

brand AFRICA™ FORUM 2010



Brand Africa FORUM 2010 Report

the african initiative to drive africa's
reputation, image + competitiveness,
from africa, for africa.

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Brand Africa FORUM 2010 Report

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Rethinking Brand Africa – By Africa, For Africa



The inaugural Brand Africa FORUM held in Johannesburg, South Africa on 16 September 2010 brought together over 300 delegates to explore the issues impeding and the opportunities for proactively driving Africa's image, reputation and competitiveness.

Branding, as global policy advisor Simon Anholt stated at the FORUM, can be a deceptive word. In his view, branding is a "famous old trick of the public relations industry to treat the subject with hubris and arrogance and talk glibly about manipulating public opinion."

However, much of Africa's image is based on public – global – opinion. So the concept of branding can indeed be harnessed to reinvent public opinion and the enduring simple, naïve stereotypes about Africa. Admittedly, these perceptions are undeniably due to perceptions of corruption, war and poverty, malnutrition and disease which beset our continent. To get it right would require the collective efforts of all Africans and supporters of Africa across civil society, business, politics and media – one country at a time.

As Anitha Soni, the Chairman of the International Marketing Council of South Africa emphasized, there's a need for teamwork and frank discussions on the subject of Africa's image and its impact on global competitiveness.

The recent successful 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa presented Africa a global platform and opportunity to mobilise public spirit and communicate a message of unity, ability and sustainability. It's legacy goes beyond South Africa's borders, Soni explained.

"As Africans our destiny is linked to each other. We do believe that it is indeed Africa's time and not because we hosted a successful Soccer World Cup, but because Africa is attracting attention in regard to foreign direct investment and is largely an untapped market."

The Brand Africa initiative is not about creating a 'Unites States of Africa.' Rather, it's about presenting a united front for Africa. It's about creating a lasting legacy. It's not an event, but a long-term passion and commitment which holds great promise for the African continent.

Consequently, the FORUM addressed the key issues and opportunities that are catalytic to Africa's future:

- The legacy and impact of the FIFA 2010 World Cup™ South Africa
- The cost of Africa's negative brand to its global competitiveness
- The role of media, business and nation branding
- The limits imposed by aid
- The importance of bringing all stakeholders together.



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The Brand Africa Initiative

The image of Africa does not reflect its economic diversity, entrepreneurial aspirations or the optimism that goes with rising investment, growth and greater stability.

“Brand Africa, with its simple message of ongoing catastrophe, is promoted by aid agencies, international organisations, donor governments and aid celebrities like Bob Geldof and Bono . . . not as 53 countries in various stages of development and struggle for independent existence and identity, but as a uniform, hopeless basket-case,”

Simon Anholt, World Economic FORUM on Africa, 2006.

The initiative is an independent pan-African brand-driven initiative for African thought leaders, decision makers, citizens and influencers, to proactively drive Africa's reputation, image and competitiveness.

Brand Africa aims to create opportunities and platforms to share insights, thought leadership and best practices in building sovereign nation brands and the collective African brand.

What distinguishes the Brand Africa initiative is that:

- It focuses on Africa not as a topic within a broader agenda, but as the agenda;
- It harnesses the power and discipline of branding as a vehicle to articulate and shape the reputation, image and competitiveness of Africa, and
- It is an African initiative for Africa, by Africans and supporters of Africa.

“China has an agenda in Africa. India has an agenda in Africa. The US has an agenda in Africa. We are naïve to think that the people that come into our country, even the ones who are here to help us, have no agenda. Everyone has an agenda.

What is Africa's agenda?

Jay Naidoo, Chairman of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, Brand Africa FORUM 2010



“Only a united Africa can redeem its past glory and renew and reinforce its strength for the realisation of its destiny. We are today the richest and yet the poorest of continents, but in unity our continent could smile in an era of prosperity and power,”

Kwame Nkrumah, 22 March 1965



Dr Irvin Khoza

"The bid to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ was, for us, a decade-long campaign to present an Africa devoid of the stereotypical conflict, decay and starvation."

Impact of 2010 FIFA World Cup™ South Africa on Brand Africa

In an African and global context you don't get a much more brand-savvy businessman than Dr Irvin Khoza. He's long been a formidable force in the world of South African football, and holds such elevated positions as Vice-President of the South African Football Association, Chairman of the Premier Soccer League, Convenor of the Premier Soccer League Sponsorship and Marketing Committee, and Chairman of Premier Soccer League club Orlando Pirates.

It was, however, his significant role as a member of the 2010 FIFA World Cup Organising Committee and Chairman of the 2010 FIFA World Cup LOC Executive Committee, among other high-level related positions relating to the event, which saw Dr Khoza taking on responsibilities for more than just the biggest sporting event on the Planet. In the process he effectively became custodian of both Brand South Africa and Brand Africa; helping to shape global perceptions around the continent. The sheer size and spectacle of the 2010 tournament not only positioned South Africa but the continent as a whole for the next decade.

These are some of the key highlights of Dr. Khoza's keynote address:

On Africa's Extreme Makeover

"Driving Africa's image and competitiveness for Africa, from Africa, is a reasonable quest. I call it a quest because it is a mission we need to pursue with vigour. We have to be relentless in this pursuit. We have to breathe meaning into the cry Mayibuye iAfrica, by this we should universally be understood to mean that Africa must return from collapse, tyranny, dependency, hunger, ignorance and many of the ills that continue to plague our beautiful continent... However, this quest has very powerful enemies, they will seek to defend at all cost a backward, corruption and debt-ridden Africa."

On Negative Perceptions of Africa

"I've spent a decade rebutting stories ranging from whether hosting a World Cup is a priority for Africa given the hunger and bankruptcy of governments; to what we are going to do with elephants and lions in the streets; to the crime, violence and savagery that Africans are prone to."

On the Significance of Hosting the 2010 Event

"Africa's World Cup was made even more special if you consider the odds against organising it. When the World Cup is hosted in Western Europe it happens without drama, it attracts people who follow and love football. Hosting the World Cup in Western Europe is in all respects a 'safe choice'. FIFA President Joseph Sepp Blatter was singled out for ridicule for his unwavering, vocal support of an African hosting.... This World Cup will be remembered for how its reach and appeal went beyond the Beautiful Game; it helped South Africa graduate from a country of promise and prospects for success to a country and a people who get things done."

On Lessons for Brand Africa

- "When all is stacked against you, you have to develop a thick skin. Don't listen to the naysayers."
- "Africa has to make a tough choice between being a trading partner or a dependent subordinate in its relationship"

with the world. The world will treat us in accordance and commiserate with the choices we make."

- "Ask people to serve; especially those who are influential. Our bid to host the World Cup benefited greatly from influential leaders in their different spheres, from business leaders to serving and retired heads of state, to religious leaders. All you have to do is ask; you'll be surprised at the will and the input you'll receive."
- "The Brand Africa initiative cannot be useful unless it is public. It must be presented in a tangible, digestible manner. The power of perception cannot be over-emphasised; perceptions tend to outweigh the realities on the ground. Brand Africa needs to defeat powerful stereotypes that have graduated into general truths, leading people to discount themselves and their capabilities. We are armed with images and the success of the 2010 FIFA World Cup; it would be a sin not to use these to mitigate the perceived risks of hosting prestigious events in Africa."

"The odds are stacked against Brand Africa: it has to be agile, alert and swift. It has to be fresh and undeterred."

In conclusion, Dr Khoza offered this advice for the future: "It is important that in your definition of Brand Africa you also define what it is not. It will help you with undesirable – offside – behaviours. Africa's time has come, Ke Nako."

2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa Highlights

- An estimated 3.05 million World Cup tickets were sold, 60% to South Africans, 28% to foreigners and 2% to fellow Africans.
- A 24% hike in foreign arrivals.
- A 23% increase in arrivals through Beit Bridge border post between SA and Zimbabwe.
- A 28% rise in arrivals by South African passport holders, no doubt returning home for the event.
- Airlines pegging their numbers at 278 000 arrivals, although it's still unclear if these figures include private jets and charters.
- At least R55.3 billion total spend on the tournament, including significant national and provincial government investment on stadiums, roads and associated infrastructure. The spin-offs from this R55.3 billion would be felt over the next six years or so.
- 700 million viewers watched the closing ceremony with the World Cup final drawing 2.4 million American viewers alone.
- Twitter hit a record 3283 "tweets" per second during the Japan versus Denmark game. The average is 750 tweets a second.

Source: GIBS World Cup Legacy FORUM, Grant Thornton Strategic Solutions & Cannon Asset Managers.



Role of Media

A high-level panel with Trevor Ncube (Executive Vice Chairman of Mail & Guardian Group), Anver Versi (Editor of African Business & African Banker), Mondli Makhanya (Editor-in-Chief for AVUSA Media) and Gary Alfonso (Managing Director of CNBC Africa) convened by Professor Anton Harbour, Caxton Professor of Journalism and Media Studies at Wits University, explored African media successes and failures, issues of African media ownership, the state of African media, the quality of African media, media freedom issues, access to media issues, the general state, strength and capacity of African media to deal with these issues and the all-important issues of transparency, accountability and the state of journalism."

"Whether it is government or business, the media will always hold authority to account. It is not just a South African phenomenon," said Makhanya, in response to probing from the floor. "Actually the image of a country is better when you allow your media to tell a story in its truest form."

Curtailing media freedom

On this issue the panel was unanimous: curtailing media freedom would ultimately damage Brand Africa and Brand South Africa.

Relating a story of how, in 2004, Kenyan journalists picked up the coveted CNN Journalism Awards, Makhanya highlighted how the winners attributed

"A free media is actually good for a brand. A free media allows you to tell the world your story in all your diversity: the negative story and the positive story." -

Mondli Makhanya, Editor-in-Chief of Avusa Media

this to the new media freedoms they were enjoying in the post-Daniel Arap Moi era. This liberty enabled them to tell the story of their country in many ways; effectively contributing to the building of the Kenyan Brand. Turning to the South African situation, he commented: "We've just come from a period (around the FIFA Soccer World Cup) where everyone was happy in this great country, we then defaulted back to that negative story due to the clampdown on the media. As a journalist, I feel strongly that we need as much freedom as possible. We need as much openness as possible."

Makhanya readily acknowledged that issues of quality were an issue in newsrooms around the continent, but he stressed "you do not fight the quality (of journalism) battle by clamping down on

the media, which unfortunately is what has been happening on our continent. Many of our colleagues on the continent have often looked up to South Africa as the beacon of press freedom and media freedom. In fact we are one of the freest media in the world, we are in the Top 30. I think now there is a possibility that we'll find ourselves among those states with a less-free media."

Warts-and-all reporting

That said, is the media correctly using its freedom for the greater good? Mail & Guardian Media Group's Ncube echoed Makhanya's sentiments that there should be fairness in reporting but also raised issues with patriotic journalism – "sunshine journalism" as he called it – which consists only of telling positive stories about Africa. "Basically the role that we should be playing is putting a mirror in front of Africa and saying 'Africa, this is how we look'."



Prof. Anton Harber

There are problems with this approach, of course. Not least of which, said Ncube, was the opposition from politicians "who believe there are certain stories that should be hidden. One of the stories I think the politicians are uncomfortable about and some of the people in this room will be uncomfortable about, are stories of corruption, mismanagement, and how prevalent HIV and AIDS are across the continent. Should those stories not be

told so that Brand Africa looks good and smells nice? No, we need to tell the story of the good, the bad and the ugly. Why? We do it so we learn from our mistakes ... so that Brand Africa becomes a better, stronger brand. I truly believe that unless and until we get to a place where we work hard to undo the difficulties that we face, then Brand Africa has a huge problem."

A trusted partner

So where to start? For CNBC Africa's Alfonso aligning the branding needs of the continent with the media's own agenda starts simply with building trust. As an organisation which prides itself in truly being on-the-ground in several African countries, Alfonso said CNBC Africa had set a precedent for coverage of African affairs beyond the usual "15 minutes on the weekend" which most international television channels produce.

"Since we started, CNBC Africa has produced over 500 000 minutes of African content - that's 5 000 18GB iPods - that's how much content we've been able to produce in three years," he said. More critically, believed Alfonso, was the range of content which didn't shy away from contentious issues but which gave equal airtime to positive and uplifting news out of Africa. This, he said, built trust. "As a media professional I take umbrage that many international operations fly in, quickly run to the trouble spots, point the cameras, run back to the hotel rooms, edit it, send it out around the world and then get out before the authorities find out where they are. The only way you can build trust is if, or when, you decide to be local. By local, I mean being on the ground."

Only when the media moved away from stereotypical images of "children sitting under trees with flies on their faces" would you start building that trust, said Alfonso. "The day you are reporting not only from Johannesburg, or from London, or from Shenzhen in China, but you are doing it from Africa with an African perspective is the day that, I think, Brand Africa starts living in the media space."

The ownership debate

For that to happen though, media

ownership across the continent needed to transform from the under-resourced operations which currently dominate the landscape. "Ownership of African media - print, radio, television - is still in a precarious position," said Ncube. "We don't have huge conglomerates, except for South Africa. Generally it tends to be one-man operations, people with a vision, people with a passion, but people without the resources to acquire the equipment, or the skills we need to project the African image in a manner we all want." This dearth of resources trickled down into the quality of the product being produced



Trevor Ncube,
Executive Deputy Chairman, Mail & Guardian
Media Group

too. "If you go down to the newsroom anywhere on the African continent you'll find that, yes, there are brilliant people but ... we've got a problem with a shortage of skills. Junior people in newsrooms,

"In building the African Brand there are a lot of factors and the African media is a key component that goes into forming that brand." -

Trevor Ncube, Executive Deputy Chairman of the Mail & Guardian media group

people who are not inadequately trained and equipped to speak authoritatively and provide leadership as far as forming Brand Africa's image is concerned," said Ncube. Without a doubt Africa's fragmented and diverse media needed to do "much more than we are doing right now", said Ncube. "But the pattern of ownership, the deficit of skills in newsrooms limits the ability

of the African media and the African journalist to tell, in an authoritative and informative manner, what issues the African people are facing on a daily basis (is an on-going problem)."



Anver Versi,
Editor, African Business & African Banker, UK

Leveraging off the business boom

Unfortunately, in a real case of the chicken before the egg, part of that transformation hinges on more good news getting out there and changing the way global investors perceive Africa as a business destination. One man at the forefront of telling those increasingly positive stories is London-based Versi, who sees first-hand how the British press still battles to achieve a balance in Africa reporting which they feel is fair.

"There are only two brands in Africa, one is wildlife and natural beauty, which is well depicted and well covered. Secondly you have the poor starving African. These are the two major depictions," said Versi. "Now the business story is trying to make its voice heard. You'll find business stories in the Financial Times and The Economist,



Gary Alfonso,
Managing Director, CNBC Africa

but most of these stories have to do with multi-nationals or with British companies or American companies. African

achievements are hardly ever mentioned." A recent Boston Consulting Group survey, for example, found that the big 40 African companies are outperforming

"To get Brand Africa correct it starts internally. It is our duty to start reporting not only the negatives but also the positives." -

Gary Alfonso, MD of CNBC Africa

their counterparts not only in local and emerging markets, but even in the First World, said Versi. "It also showed that if you invested in one of the South African companies 10 years ago you would now earn a return almost 100 times more than the Standard & Poor's 500



Mondli Makhanya,
Editor-in-Chief for AVUSA Media & Chairman of SANEF

or Nikkei Index 225 or the DAX. So here we have phenomenal stories of African companies."

These are the good, positive stories which for Versi are the logical choice to carry forward the powerful 2010 FIFA World Cup™ South Africa legacy. They are tangible, they are positive and they sell the story of an economic miracle on the boil in Africa. Yes, these stories of growth and investment jar with the negative perception of Africa, but said Versi: "The world has, unfortunately, lumped us together, we can't change that perception, but what we can do is sell Africa as a brand. And we have so much to sell."



Dr. Dambisa Moyo

"Africa's brand is actually encouraging a system where we are not seeing the levels of economic growth or trade what we should be seeing on this continent."

Branding Africa: Taking Ownership and Responsibility

*Dr Dambisa Moyo is an internationally acclaimed economist and the author of the New York Times best-seller **Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How there is a Better Way for Africa**, one of Time magazines "100 Most Influential People in the World" and a member of the World Economic FORUM's Young Global Leaders FORUM. While branding may not be her forte, the political, social and economic implications of branding done well certainly are. She tackled the imperative that improving the image of Africa held for business, political stability and the growth of the continent.*

Looking firstly at the issue of what key elements a brand should display, Dr Moyo highlighted the following points:

- It has to be strong.
- It has to be credible.
- It has to be consistent.

So what is Africa's brand?

That agreed upon, what are the key elements of the African brand? According to Dr Moyo: "I think the characterisation of Africa falls into four parts. If you travel anywhere in the world and you say the word 'Africa', what comes into people's minds is some combination of these four: poverty, corruption, war and political instability and disease. Obviously there are countries in Africa that have not had civil war, such as my own country, Zambia, and there are other countries where corruption is not so rampant, maybe Botswana. The point here is that clearly not every country in Africa has these four issues. However it is important for us to understand that all African countries are painted with the same brush."

Therein lies the rub. Because, as Dr Moyo explained, the fairness of the overall Brand Africa was not necessarily a prejudicial representation of the continent. Breaking down her four elements, Dr Moyo explained:

Poverty

"With respect to poverty there are about 1 billion people who go hungry, who starve around the world every day. However, 400 million - which is the highest concentration of those people starving - are in Africa. The second statistics is that around 70% of Africans live on less than \$2 a day. Suffice to say there seems to be some validity to the issue of poverty but maybe some unfairness in terms of characterising the continent as a place of poverty."

Corruption

"The fact of the matter is we know that many, some would say most, African governments are actually corrupt. It's harsh but true. Every year Transparency International puts out a global ranking called the Corruption, Perceptions Index; and 40 out of 42 African countries that are ranked are below five out of 10. We still see a lot of corruption on this continent. That is not to say there's no corruption elsewhere... but we have a situation where African governments are perceived as corrupt which means that the African business environment is perceived as corrupt."

Disease

"This continent has been ravaged by HIV/AIDS, both in terms of incidents and prevalence. Is it a fair representation that this

continent has serious problems around disease, not just HIV/AIDS but things like malaria, and treatable things like Tuberculosis and Cholera? Absolutely."

War & Political Stability

"In the past 18 months there have been four coups d'état on this continent. In the 1990s there was more political insurgency and war on this continent than the rest of the world put together. And, of course, we still have a number of failed states. Like it or not, there is evidence and reasons to believe the branding is right (on this issue)."

What does Africa's "negative" brand cost the continent?

Getting to the financial and growth implications of this essentially negative world view of Africa, Dr Moyo stressed that while there was good news and loads of reasons for optimism, the hard numbers show that Africa is still moving in the wrong direction; even in following the financial crisis. "We have roughly 1 billion people on this continent, which is a sixth of the world's population, but Africa (in total) has less than 2% of global trade," said Dr Moyo. "The whole of Africa's global share of trade is less than that of Spain."

Fixing Africa's brand

But Dr Moyo believes there are strategies which can be put in place to repair Africa's Brand. "I'm an Afro-optimist,"

"I don't think we're at a time where we can focus on branding one country and think that the rest of the countries on the continent are irrelevant."

she stressed, "so I'm a great believer in talking about the things we should be doing and which we can do to move things along in the right direction." She stressed the importance of the following four points:

Forget the politicians.

"We cannot rely on the politicians to do anything. In fact, many – not all – politicians on this continent actually benefit from the status quo. So actually, for doing nothing, they get money every year. It's the biggest scam running. We

at the people who have no vested interest on this continent who have actually become the face of this continent. Here I'm talking about the celebrities. I'm all into free speech, but they are the ones setting the agenda and they are perpetuating a negative view of this continent which is actually hurting business."

Get transparent.

"There are basic things in the business arena which leaders simply have not done yet. One is to get credit ratings – it's a great way of being transparent. Only 16 out of 53 countries on this continent have credit ratings, yet if you ask most investors the first thing they look at is whether a country has a credit rating. It is a signal to the marketplace that you believe your policies are right and you are doing the right thing. If you don't have a credit rating there's kind of a bad smell to it."

Build up business.

"Look at the World Bank's Doing Business Survey; 60% of the bottom 50 countries are on this continent. There are countries on this continent where it can take you two years to get a business licence. At the other extreme, places like Australia can take you a day, two days. That said, today in Rwanda it takes you 30 minutes to get a business licence and you can do it online. Not surprising Rwanda was the most improved country in the World Bank's Doing Business Survey in 2009, jumping some 65 places."

There are strategies that can be put in place, said Dr Moyo. But political and business will were critical to driving these initiatives forward and ensuring that leaders – across all spheres – were held accountable. Critically, she said, African countries had to accept that only as a continent would it rise. "The fact of the matter is that we are all tainted with the bad brush and until we seem improvements regionally, see serious policies being put in place, then I believe we are not going to be able to change anything."

"Africa needs to grow at 7% a year in order to put a meaningful dent in poverty and estimates for this year and last year are around 3% to 4% around the continent."



In a nutshell, said Dr Moyo: "We have got a bad brand and that brand is actually encouraging a reduction in foreign direct investment... The United Nations estimates that Africa needs to grow at 7% a year in order to put a meaningful dent in poverty and estimates for this year and last year are around 3% to 4% around the continent."

as individual Africans, and people around the world who actually give a damn about this continent, are going to have to stand up and do something. Our leaders, by and large, are shameless how they go around the world perpetuating this idea of Africa being poor and pathetic."

Dilute the celebrity campaigners.

"We have got to stand up and point fingers

Role of Business

Following on Dr Dambisa Moyo's address, the subsequent panel discussion offered a fascinating mix of insight on political will and transparency and the need for business to stand up and take on a real role, beyond glib words and business plans.

Shooting straight from the hip, former politician Jay Naidoo – currently Chairman of the Verbal Alliance for Improved Nutrition – made an impassioned plea for all sectors of society to hold government to account. "Why do we tolerate mediocrity?" he asked. "We have to ask the question of what we expect from government, what our Constitution gives us rights to and how do we ensure accountability and performance from our governments in terms of what we've elected them to do."

Keeping a tight rein on proceedings, Mail & Guardian Editor Nic Dawes bounced between participants giving equal weight to the interlinked issues of business, politics and strategic imperatives; although as the conversation progressed the importance and impotence of Africa's governments and leaders became more marked.



Jay Naidoo,
Chairman, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

Lack of leadership

According to Lumkile Mondli, Chief Economist at the Industrial Development Corporation: "Political leadership is one of the biggest stumbling blocks, it is failing (Brand Africa) in terms of a long-term agenda." Mondli also highlighted the need for improved transparency on the continent and issue which was taken up by Dr Moyo, who said: "We absolutely need African governments on board, but not just any old ramshackle government.

"Of critical importance are the continued reversals in the transparency gains." - Lumkile Mondli, Chief Economist at the Industrial Development Corporation

We need serious government who are committed and determined to solve the problems of this continent. The fact is that across the continent we just don't have that."

Echoing Naidoo's call for co-operation between political, business and civil society spheres, it was particular in the area of leadership where Professor Stella Nkomo, Professor of Human Resource Management at the University of Pretoria, saw a real opportunity for co-operation. "We do have a cadre of excellent business leaders (in South Africa) and we are also faring quite well in terms of the work our business schools are doing in producing MBAs. We have 17 business schools in South Africa that are turning out young business leaders who can compete with those from legendary (global business) schools."

Charting a course for Africa

Nkomo's desire to bring business tenants to play in politics reinforced Naidoo's



Nic Dawes,
Editor, Mail & Guardian

views over the need for a united strategy. An agenda. Said Naidoo: "We must be absolutely clear about Africa. China has an agenda in Africa. India has an agenda in Africa. The United States has an agenda in Africa. We are naïve to think that the people who come into our country, even the ones who are here to help us, have

"Part of the challenge for governments in Africa is perhaps to learn from some of the successes of business leadership. I think we need to do much more partnering between the capabilities of business leadership and political leadership." -

Prof Stella Nkomo, Professor of Human Resource Management at the University of Pretoria

no agenda. Everyone has an agenda. But what's the African agenda? And that's where we fail, because we leave it to somebody else... We've got to get Africa's governments aligned with where we want to take the continent."

His criticism extended to the recent FIFA World Cup too. "We let FIFA control the agenda too. "We allowed ourselves to be bullied by FIFA. Do we need stadiums with Jacuzzis in them? We didn't have the



Santie Botha,
Group Chief Marketing Officer, MTN Group



Lumkile Mondi,
Chief Economist, Industrial Development
Corporation of SA LTD (IDC)

courage to stand up and say this is where it stops."

For Naidoo the first place to start was with business and by asking companies like MTN what they were doing to build capacity, to build real enterprises. "Because no company can succeed – and be part of a brand in Africa - if you don't deal with poverty, inequality and the challenges that face women in this continent," said Naidoo.

"What do we want to achieve as a continent? What do we want to showcase to the world? What does Brand Africa mean? Rather showcase the success stories of Africa to the world." -

Santie Botha, Group Chief Marketing Officer of MTN Group

The role of business

However the weight of business may well be overestimated. According to the statistics rolled out by Oliver Schmitz, MD of Brand Finance, Africa's corporate brands are faring only slightly better than the continent's standing in the brand strength league. In terms of the 2010 Brand Finance Nation Brands League, South Africa was the only African country ranked in terms of the strength of its brand. A lack of transparency around other African nations making it impossible to accurately include them in the list.

"South Africa was ranked 40 out of 57 countries in this year's brand table. It receives a rating of 'A', it's up four positions from last year and it's had a 36% increase in brand value."

Brand Finance's company ranking – the



Prof. Stella Nkomo,
Professor of Human Resource Management,
University of Pretoria,

Global 500 – again had South Africa flying the flag for Africa. "MTN were ranked 179th with a brand value of \$4.7 billion, that's up 29 places from last year. The only other African brand was Vodacom at 399, with half the brand value of MTN," said Schmitz. "That's the reason why African brands only generate 0.1% of brand value in the Brand Finance Global 500." How, with this limited impact can business play a meaningful role in realigning Africa's brand?

For the IDC's Mondi, the continued export of unbeneficiated raw materials to China and India was part of the problem as was the lack of a real attempt to "build sustainable industries which would go some way towards building intra-African trade". It's up to us South Africans to try and change the game, he said.

"What matters about the brand is how successful you are as a society, and a company can only be successful if the society is successful." -

Jay Naidoo, Chairman: Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition

Telling the positive stories

Part of that role included talking about the successful stories of companies in Africa, said MTN's Group Chief Marketing Officer, Santie Botha. "How do you build on the World Cup in South Africa?" she asked. "What are you doing to make sure the positive stories of South Africa are getting out to the world? Get serious business and government leaders into a room, decide on the priorities and then put clear deadlines in place. Run it as a business. That's the only way."




Oliver Schmitz,
Managing Director, Brand Finance

But tapping into Botha's earlier comments that no brand can stand in isolation from

"We have to accept, whether we like it or not, that aid has contributed to the disfunctionality of African governments." -
Dr Dambisa Moyo, Branding Africa

reality; the continued negative impact of a problematic continent-wide image was filtering down to business.

While this negative Africa view worked for drawing aid and hand-outs to the continent, Dr Moyo shared a comment from a senior International Monetary Fund official which highlighted the deeper problem of Africa's governments. "The official said the international community only feels that out of 53 African countries that there are two countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where the government can even write a basic report on the key sectors of the economy". My guess, she said, was South Africa and Botswana. And where does that position Brand Africa?

A close-up photograph of Simon Anholt, a man with dark hair, wearing a grey suit jacket over a light blue and white checkered shirt. He is speaking, with his mouth open and a microphone clipped to his shirt. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a stage or conference setting.

“South Africa is so typical of developing countries, whose eyes are fixed on the countries above them, constantly getting a bloody nose because it fails to impress them. It should also be looking behind its back, looking at all the countries that do admire it. And a very large number are here in Africa. Those are your markets.”

Simon Anholt

Why it's time to abolish Brand Africa

Acclaimed policy advisor, author and publisher of three major international surveys: the Anholt Nation Brands Index, the City Brands Index and the State Brands Index, Simon Anholt says, Contrary to popular opinion he's not a fan of “branding.” He says he detests the word.

As he told the Brand Africa FORUM 2010: “This word ‘brand’ ... has taken on a very negative connotation. People are starting to say, for example, maybe it's time we started talking about reality rather than trying to put a glossy coat of paint over the problems. The strong indication being that that's what branding is: Branding is putting lipstick on a pig.”

I'm not here to defend branding, he reiterated. “I think it's the most dishonest, deceitful, empty, boastful, dangerous word you can use. I'm here to attack it and if possible destroy it.”

Why? Well part of the problem seems to be around semantics: a general and oft-perpetuated confusion between brand image and branding. “There is a difference between brand image and brand identity and there is endless confusion between these two entirely separate issues,” said Anholt. In truth they are two very distinct and separate concepts:

- Brand identity – “is pretty simple and pretty straightforward. That's what branding agencies call ‘branding’, it's the design and packaging of a product.”
- Brand image – “is something entirely different, it's what I think about a product. It's the context in which your message is received.”

“You have absolutely no control over brand image,” stressed Anholt. And this is where it gets sticky because branding, nation branding and the like stubbornly refuse to sell the ethereal quality of brand image, preferring instead to look at branding as a Halcyon cure-all. “Governments talk about commissioning the drivers of behaviour as if they could get a screwdriver and open people's skulls and fix what people think. Brand image is in a

secure location. The image of South Africa is in a secure location. Brand image resides in the minds of millions of consumers.”

Branding is a lie that has been perpetuated by the branding industry in an effort to try to create the illusive idea that there is a shortcut to a better brand image, said Anholt. “It's a famous old trick of the public relations industry to treat the subject with hubris and arrogance and talk glibly about manipulating public opinion. I think one has to approach public opinion, especially international public opinion, with a great deal more humility than that and recognise what an extraordinary and powerful and moving force it is... So let us forget about the idea of branding South Africa. Let us forget about the idea of branding Africa. Branding is something that's done by popular thinking.”

So, how do nation's “fix” brand image?

For Anholt, moving Africa forward from a stereotypical brand of poverty started with getting the product right. “Frankly the most likely explanation for why a country has a poor image is because it's not a very good country. Of course there are exceptions, and

really and truly many African countries really do not deserve the reputation they have. The question is how to change that." And specifically how to alter those perceptions in an increasingly overcrowded market where every nation on the Planet is a commodity.

"Globalisation has turned the world into a single market place ... one of the consequences of that trend is every place, every country, every continent, every region, every city, every town, every village finds itself competing for what's going on in every other place," explained Anholt.

"There's only one superpower left on the planet and that superpower is called public opinion, and it dictates everything. As a result of these forces of globalisation, countries are in a very crowded market place.

In a situation like this your reputation, your standing, your image, your brand – if you must – becomes absolutely everything, because nobody knows anything about the reality."

How do you tinker with an unreal reality?

Worse still, explained Anholt, was how his Nations Brand Index reveals the full extent of the ignorance in the global community. "Most people only ever think about three countries: their own (a little, not a lot), the USA (because it's there and you can't avoid it), and whichever countries happens to be personally relevant to them at that particular moment (maybe where they hope to go on holiday next year or this year's pariah state). The other countries on the planet effectively don't exist."

This simple statistic, gleaned from the survey he himself laughingly refers to as the "Index of Ignorance", makes the notion of branding or re-branding a nation even more absurd. "When I get a country coming to me and saying please make us famous, I find it difficult to stifle my cynical laughter because which of those three countries are they going to take out? Are you going to take out the United States? Are you going to become more notorious than Zimbabwe or Afghanistan?

Are you going to become more important to people than their own native land? I just don't see it."

So there is no magic formula. What then? Well, this was where a long-term commitment to image maintenance from countries and governments came in. It may not sound as sexy or exciting, but for Anholt this was the only tenable way to approach the issue. "The task of responsible governments in the 21st century is to almost be brand managers as much as policy makers because a nation's most valuable and precious asset is its good name. If you have a good, powerful and positive reputation it benefits every sector of society."

Focus from the inside out

Entrenching that image starts, not as the notion of branding suggests from the outside, but with the internal perception.

"If the governments of the world placed half as much value as the bosses of wise corporations do on their image then the world would be a safer place than it is today."

Unless a nation's citizens believe the message then what chance do you have of convincing the world?

Sure, said Anholt, marketing at a sectorial level is important, for example spending on tourism will attract more tourists. "But at the national level that doesn't mean a thing, that's propaganda ... and we instinctively ignore it because it has no reference to us. This is about foreign governments saying you will change your mind about our country. Why?"

Instead, a country must develop systems and structures and strategies to project a constant, unbroken stream of evidence that it deserves the reputation it desires. "In other words, proof, proof, proof and more proof. Never, ever stop," stressed Anholt.

The South Africa brand

In the case of South Africa, we stand apart as one of the few countries in the world that have succeeded in improving its image, transforming from an apartheid pariah state to a democratic golden child. But South Africa has failed to follow

through, said Anholt. The question is: will the country continue to fail in these stakes by not following through on the success of the FIFA 2010 World Cup™?

"These are not sprints these are relay races which have to be protracted over generations. Not talking. Not bragging. But proving," stressed Anholt. "You have to create a climate of relentless innovation in every sector and every part of the country."

So, he highlighted the following three points as critical to any international marketing council, not the brand but holding stakeholders to account and taking control of the process:

- Ensure there is at least some fundamental synergy between sectors so they are not spending against each other and sending out contradictory images.
- Evaluation. Monitoring and measuring. The process must be transparent and accountable.
- Hold government, business and civil society to account to stop being boring. Because if you are boring, nobody cares. Nobody remembers.

Again Anholt was quick to point out the advantage South Africa gained in the image stakes under the stewardship of former President Nelson Mandela and the crucial role governments, and African leaders in particular, hold in this process: "It's really very important for governments to cherish the privilege they have of looking after that asset (their country's image). Their job is to hand it down to their successors in at least the as good a condition in which they received it.

Thus Nelson Mandela goes down in history as a great leader because he inherited the brand South Africa of apartheid and handed down the Rainbow Nation.

Thus George Bush goes down as a bad leader, because he inherited a brand America which had taken 350 years of careful, deliberate building and handed it to Obama apparently in shreds and tatters. It is, therefore, very important for governments to understand its role not as the owner of that image but as the custodian."

Nation Branding

Leading on from Simon Anholt's address, a Ghana, Kenya and South African nation branding panel joined Anholt in a discussion around the issue of transforming Africa's image on the world stage. The discussion was led by Moky Makura, author of Africa's Greatest Entrepreneurs and MD of MME Media who got the ball rolling by quoting corporate identity expert Wally Olins who, on the issue of branding a country, said: "It's about presenting a nation or region in a powerful, attractive and differentiating way." So, asked Makura, in a continent "where nearly a third of the countries are in some sort of conflict situation - when will Africa be ready to do that"? And should we, in fact, even be having this conversation?

The resounding response from the panel was "yes". Anholt for one stressed that there had been a significant change in Africa and around the world in terms of brand image. "The programmes that were being carried out by countries five or six years ago were shocking. Today there are sophisticated campaigns.



Moky Makura,
MD, MME Media

The two cautions I would make is be objective and remember how ignorant people are and how little they care about distant countries, you have to set your standards very, very high. Secondly, these kinds of initiatives must be transparent, accountable and measurable. You must set targets and be able to demonstrate that you've achieved them, otherwise you are wasting your time."

There are success stories on the continent and South Africa and Kenya are among them. Ghana too has recently set in motion a measured plan, which CEO of Brand Ghana, Mathias Akotia, discussed with the delegates at the Brand Africa FORUM 2010.

The Ghanaian situation

As a relatively new organisation, Brand Ghana is a two-year-old initiative to reshape the country's image. Akotia explained that this conscious nation branding – or identity management – is not new to Ghana which already underwent a rebranding of sorts when

the country gained independence in 1957 and rolled out a new flag, new anthem and so forth. The Brand Ghana initiative aims to build on these symbols, which were "all created to evoke very specific values: loyalty, respect and so forth.... So we could drill deep down to those values, and which are most important to drive the country forward."

Brand Ghana started with this set of values and a vision for Ghana, the upkeep of which they are putting firmly at the door of government. By starting internally, Brand Ghana hopes to grow this image and perception of their nation by radiating a united image. By first agreeing on their national identity, they aim to use these common values "to affect the leadership of society: government, media, civil society etc, to make sure there is a support for the identity. Then, through a lot of public education and socialization, to make sure that all these systems begin to come alive with the expected behaviour of Ghanaians. It then becomes easier to project Ghana in a positive light."

The South African situation

As one of the real success stories of Africa, South Africa boasts the emergence of a self-styled Rainbow Nation from the dregs of an apartheid nation. Miller Matola, CEO of the International Marketing Council of South Africa, believes the nation's brand

is not only in good hands but that the positive associations from the FIFA 2010 World Cup have been built on.

"We said we'd use the World Cup as a means of not only changing perceptions as well as the image of Africa and South Africa. Use it to galvanise South



Miller Matola,
Chief Executive Officer: International Marketing
Council of South Africa

Africans and ensure that South Africans themselves live the brand," he said. "If we look at the impact of the World Cup I believe we did manage to change stereotypes. I believe the world looks at South Africa, and Africa, differently than they did previously."

The benefit of this, said Matola was a newfound sense of self-confidence. "We have a very strong sense of confidence about the future and what we are able to achieve as a country."

Matola also focused on the broader need for South Africa to play the "role of the connector into the continent, which we believe can benefit us and the entire continent". It's quite a stretch but one Matola felt was critical, in part because creating a successful region is inextricably linked to the ability to attract investment, grow exports and increase the consumer market. "A market of 49-50 million might not be attractive but once you start integrating across the region into a market of maybe 200 million in SADC, or close of 1 billion for the continent" it becomes more exciting, he said. "In order for us to

"For us, branding Kenya is a comprehensive programme of development policies of Kenya. It is not about communicating our liberty. It is about the entire programme of developing the nation of Kenya anchored by official Vision 2030." -

Mary Kimonye, CEO of Brand Kenya

thrive we need other African countries to grow and develop."

The Kenyan situation

Brand Kenya's CEO Mary Kimonye also had some important insights to share, not least of which was how Kenya's internal motto of Harambee (Pulling Together) has been picked up by the rest of Africa too.



Mary Kimonye,
CEO, Brand Kenya

"That motto of Harambee is anchored in three values: brotherhood, unity and love (both for the country and ourselves)," explained Kimonye.

Like Ghana, Kenya's campaign is hinged on internal rebranding first, with the benefits of direct foreign investment and the like being just some offshoots of that improved image and identity. "Our mandate has two faces: One, what do we think about ourselves as Kenyans? And, two, what is it that everybody else thinks Kenya is and believes Kenya is? Any item we can identify which shapes that perception then becomes a key focus for us in developing the image of Kenya."

Once the image is projected then it's very easy for people to respond to you, she explained. "You don't have to go shouting wonderful Kenya or beautiful Kenya, it will

"It is important for us for the other countries in Africa to put in place measures at a structural level, policy level and to also come up to speed." -

Miller Matola, CEO of the International Marketing Council of South Africa

already be lived by the citizens and the media will pick it up. If you are a strong brand you don't have to market."

Echoing Anholt's comments about nations essentially being commodities, Kimonye stressed that a solid image is not easily dented if the "commodity" has something to offer. Looking at the violence which followed Kenya's 2007 presidential election, she said: "It did not dismantle the Kenyan Brand at all."

The message seemed to be that a strong regional or African brand would withstand the occasional tremor. "Think about a corporate," said Kimonye. "A corporate has good products, the cash cows, the stars, and the problem children. You have strategy for each one of them."

Hinge Brand Africa on the stars, the South Africas, Kenyas and Ghanas of the continent, she advised, and develop specific strategies for the problem children. "Regional integration in Africa must go on; investment in SMEs in Africa must go on; and engagement with the media from a government perspective



Anitha Soni, Chairman,
International Marketing Council of South Africa

must go on. We're not asking the media to be patriotic; we're only asking the media to be fair. Tell the story of poverty but also tell the story of what African governments are doing to deal with poverty. We must stop lamenting and stop giving excuses of colonialism."

The African situation

Anitha Soni, the Chairman of the International Marketing Council of South Africa, contextualised the role of nation branding organisations and stressed in her opening address that their role is "not just a nice thing to do. Our mandate is to build South Africa's Nation Brand reputation in order to improve South Africa's global competitiveness with the

objective of ensuring that we hold our own in the global space." But building Brand South Africa is inextricably linked to the notion of an African brand too.

"As Africans our destiny is linked to each



Mathias Akotia,
CEO, Brand Ghana

other," said Soni. "We do believe that it is indeed Africa's time and not because we hosted a successful Soccer World Cup, but because Africa is attracting attention in regard to foreign direct investment and is largely an untapped market."

As a continent we need to be asking the following tough questions, said Soni:

- How do we build effective institutions and government structures?
- How can Africa gain a greater voice within global decision making, rather than just being an agenda item?
- How can we foster growth and inclusive development?
- How can African countries create new economic partnerships and foster greater regional integration?
- How do we manage Africa's risks?
- What gains can come from rethinking the demographic challenges, particularly relating to youth unemployment and urbanisation?
- How do we strengthen our mind-set of empowerment?
- How can poverty and inequality be reduced?
- How do we get Africans to take responsibility for their own empowerment and the future of the continent?

Only by being brutally honest with ourselves as an African collective can we truly begin to reshape the messages that inform opinion about our continent and improve our standing in the global market place.

CNBC Africa Brand Africa Debate



"In business we're talking increasingly about the African century, the new dawn for Africa, a new frontier. And, as Africa awakes, you want to know what message we should be telling the world. This is the core of what we are discussing," was the opening gambit from CNBC Africa anchor and journalist Lerato Mbele, as she hosted the special CNBC Africa debate around the inaugural Brand Africa FORUM 2010.

Taking part in the discussion was an eminent panel consisting of International Marketing Council CEO Miller Matola; Dr Dambisa Moyo, the author of Dead Aid and a director of Barclays and SABMiller; Thebe Ikalafeng, Founder and Chairman of Brand Africa; Simon Anholt, the author of Brand America; and Professor Hellicy Ngambi, Dean at UNISA's College of Economics and Management Sciences.

In a thought-provoking discussion and interaction with guests, the debate elicited the following comments and observations:

The unnoticed continent

While Anholt stuck to his earlier anti-branding guns, the rest of the panel stressed the importance of communicating the positive message of Africa to the rest of the world. Mbele was quick to launch into statistics in support of the impressive growth on the African continent. Isn't that proof enough? What more does Africa need to do to swing global opinion around the continent?

Keep doing what you are doing, recommended Anholt. "The reality is this train has left the station. Elite audiences already know they are onto a good thing if they are investing in Africa. It is right that people should be impatient for change. We are speaking about speeding on change that is happening."

So how do you speed up change?

Dr Moyo pointed to the Incredible India campaign as an example of a highly successful initiative which, launched about a decade ago, has proved transformational, "certainly in the minds of people in Europe and the United States". While television stations continue to inundate viewers with negative images of Africa, this form of branding held some hope for the continent, was Moyo's message.

Anholt stressed that this form of campaign was essentially a tourism promotion to attract tourists. Its depths were not as far reaching as a nation brand. "Nobody could argue against the

good sense of (the campaign), but it's not the reason overall why India is moving forward so quickly. It's because you can't open a newspaper without reading that some Indian entrepreneur has become the second richest man in the world. It's because you can't switch on the television without seeing a Bollywood movie. It's a combination of many, many things."

What's the success combination?

It boils down to a combination of the points below, each of which was interrogated by the panel:

- **Communicate** – "It's important that we channel the right message. The problem with Africa is that we don't tell our stories," stressed Ikalafeng.
- **Get the fundamentals right** – "We recognise that you need to address the fundamentals. The challenge we're sitting with in Africa is that we tend to be painted with one brush and even those countries that are reforming seldom get to be applauded," said Matola.
- **Ensure good governance** – "Governance is central to rebranding any nation," said Ikalafeng. "We have pockets of excellence within the continent, the challenge we have is we don't have the same level of governance from one country to the next."
- **Weed out corruption** – "Nobody wants to invest in an environment where there's rampant corruption, where there's a lack of infrastructure and where there's no clear agenda from the government," said Dr Moyo.
- **Enable business to thrive** – "Doing business on this continent remains a nightmare for many people. We need the

private sector on board. Until we get the right policies in place to attract foreign investment ... we are not going anywhere," said Dr Moyo.

- **Know our strengths** – "We need to leverage our strengths, we need to believe in ourselves, we need to know that we can do this and be responsible, accountable," said Prof Ngambi.
- **Involve the media** – "We need to be able to tell stories from an African perspective," said Ikalafeng, who also highlighted the need for fair and balanced reporting.
- **Transform the African mind-set** – "We need to celebrate excellence and stop rewarding mediocrity," said Prof Ngambi.



"It seems to me that the problem at the moment is the image of Africa is dictating the images of the individual countries and that's unfair. It needs to be the other way around." -

Simon Anholt, author of *Brand*

Africa's leadership vacuum

The most critical element needed to move forward and address the issues above, depended on good leadership and accountability from Africa's governments.



Without this essential ingredient the quest for an improved image for Africa would remain a fairy-tale. Governments should be driving the process, believed Dr Moyo: "We do not have a clear agenda in respect of what we should be doing to generate long-term economic growth and reduce poverty. Governments should be taking

"There isn't a strong credible consistent message about this continent. We've allowed other people to set the agenda." -

Dr Dambisa Moyo, the author of *Dead Aid*

the lead in branding – in shaping people's vision of Africa, not just on the continent itself by internationally."

In fact, across the board, Africa's leaders came in for short thrift from the panel. "We have to define leadership," said Prof Ngambi. "We think leadership is about a position, we are not looking for skills and

"We need to address those issues that keep us from being successful. We need to take the lessons from those who have gone before. It takes time, but if the will is there, it can be done." -

Miller Matola, CEO of the International Marketing Council

competencies. So even our definition of leadership is wrong."

The way forward



In a nutshell, the general agreement was that Africa's leading lights – its star nations – needed to continue to drive the process, for the betterment of the entire continent. "The only way Africa as a continent can change its image is if certain countries, the front runners, manage to drive a wedge into that monolithic negative image and start showing individual countries doing remarkable things with their own identity, their own culture, their own history, their own assets, their own heroes," stressed Anholt. And, encouragingly, Africa's heavyweights look ready and willing to take up the challenge.



Conclusion



The inaugural Brand Africa FORUM 2010 tapped into opinions and insights from leading thought leaders and personalities in society, business, academia, sports, the media and civil society. The challenges facing Africa's leadership, infrastructure and governance were tackled head on. But across the board the overall feeling was one of confidence for the future: That Africa was alive with possibilities and poised for great things. "We are a continent that is excited about its prospects. We are ready to take on the Chinas and Indias of this world," said Brand Africa Founder and Chairman Thebe Ikalafeng.

The question is, how?

As Miller Matola, CEO of the International Marketing Council, said during the CNBC Africa live debate: "We do need a game plan." And the starting points are clear:

- Governments and leaders need to get on board and invest in and drive the initiative of rebranding a continent. Only with good governance and policies can Africa truly play on the world stage.
- Socio-economic fundamentals are essential in order to build a brand of strength rather than one propped up by international aid and charity. Business needs to be encouraged and incentivised, SMEs developed and a business-friendly environment created, like that in Rwanda today, where Dr Dambisa Moyo told the FORUM: "It takes you 30 minutes to get a business licence and you can do it online. Not surprising Rwanda was the most improved country in the World Bank's Doing Business Survey in 2009, jumping some 65 places."
- Like Brand Kenya, Brand Ghana and campaigns like "Lead SA" in South Africa demonstrate, any successful nation brand starts at home with a strong internal connection to the message. What do we think of ourselves as Africans? What is Africa's value proposition?
- Honest communication channels between the media and governments need to be opened up and as Trevor Ncube, Executive Deputy Chairman of the Mail & Guardian media group, said: "I believe the role we ought to be playing is

telling the story of the African, telling the story of the good, the bad and the ugly, that the African people experience on an everyday basis."

Already the people of Africa – both on the continent and the diaspora around the world – are transforming global perceptions through such events as the successful FIFA 2010 World Cup South Africa. "I refuse to accept that Africa is a basket case," stressed Matola, echoing the feeling of the FORUM. "I believe we can rise to the challenge."

The most immediate step is for every citizen of Africa to receive their call to arms; we need an agenda, said former politician Jay Naidoo, Chairman of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. "China has an agenda in Africa. India has an agenda in Africa. The US has an agenda in Africa. We are naïve to think that the people that come into our country, even the ones who are here to help us, have no agenda. Everyone has an agenda. But what's the African agenda? And that's where we fail, because we leave it to somebody else... We've got to get Africa's governments aligned with where we want to take the continent."

Certainly the task ahead is not an easy one and changing Africa's reputation, image and competitiveness won't happen overnight; it will take a systematic approach and a common purpose across the continent. "The Brand Africa initiative is not about creating a 'United States of Africa,' but a united front for Africa," said Ikalafeng. **Ke Nako.**



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