



1st International Conference in Responsible Leadership in Africa

hosted by

The Centre for Responsible Leadership in partnership with the GTZ

at the University of Pretoria, Main Campus, South Africa

Tuesday 18 to Thursday 20 May 2010

Theme

“Developing the next generation responsible leaders”

Background

The looming global economic crisis is not the first one of its kind but it certainly is one of the most profound in history. What most economists, commentators, academics and world leaders seem to agree on is that we're in this crisis for the long haul. In fact, the hype around the financial crisis has been overwhelming. Comments and questions ranging from “Is this the end...?; “global economic meltdown”...to “is this the final world recession that will bring capitalism in its current form to its knees”are omnipresent. Yet, it seems important to note that the world is also facing persistent social and environmental crises. Climate change and pressing public problems such as hunger, poverty, and diseases such as HIV/Aids or Malaria are daily realities for the better part of the world population. And while the concern and actions taken to deal with the global economic crisis have been coordinated, orchestrated and have born common interest in mind, the same cannot be said for the way world leaders have been dealing with the environmental and social crisis the world has been facing with increasing intensity the past two decades.

The irony quite simply, is that the economic crisis (hopefully) has an “expiry date” whereas the environmental and social challenges the world is facing are open ended....

Clearly, what is needed in light of the profound challenges the world is facing are leaders in both business and society who are able to tackle these pressing public problems, who are engaging in sustainable business practices and are willing to contribute to the global common good. Unfortunately much of what we find in terms of concepts and qualities defining good leadership seem to be outdated and irrelevant. The “shortermism” mindset mirrors quick returns whereas the more “longtermism” represents an approach which celebrates a more sustainable mindset, societal progress and planetary well-being. The next generation responsible leaders therefore need to be able to re-define the boundaries of a new world view which epitomises responsiveness, relevance and responsibility.



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Corporations are made up of multiple stakeholders and can therefore never be static entities. Corporations are the conduits of society, having the responsibility to harness human, monetary, environmental and social capital in the best interest of the planet. Corporations are living entities and the very leaders keeping them alive are the ones that have led to a global moral deficit.

The Question

The question begging to be answered is whether the next generation leaders have the ability to shape new principles for the role of business in society, place a high emphasis on ethical fitness, believe in corporate “statesmanship” and stewardship and whether they are able to critically reflect on the purpose of business.

Participants

Local and international scholars and practitioners representing the public, private and civil society sectors as well as local and global multi-lateral agencies in the field of responsible leadership, corporate citizenship, corporate governance, corporate responsibility and sustainable development will participate in a 2 day conversation to discuss, debate, and shape critical questions and agendas on how to develop the next generation responsible leaders.

The scope

Areas under discussion will include:

- Virtues and values
- Leadership and society
- Responsible leadership
- Leadership and ethics
- Leadership for positive social impact
- Leadership for positive environmental impact
- Leadership for sustainable futures
- Responsible leadership and governance
- Developing responsible leadership – and responsible leaders
- Attributes of responsible leaders
- Responsible leadership and stakeholder engagement
- Paradigmatic foundations of responsible leadership
- Critical analyses of existing leadership concepts and paradigm
- Context of responsible leadership
- Responsible leadership in different and across sectors and cultures
- Responsible leadership and organizational culture
- Responsible business and measurement practices



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