectively. Time does not allow us to delve into the depths of what we do. I just wanted to know that you may have excellent legislation that is supposed to ensure an enabling environment, and yet you may have all sorts of problems accessing what is supposed to be accessible to you. What can we do about that? Let us bring together women and harness the power of numbers and the power of their capacities.

As Penelope put it, in a way we are our own enemies. And as I did in the beginning, let us take this process to a welcoming place like Botswana and think what we can do pragmatically, and then take this out and spread it across Africa.

### **BARBARA JAFTHA**

Before talking about myself, I would like to express my gratitude for having this privilege to be here with you today. I would also like to express my admiration for the Queen Mother for the wisdom that she shared with us and her humility. At the dinner last night, I accidentally knocked her with my bag and felt appalled. And I thought that it is amazing that despite everything that she has achieved in her life, and all the leadership that she possesses, her humility really stands out. Thank you, Queen Mother, for letting me knock you with my bag.

Speaking of the most important things in my life, I am first and foremost a Christian, and I am the mother of two wonderful human beings, aged 27 and 21. I have 18 years of experience in the corporate environment. It is an environment where survival of the fittest is the rule. Still, you must not compromise your values. Throughout these 18 years, I have climbed corporate ladders without compromising values.

When I was a child, I wanted to become a lawyer, yet my father could not afford that. Only my older sister could afford to go to university. So, I had to study as I worked. I managed to get a good job that involved a lot of traveling inside South Africa and sometimes abroad as well. But, as I watched busy people boarding planes, I could not help thinking that they do not have a life. Why were those people so anxious and serious? And then I realized that I was one of them. I had a good job and I was well paid but I was not truly happy. Once, I got a message from my daughter in which she said that she was doing a difficult



project and I was not there to help her. I boarded a flight to Johannesburg right after that and it seemed like the longest two hours in my life. So, I thought, “This is it”. But I did not have to quit. Fortunately, I was working for a company that supports families and makes compromises.

I am a great observer of people. I have been in meetings that last hours and I wondered why they were so long. I realized that the reason was that the person who was chairing the meeting was not running it properly. The chairperson could not manage people. At that point, I realized that my passion was people. I felt that I had gone through many experiences. Now, what could I do to produce the greatest impact? What came to my mind was the young women of Africa, not just South Africa.

I was on a long flight, drawing a tree. As I looked at the roots, I wondered what the roots of the events in our lives are. Is it the circumstances? Or culture? Our experiences? The challenges that we need to deal with? Then I decided that my company would be a root system. We only show people what is above the ground although the roots are extremely important.

That was the beginning of my company Anchored Roots. I struggled with the name because “roots” is a popular element of many names that had already been taken. But six months later I came up with Anchored Roots and that is now our name.

Anchored Roots helps women in the business world. We help them become leaders. We develop their skills. We help them find funding. We do all the different things that we can do. But the most important thing is the achievement of sustainable change which means changing the person first. The first phase is unlocking potential. You have to understand who you are, what you want to give, and why you want to give. Only then can you align yourself to a team or a group of people and produce impact. When this has been achieved, it can be taken out into society and carried forward.

Being in a senior management position, I have seen many disillusioned young people. They have huge expectations but when they are in a new environment they collapse in a matter of six months because they cannot adapt to the transformation that is taking place.

That is it about Anchored Roots and myself. Thank you for listening to me.

### **PAULINE LAMBOU EPSE NGOUANFOUO**

Hello everybody. I am from Cameroon and English is my second language. I was born 51 years ago in a small village in the west of Cameroon. I have had to struggle hard in my life, like a typical African woman. An African girl may not be able to go to school. Or she may go to school without shoes and without books.

I also had this problem of being forced into an early marriage. When I was 18 years old, I had a fiancé who was 45. I wanted to go to school but I did not have money. That was a real challenge.

I am grateful to my mother because she did whatever she could to send me to school. We worked on a farm and she sold the crops to allow me to go to school. Luckily, after I finished primary school, I got a scholarship and was able to continue. I had no possessions but I had something in my head. I was always first or second in the class. I was the first girl in my village to complete her education.

I went to university in the capital city. When I arrived there, I had no place to sleep. And I was one of the few women in the university. All the rest were men. I was trained to become a teacher of French and English. That is when the trouble started. We were supposed to buy everything that we needed to go to school. My parents were villagers and could not help me. But I received help from an unrelated woman. There are women who help children, sometimes without even knowing who they are and where they are. I am enormously indebted to her. That woman bought everything for me.

The other problem was marriage. “What kind of woman cannot give birth to her own child?” “What kind of woman gives birth to only one child?” There were actually many children in our household, the children of my relatives. One of them was born with autism and required special education. That triggered my interest in special education and I obtained a Master’s degree. And I am now doing a PhD.

### **PENELOPE JONES MENSAH**

These are all very different stories. Yet, the spirit of *ubuntu* and the spirit of the lioness transpire from all of them. These women have given to others much more than expected.



I have a different story. I come from a privileged environment. My father was a high-court judge and attorney general. Later, he set up a private practice. As I grew up, I did not anticipate any challenges. But I grew up in Africa which has a very patriarchal society. I got my law degree, got married, and started a legal practice. My first child had sickle-cell disease, which was the first challenge in my life. That disease is common in West Africa. I did not know much about it and I had to learn how to deal with my child. I was faced with a dilemma: should I devote my life to providing care for that child or should I go back to work? One of the two parents should make a sacrifice for that child. Which one should it be? Even a privileged person, like myself, may have to deal with a dilemma of this kind.

My second child came soon after the first one. He was fine. Then we had a third one. Sickle-cell disease again. At that point, I realized that I had to become a full-time mom. Despite all my education and my legal practice, I was the one who had to make a sacrifice and give up my career for the sake of our children. As a result, I spent the next 10 years at home, raising my children. I had to deal with the challenge of being an ambitious woman living in a system that did not support my struggle with my challenges. That stalled me a bit.

When I saw that my children were doing well at school, I decided to set up my own law firm. I did not have a lot of experience because I had worked for only a year or two before I quit. I got my biggest client the first week after I started. I was very honest and admitted that mine was a small firm, not one of the top firms in Ghana. But I knew I could do the job.

We need policies that will help African women as a whole, regardless of their social background. These policies should give women an opportunity to thrive. We have to get together and raise the next generation of African leaders. I was a very intelligent child, doing very well at school. I was ambitious and hard-working. I obtained an excellent education. And still, I was stalled by my gender.

When I turned 40, I started thinking what I could do to help another girl in the same situation as me. Or she might be in a worse situation than me, without an education, having to conform to the pressure of her society. At the age of 40, I realized how lucky I had been. I set up the 40 Roses Foundation which provides scholarships to economically deprived girls. Some of them are the first in their families and in their villages to go to university. We started

out with 40 girls that were nominated and recommended to us. We raised them so that they become the next generation of African women leaders. We offer scholarships and we connect them with successful women, like you and me, so that they get mentoring and develop their potential. That is how I give back to society. Although our stories are different, we have the same goal. We give back because we understand that it is important for us to lift others. We heard the statement that women are their own worst enemies. We should not allow that to happen.

We have to think how we can support other women in these initiatives. I would like to ask the audience if they have questions that the panelists can answer.

### ***PATIENCE SIWADI***

One of the things that I have had to deal with on my journey is fear. It is fear of the unknown. I know that the only thing to fear is fear itself. I have been petrified at the thought of stepping out and setting up a business. I would like the panelists to tell me how they have fought fear. How can you teach a young girl to combat fear? In my country, Zimbabwe, fear is quite prevalent among women. There is a good reason for that. According to the statistics, 70 percent of the women's first sexual experience is rape. There are a lot of child marriages, too. So, the fear is very real. How do you get rid of it?

### ***BOOKIE MONICA KETHUSEGILE***

I know what fear means. It can be so strong and long-lasting that it affects your whole life and the life of your children. I am the mother of three girls and I understand the fears that you talked about. What has sustained me in my life is my faith in God. The second thing was my righteousness. I have not cheated anybody. Yesterday, we talked about the importance of doing things right and being confident. The men in the business environment tried to intimidate me and cheat me. They would pay the other men but not me. They would refuse to give me what was rightfully mine. I did not know why nobody was taking my side. I had to fight hard battles in court and spend sleepless nights. What helped me through that process was the existence of God in my life. That is important in a spiritual sense. It is also important that you are true to yourself. You have

to know what is right and you have to do it. That was my response to fear.

Speaking of foundations, I have also established a foundation and a trust fund to assist women in the space where I found myself.

### ***PENELOPE JONES MENSAH***

I think that education is a powerful weapon against fear. The early marriages and all the other problems that were mentioned here are very real, indeed. But once a girl gets a good education, she can make the right choices. She gets empowerment. That is why I decided to help educate girls. If you educate a girl, you educate a family and eventually you educate a nation. Women are the backbone of society. We have to understand that the most important thing for a woman is education, education, education.

Education can help us crash through the glass ceiling. But how do we collaborate after that? How do we bring other women to the table so that we can be a collective force to be reckoned with? At the end of the day, we can be very powerful across the board. And still we find ourselves lagging way behind the men. How can we collaborate so that we bring other women to our level and help them achieve what we have achieved? And how can we integrate geographically? European women call themselves European. The same goes for American women. But we say “She is from South Africa”. “This one is from Ghana”. How can we all collaborate to empower ourselves as a region?

### ***BERTHA YENWO***

I would like to comment on a cultural issue. We should educate the next generation so that they are not part of what used to happen. But how exactly can we achieve that. There are still many parts of Africa where early marriages are prevalent and that is part of the local culture. How do we make a transition from the culture of the old generation to a new culture?

### ***PENELOPE JONES MENSAH***

I agree with you and I think that is where mentoring comes in. We cannot just send girls to school and disregard the effect of mentoring. It is important

that we educate them but we also need to find mentors who are good role models for them. They should learn from the mentors' experience and form their own opinions as to what is right and what is wrong.

I would like to ask Barbara now to share her impressions. Do women collaborate in a professional setting or do they tend to compete with each other? Do we pull each other down out of envy? I know that you are running a foundation that fosters collaboration among women. Have you encountered any difficulties?

**BARBARA JAFTHA**

The women in my foundation wish to collaborate. But the corporate world is really different. I have managed many teams. I have discovered that it is important to set the right tone at the outset. You have to be quite assertive, even harsh, the first five minutes after you have been introduced to the team.

We have talked a lot about self-confidence. We have said that it is important to be self-confident. But how self-confident are we in reality? We may feel a need to compete because we lack self-confidence. There is a lot of struggle in the corporate world. When we talk about collaboration, we have to know what that means, and what we want to give, and why we still compete with each other.

**BOOKIE MONICA KETHUSEGILE**

I think I should share my experience with Mosadi Khumo. It is a very large organization. We have about 1,500 women in our ranks across Botswana. We have had very serious problems within the organization. We have a hierarchical structure with a women's millionaires club at the apex. I have had to deal with the strife among the leadership.

At the same time, we have been collaborating very well with the world outside the organization. There are many rural women who believe that we can help them improve their lot. We have been embraced by the government because it realizes that we are carrying forward its agenda. We have also been embraced by corporate partners. But among ourselves, we have all these petty little things. To deal with them, I have had to call these women one by one and talk to them. "Do you realize that we are destroying what we have put together?"

We are grandmothers and yet we are fighting and making a show. Let us behave ourselves because we are going to embarrass ourselves”.

I do believe in education. But that does not mean just going to class. It also involves interaction. That is why I said this several times: “Come to Botswana and help me show to our women that they can make things happen”. We should strengthen their self-confidence. They should stop bickering. They also need to know how to deal with the existing problems between organizations. Let us work together and harness our potential.

The real question is what it takes for a person to develop this mindset. Working together as Africans, pooling the efforts of all our organizations, we can be successful.

#### **DANISA E. BALOYI**

I think that part of the problem is our reluctance to support the leader. We all want to lead at the same time, but that is just not possible. I think that the more we talk about this, the better it will be. I always tell young people that to be a good leader you should be a good follower. You cannot be a good leader if you cannot follow.

This is what breaks women’s organizations. As my father put it, “You get elected in the morning and by the afternoon the knives are out”. Let us break that cycle. We cannot break it unless we address it and talk about it. Let us tell each other that it is this person’s turn now. Yours is coming.

#### **GIFTY AKUSHIKA LAMPTEY**

I would like to address the comment of one of my sisters here who said that women were petty. Why is that? Why do we fight each other? Sometimes, you have to address these women individually and change their mindset. I believe that education is the key. I am not talking about classroom education. Some of them are grown but not mature. Some have problems with their background. Some have problems with the way that they were brought up. Some have never been loved. To change them you have to make them feel loved. African women tell African men that they never say “I love you”. The reason is they have not heard that expression. Their moms never told them that they loved them. Their

dads never said that, either. This has to do with the way that people bring up their children and the background that they come from.

I think that, as women and mothers, we need to start showing more love for our children and extend that affirmation to everything that they do. We have to bring them closer to us. I believe that when we notice that other women are petty we need to bring them closer to us. We have to spend some time and find out what the problem is. Then, they will come to you and say, “You are so patient and so humble. You do not find anything wrong with what we find wrong”. The most important factor here is love. We need to be able to extend love to other people. When you love, you can draw more people closer to you. When you love, you are emulating Christ. I think that as women we should love more.

Do not find fault with a particular person. That particular person may have a problem. It needs to be addressed. It could be from her upbringing or it could be from issues that she encountered. We need to find out what makes her what she is. And then you address that particular issue. Then, she will change her ways and begin to accept people. That is what brought my ministry to where it is today. We can reach out to the lowest places. Then, they can hug me, and kiss me, and love me. And they can speak to me. But they need somebody who is willing to listen to them. You must not build walls around you so that people cannot approach you. When you remove those barriers, they can get closer to you.

### **PENELOPE JONES MENSAH**

We obviously need a paradigm shift. We need to stop the needless competition and bickering. It starts with that shift in our mindsets and the understanding that we need to do it for ourselves. We need to understand that, instead of competing with each other, we should complement each other. This will be possible only if we rise as women and get other women to join us at the table. That is how we will produce an impact for our children, which will also affect our children’s children. It all starts with us.

We are all here in the spirit of unity. We believe that united we stand, divided we fall. We understand the spirit of *ubuntu*. And yet nothing will happen if we go back to our countries and do not use the tools that we acquired from this conference. Let us leverage our contacts to our advantage. Let us find a



way to build a strong, united front. If we do not understand that and fight against each other, we will be shooting ourselves in the foot.

### **TONY GUM**

I think that another problem that we have as women is that we have this perception of individuality. A better word for it is selfishness. We misconceive it as being an individual and being self-aware. When you are self-aware, it is something very internal. It does not need to be loud. Selfishness is often quite the opposite. We do not listen to each other because we have our own agendas. We do not give each other a chance to talk. This contradicts what we have been talking about. We are not actually building the essence of collaboration.

I know that we, as women, have been oppressed for a very long time. Therefore, as an individual, you want your story to be heard. It is valuable and important. There is a time and a place for us to speak our truths.

I would like to hear more from the panelists about what contribution among women means. I am young and want to learn more about what it means for us to unite as women and as a community so that we move forward.

### **BARBARA JAFTHA**

I would like to stress the importance of how we observe ourselves. In coaching, we speak of the principle of observing yourself as another person. And the main principle is to leave people better than when you found them.

Collaboration is about discovering what everybody can contribute and bringing all this together in order to produce the best impact. So, you need to know what you can give and what impact you can produce. There is something that we all struggle with, including myself. We do not know how to ask for what we need. We are naturally sensitive people. That is how God created us. We have to learn how to use our sensitivity to our advantage. The negative side of that is that we are easily offended. Sometimes when I hear a comment about myself, I ask myself “Barbara, why are you feeling that way about that comment?” You have the right to be offended. But sometimes it is better to keep quiet. Power sometimes lies in our silence. It may be preferable to talk to a person offline, after the meeting. And you see that you have made a big

impact. You can share your story privately and produce a much more powerful impact. That, too, is collaboration, you know.

***PAULINE LAMBOU EPSE NGOUANFOUO***

In conclusion, I would say that we need to bring all these organizations of leading women together and work together. Let us form a Women's Legion of Change. It is possible.



***PENELOPE JONES MENSAH***

Let us take this conversation back to our communities and continue it there. If we want to carry our agenda forward, we have to be united. We have to make a conscious effort. Before stepping on a woman's toes, we must remember that we are on the same side. Thank you very much.

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# BUILDING, BRIDGING AND BLAZING PATHWAYS FOR WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

## Closing Keynote

**SUSAN R. MADSEN**

It was a pleasure to be with you these two days. Now I have the hard task of closing this conference with a keynote speech.

Let me tell you a little bit more about my background. I am a professor at a school of business but I have spent a lot of time leading social change in terms of global women's leadership, and I have been very passionate about that. I have also been involved in social change in the state of Utah. But one of the things that I am most proud of in my life is that I have four children. And they are all with the same man. Three of them are in their twenties and one has just turned 30. I have a daughter who joined the Utah National Guard, so she is my soldier.

Now that our children are out of the house, my husband and I are having a delightful time. We are loving it, even though we love our children. They are our best friends. We also have a grandchild, 18 months old.

As I told you yesterday, I have spent a lot of time interviewing prominent women, such as governors and presidents. I have done this in the United States, China, and the Middle East. I like listening to their stories of how they developed their self-confidence and their voice, what kinds of things influenced them, and what people were instrumental in their lives, from the time that they were born all through school. What was it that really made a difference in their lives and enabled their careers? My goal is to find an answer to the question of how we can raise girls in a way that gives them more voice and self-confidence. How do we help them want to lead? I am talking about both formal and informal leadership.

I do a lot of other work, too. I do quantitative analyses. But it is the women's stories that have changed me. They have motivated and inspired me. I like to speak about my research in a way that touches people's minds and hearts. And then we have to start thinking what we can do about these issues.

I have been asked why I am so focused on women's issues. Some people ask, "Don't you like men?" I tell them that I do like men. I am married to a man, and I have three sons. But I feel called to do the work that I do with women. Other people say that I must have been raised with a bunch of sisters, which must explain my interest in women. Actually, I have six brothers and no sisters.

I like to read research findings because if you pay attention to research it can save you a lot of time. You can learn something about businesses and communities without starting from scratch. My husband has traveled with me to some of the events at which I have spoken, and he now says that he wants to do a bit more than carry my luggage. I have told him that he needs to get a PhD to do that. People think that they understand leadership but that is not easy without doing research. My husband has two Master's degrees but that is not enough, so he is now in a PhD program. His research is on men's role in supporting women. Let us now move forward because I do not want all this to go to his head.

I want to talk about why women's leadership matters so much. We all know pieces of this but I want to give you the business case. And this applies to government as well. I want to give you a good framework that will help you understand all that, as well as some resources. I want to talk about useful strategies and initiatives, too. This can give you ideas about your own personal development.

The first question is why the issue of women's leadership matters. I have been involved in social change in the state of Utah. I like it because I see a lot of exciting things happening. Two years ago, I wrote a brief called "Why Do We Need More Women Leaders in Utah?" A similar case can be made for other places, such as Central and Eastern Europe and Africa. I keep the copyright of this brief so I can do whatever I want with it.

I have summarized a lot of studies from different countries, not just the United States and European countries. The summary suggests that companies with more female leaders, such as board members or executives, perform better. They have faster debt reduction, and strike better deals. When women's voices are heard, they make less risky bids.

When there are more women in top positions, there are decreased turnover intentions. The gender wage gap is reduced and increased employee engagement. There is higher customer satisfaction, too. All these findings demonstrate that when you have men and women work together, you have the best solution.

There are many studies on gender differences in ethics. The findings suggest that women are more ethical than men. Companies with more women in top positions have less corporate fraud. Men are more likely to embezzle. When women do embezzle, they take less money.

The presence of women in a team reduces groupthink and makes for more considerate team members. Women are better holistic thinkers, more process-oriented, more sensitive to non-verbal cues, and more comfortable with ambiguity. They are more nurturing to others and focus more on inclusiveness and the personal development of other people.

The studies have also found another benefit from having more women in leadership positions: leveraging talent. Women tend to look for win-win solutions, whereas men seek win-lose solutions. Of course, this does not apply to every man and every woman. These are general trends. We need win-win solutions today, especially in politics. I could give you lots of examples, but I do not want to start talking about our politics today.

About a year ago, I was speaking to about 500 teenage girls. I said that we did not have enough women in our state legislature. I asked them what they thought about that. Does it matter? There was a pause and then they said, "No. It probably does not". I said, "Well, it does!" Women ask different questions. Our brains are made somewhat differently. There is research that shows that when there are no women around the tables where governments make decisions, funding is not given for specific things. Some of the things that women care about are healthcare, education, poverty, and social programs. You can see the difference across states and in the way that funding is allotted based on how many women participate in state governments.

When women participate in decision making, decisions are sometimes slower because there is a greater diversity of ideas. That frustrates men sometimes. Yet the research is clear that problem-solving is better when women participate, and the solutions are more innovative and creative. It might take a bit longer but the quality of the decisions improves and that is a big advantage.

Women and men also have different leadership styles. Women's style is more nurturing. That is a wonderful thing to be proud of. Also, more women at the top of the company means more corporate social responsibility, better engagement with society, and more philanthropic responses. When men and women work together, the result is increased innovation and improved creativity, better decision-making and problem-solving, higher collective intelligence, higher social sensitivity, better team performance on highly complex tasks, and many other things.

Now you see why the presence of women matters. It matters a lot. It matters in all kinds of situations: businesses, not-for-profit organizations, church groups, communities, and governments. All of this is strongly supported by research. And who benefits from that? Everybody.

A study of 64,000 people from 13 countries asked the respondents to classify 125 different behaviors as masculine, feminine, or neutral. The researchers also asked them which of those traits were most important in leadership today. About 66 percent of the respondents, including men and women, said that the world would be a better place if men thought more like women. And the analysis showed that the traits that were perceived as feminine were also seen as more important in leadership. That tells us something. We have some natural skills that can be very beneficial today. You can find more details in a book titled "The Athena Doctrine."

Another study found that women are rated higher in terms of leadership effectiveness. These studies are really large, involving hundreds of thousands of participants. Thus, the assumption that men are generally better than women as leaders is not based on real evidence.

According to researchers Folkman and Zenger, some of the most salient traits of women that make them good leaders are the following. They can be counted on to follow through with their commitments. They are careful to honor commitments and keep promises. They willingly go beyond what is needed. They make a genuine effort to improve after they have received feedback from others and actually actively look for opportunities to get feedback and improve. They stay in touch with the issues and concerns of the individuals in the workgroup and bring to the group a higher level of energy and enthusiasm. They are truly concerned about developing others. They follow through on objectives to ensure success and do not get distracted before the project is completed.

Those are the things that they found across the board, describing what women do better than men. All this matters because we are very good! We know it but there is also research behind it showing that things work better when you have the best of women's minds and energy with the best of men's. This is important information to know. First of all, it is good for us to know. We need to know that our voice matters and there is research to support that. But we also need reports like this one for our leaders, in our political and business settings. It is important for companies that know that women can help increase their profit.

We all have biases and assumptions and we all know that. When we look at somebody, the first thing that we notice is gender. And if we cannot tell what gender the person is, it bugs us. We start looking at ear-rings and other clues because we are confused. The second thing is race. We may think that we do not have biases but we all do. I have biases and I know that. The research on biases is fascinating. These biases are a challenge for us and everybody else.

If there is not continued work, awareness and urgency, we will automatically lose ground. If the prime minister of a particular country is a woman that does not mean that we have resolved our issues. There has to be continuous work to move forward.

I like this quote from our former president Jimmy Carter: "The biggest challenge facing our world today is based on the presumption that men and boys are superior to women and girls".

Here is another one by Sheryl Sandberg: "A truly equal world would be one where women ran half our countries and companies and men ran half our homes. I believe that this would be a better world. The laws of economics and many studies of diversity tell us that if we tapped the entire pool of human resources and talent, our collective performance would improve". And legendary investor Warren Buffet has stated that one of the reasons for his great success was that he was competing with only half of the population. "The Warren Buffets of my generation still enjoy this advantage. When more people join the race, more records will be broken".

When I did my interviews for the first couple of books that I published, I talked more about the word "challenge" more than words like "trials". But the leading women that I interviewed would smile a little when pronouncing the word challenge. That reminded me of my house in Utah. We have lots of good

mountains and lots of snow. The mountains are on two sides of our house. And my husband and kids liked to look at the mountains and say "They look hard to climb but that would be an exciting challenge". That is a different look at the concept of challenge. It is interesting to think about the words that we use.

We have internal challenges and external challenges. To address internal challenges, we need to work on developing women's self-confidence, for example. In terms of external challenges, we need to work on public policy and other changes in the culture of our organizations. That is critical. But we all need internal change as well. Both are important.

According to the literature, there are a number of external barriers, such as the glass ceiling, the lack of pay equity, organizational practices (recruiting, hiring, career development, training, and promotion), others' perceptions (likeability, attractiveness, discrimination), lack of opportunities (role models, networking, socializing), socialization, and unconscious bias. Every single one of these is real.

One large study in Europe found that handsomeness is an advantage for a man in a leadership role. But it is not so for women. When you are too beautiful, you get judged. So, you are better off if you are middle of the road.

I have done a lot of research in the area of unconscious bias. A year or so ago I did a radio show on benevolent sexism. That is an unconscious bias, too. It is often men who do this to women. They will sometimes say, "You don't need to go to this networking event after work because you want to be with your kids". It sounds nice but it deprives a woman of opportunities to network. Some bosses will not even ask a woman if she wants to take an assignment out of the country because they suppose it is going to be hard. They want to be nice but in reality women do not have an opportunity to say that they want to take that assignment. These are mostly good men who try to be kind to women, but the outcome is negative.

Understanding the research in this area is empowering. I watch myself and I observe things happening around me. For example, women are socialized since a young age to take care of each other. Boys tend to play win-lose games, like running competitions. Girls wait for everybody and hold hands. We are brought up to think that everyone should be equal but some women make it to the top and others wonder how they have managed it. And the perception is that they have broken the sisterhood rule.



Another interesting finding is that men and women compete differently in the workplace. It is acceptable for men to compete directly with other men. They can do that and they are fine with it, and they are usually friends again five minutes after having an alternation of some kind. "You win. You have more sales than me. That's OK". On the other hand, studies in various cultures have found that women are also socialized to compete but not directly. Women have indirect competitions with each other. It involves back-biting and gossiping. It has also been shown that women compete with their bodies. They compete with their looks and their bodies, whereas men do not compete that way. If they do, they compete on what their bodies can do, like in sports. Women are more likely to compete on how their bodies look.

By understanding these issues, we become more empowered. I once did a two-and-a-half hour seminar with women on this issue. I let them discuss these things and wrestle with them. You might think that they would go out a little depressed. They actually felt lifted and said that this was good information. They felt better because they were more conscious about these things.

Some studies suggest that 30 to 40 percent of women need a tap on the shoulder more often than men to step forward for an opportunity. Also, if men feel that they have 50 to 60 percent of what it takes for a promotion or a political office, they will step up for it. Women, however, feel that they need to have 90 to 100 percent. Otherwise, they will not even think about it. They will just delete the e-mail that invites them to consider it. Yet, the research suggests that if a woman does get that tap on the shoulder, and is told that she has what it takes to do the job, she is much more likely to consider the offer. The power of the tap cannot be matched by anything else. That is something that we can do quite easily. I tap people all the time. I tap students. I tell them that they should consider going to graduate school because they have a good mind for something. I think that there are five or six women that ran for office in the state of Utah in the last four of five years because I tapped them. Sometimes we think that women know that they have some gifts. We think that they know they are amazing people. And yet they often have no clue what they do well. It is our responsibility to let them know. A lot of men have all the self-confidence that they need but women need encouragement.

I do a whole workshop on the differences in self-confidence between men and women and the neuroscience behind that. Women can benefit a lot from understanding these differences. It may be depressing to hear this but it is a

fact that, generally speaking, women are less self-assured than men, have more self-doubt, feel more anxiety when they leave their comfort zones, do not let go of defeat, have hurt feelings longer than men, judge themselves harder than men, and take longer to get started again after failure. There is some hormone science that explains this. But it does not mean that we are worth less than men. It simply means that we are made differently.

Here is what Sheryl Sandberg says about the internal barriers that hinder women: "In addition to the external barriers erected by society, women are hindered by barriers that exist within ourselves. We hold ourselves back in ways both big and small, by lacking self-confidence, by not raising our hands, and by pulling back when we should be leaning in. We internalize the negative message we get throughout our lives-the messages that say it's wrong to be outspoken, aggressive, more powerful than men. We lower our own expectations of what we can achieve. We continue to do the majority of the housework and child care. We compromise our career goals to make room for partners and children who may not even exist yet. Compared to our male colleagues, fewer of us aspire to senior positions".

Somebody noted that women often start their remarks with some sort of apology. "I just have one point to make". "I have never thought much about this". "I do not know if this is accurate". "I do not know a lot but I do want to say something". "You may not agree but I think that the event that I organized went well". "I am sorry for bugging you but I just wanted to ask if I could have a few minutes of your time". "I know you have more important things to do, but I wanted to see if I could talk to you".

Self-confidence comes from different sources. It has a genetic element. Socialization also plays an important role. But the third big factor is choice. You really have a choice. The examples that I have just given you have more to do with socialization than genetics.

I would like to share a couple of tips that we may need as women. To deal with external barriers, do the following. Expand your pool of potential directors by looking beyond your current chief executive officers to other executive-level candidates. Expand pools for other management and leadership positions as well. Examine practices to see if changes can be made to facilitate the recruitment, promotion, and retention of women leaders for executive positions and boards, as well other positions. Consider women-only leadership development programs.

To deal with internal barriers, do the following. Increase your self-understanding. Challenge assumptions. Recognize and explore biases and barriers. Analyze your fears. Find your leadership identity. Accept and give feedback. Find courage to break the mold. Understand yourself. Discover your strengths. Explore your motivations. Break rumination cycles. Develop a growth mindset, focus on "we instead of "me". Learn from failure. Embrace struggle. Take risks, Discourage pointless perfectionism. Decrease reliance on praise. There is research done in many countries showing that girls are socialized to relatively on praise. And girls get praise for being quiet and raising their hands in class.

Being open to failure can help you increase your self-confidence. What boosts your self-confidence is action. If you are used to failure, you will act more and your self-confidence will increase. Another thing that people sometimes do not get is that the more self-compassion you have, the more you are able to forgive yourself and say, "That is OK. I am human", and the more risks you will take. That will raise your self-confidence level. Sometimes we think that we need to beat ourselves up. We think that it would help if we think and talk negatively about ourselves. The research says the opposite. The more forgiving we are to ourselves, the more we will strengthen our self-confidence.

Another thing that will help is raising our motivations and aspirations. We struggle more than men with envisioning ourselves as leaders. And we are significantly less likely than men to see ourselves as qualified to be leaders.

When we mention the world "calling", it usually evokes a religious connotation. This came out of Martin Luther's vocational work. I am a very spiritual and religious person. For me, my calling is very much a part of who I am. I believe that I have been called to do the work that I do. I feel it in my soul and I feel that God has called me. But the research suggests that other people who are not religious can still feel called. They may just feel that they are made in a certain way. Either way, the research suggests that if we help women find their calling, even if they say that they do not want to be a leader, they will do it. According to Parker Palmer, founder of the Center for Courage and Renewal, "Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic self-hood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we ought to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks. We will also find our path of authentic service in the world. True vocation joins self and service, as Frederick Buechner asserts when he defines vocation as 'the place where your deep gladness meets the world's deep need'".

Yesterday, I told you that we need to seek opportunities to grow. There is one thing that prepares women to become leaders even though they may not realize it: motherhood. The women leaders that I have interviewed in different countries agreed that motherhood prepared them to lead. My oldest child, Mike, is now 30. He was hell to raise. He was difficult when he was in my womb. After he was born, he was a wild kid and he still is wild. He climbs high mountains and flies with parachutes. The first 10 years of his life, I cried every day. But when I started analyzing these data in 2007, I realized that this child has been a gift. He has refined me more than anything else. He has taught me so many lessons. Every day I know that I love that child no matter what he did the day before. He taught me how to do that. He taught me how to deal with conflict. He taught me about sibling rivalry and conflict management. I have become so much better because of this child. I did not realize this at the time. I wish I had known it earlier. I wish I had known that each of these things would be good for me. Every life situation can teach you a good lesson if you are willing to think about it and truly reflect on it. I have done a lot of work on reflection. I can tell you that it is not experiences that teach you. It is the reflection on the experiences. Two people can have the same challenging experience. But one of them may not get any value out of it.

Here is a quote from Warren Bennis, regarded as a pioneer of contemporary leadership studies: "There are lessons in everything, and if you are fully deployed, you will learn most of them. Experiences aren't truly yours until you think about them, analyze them, examine them, question them, reflect on them, and finally understand them. The point, once again, is to use your experiences rather than being used by them, to be the designer, not the designed, so that experiences empower, rather than imprison". Is this not a fabulous quote?

We have many issues in Utah where I am from, but here you have many similar issues and you have some unique ones. We all have work to do wherever we are. I am going to end with another quote. Have you heard of the Hopi people in Arizona? This quote is from a Hopi elder:

"There is a river flowing now very fast. It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold on to the shore. They will feel they are torn apart and will suffer greatly. Know the river has its destination. The elders say we must let go of the shore, push off into the middle of the river, keep our eyes open, and our heads above water. And I say, see who is in there with you and celebrate. At this time in history, we are to take nothing

personally, Least of all ourselves. For the moment that we do, our spiritual growth and journey comes to a halt. The time for the lone wolf is over. Gather yourselves! Banish the word struggle from you attitude and your vocabulary. All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration. We are the ones we have been waiting for”.

And this one is from Margaret Mead, probably the most famous cultural anthropologist of all time: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has”.

We have to continue this work. We do not have the luxury to say that only a few of us can be leaders. We need every boy and every girl, and every man, and every woman, to step forward and look at the influence and leadership that needs to happen so that we can all become leaders and help our society in all of the ways possible for the common good. We need more women in our churches. We need them as leaders in our houses and throughout the country to be able to help our communities and countries move forward. Thank you for your time today.

## Concluding Comments

### **MELANIE BURKE**

When you are expressing your calling, it can be a beautiful moment. We have so much emotion that it sometimes escapes through our eyes. For me, that is a sign that we are connecting deeply with our calling. Thank you, Susan, for doing this great work and inviting us all to tap into our deepest self and bring who we are into the world. That is the work that needs to be done.

Thank you, ladies, also for your spontaneous response. Thank you all.

### **MOLLIE PAINTER MORLAND**

We rush out of these conferences with a lot of enthusiasm. We feel invigorated after hearing these wonderful stories. Yet, we do not always follow through in our actions when we re-enter the world outside this room. We will

get busy again and will not necessarily have the time that we need to act on our best intentions. But Susan's last slide made me think, "Can I just take this moment and harness and gather what we have been doing here in a meaningful way?" Personally, I have set myself some tasks for the next weeks.

In closing, I wanted to remind you what this exercise was all about. It was about challenges. We do not want to complain and sometimes we do not even want to say what the challenges are as that would sound too much like complaining. Stating a challenge is nothing but complaining if you leave it there. But you can turn it into something that you are about to do. You can turn it into a commitment. And then it becomes an inspiration.

The main challenges that we mentioned were associated with men. Men's stereotypes about women, environments dominated by men, sexual harassment, inappropriate advances from males, and the status-quo arrangements in organizational power structures. Are we really helpless here? I want to remind you of Susan's stories. She told us about all her brothers, what she learned from her son, and what she learned from other men. We have sons, brothers, and husbands. A lot of the people in our lives are men. What can we do to challenge these stereotypes and prejudices?

Last night I looked at pictures of my husband buying Cinderella shoes for my little granddaughter. In the next photo he was standing in front of a game that was supposed to teach her animation. The conclusion that we both came to is that it is OK to buy her those shoes as long as we buy her the animation set as well.

Think of our relationships. There is so much that we can do about stereotypes. We say that women often do not support each other to take opportunities within their organizations. They are jealous of each other and undermine one another. We do not support each other enough. We often feel like a lone voice in the organization. How can we do something about that? How can we use the connections that we have made here to address this issue? How can we harness the power that we spoke about earlier today?

We talked about mindsets. We admitted to being too competitive or lacking commitment to a specific agenda. Another related issue was the fear of failure and the risks involved in taking the right action, and the fear of the consequences, especially if you are a junior woman. What can we do about that? Are you the senior woman in your organization that can be the safety

net for other women and help them when they have felt at risk? Can you help them deal with the consequences of courage? Can you be a mentor? There are so many things that we can aspire to do.

There are also contextual challenges. We mentioned the lack of ethics, political interference in business, and problems associated with procurement being done in a certain way that undermines women. How do we change this system? It is a tough task. Is the problem too big to solve? Or can we take Susan's advice and say, "I am going to tackle my local community and at least make my local government better. I am going to improve at least my own environment". Is that something that we can do?

Another big challenge that we discussed was the lack of funding. We had wonderful inspirations from our panels about this. How can we, as women, start sailing together? How can we give each other financial knowledge and advice? How can we share information about where we can obtain funding?

Of course, education is also a big challenge.

Let me now read some of the suggestions that you have come up with.

*"Encourage women to allow experience that would make them grow. They should not fear failure".*

*"Stay committed and support younger girls and boys. Prepare them for enabling women's leadership".*

*"When I am back with my constituency, I will encourage them not to get involved in politics but to become economically empowered so as to function better".*

*"I will continue to educate women on the need to participate actively in politics and bridge the gap".*

*"I pledge to start a blog and arrange workshops for women leaders".*

*"We need to prosecute those who violate women's rights".*

*"I will be a mentor and a provider of skills".*

*"I pledge to have a conversation with 10 male professionals on their views of sexual discrimination".*

*“I will start to get men thinking about their actions in the workplace”.*

*“I pledge to be kind to other women and always share something positive to reaffirm them so as to build their self-confidence.*

*“I promise to love my sisters and my brethren”.*

*“I will be a candle that lights other candles. My life will not go out as I do that. It will only make the world a brighter place”.*

*“Women should pressure governments to support entrepreneurial skills. Together we can move Africa forward”.*

*“We need to empower women in the digital economy and help girls and boys together in the digital economy”.*

*“I will encourage women to allow experiences to make them grow. They should not fear failure but learn from it”.*

We are going to sum up all these pledges and send them to your e-mail addresses. We are also going to publish a book with transcripts of the videos of this conference and we will share it with you all.

With that, dear ladies, we are coming to the end of this amazing conference. I have the task to say thank you. We have a big thank-you culture in Africa, so this can go on and on for a long time. I just want to say that all three co-organizers donated time, money, and energy for this event. Thank you all for your generosity. I thank the team of Madelein Mkunu, the President of Leading Women of Africa. I also thank Danica Purg. This conference was her brainchild. She always sees the need to do something good for the society at large and has wonderful visions. This makes her an inspiring person to follow. The whole team at IEDC Bled under the leadership of Tanja Grilc also deserves our congratulations for building the conference website and organizing many other things, including the proceedings to be published after the conference. And we are very grateful to Coca-Cola Chair of Sustainable Development to financially support this great event. Last but not least, I thank our hosts, the team of the Graduate School of Business here. You were absolutely incredible. Thank you all.



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