A Word from the CEO

by Max Boqwana

“Whatever the setbacks of the moment, nothing can stop us now! Whatever the difficulties, Africa shall be at peace! However improbable it may sound to the sceptics, Africa will prosper!” - Pres. Thabo Mbeki, 6 May 1996

We would like to welcome all our readers and stakeholders in our first installment of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation (TMF) Newsletter for the year 2020. The TMF takes seriously its responsibility to inform and educate public opinion to foster critical and meaningful public engagements.
Like all individuals and organisations, we started this year full of energy, vigour and renewed commitment to implement our year planner.

In the TMF’s case, among others, this entailed the acceleration of the establishment of the Thabo Mbeki School of Public and International Affairs, putting steam on the resource mobilisation initiatives for the building of the Thabo Mbeki Presidential Library (TMPL) and the implementation of the TMF/ProFuturo pilot project to introduce digital education to 50 schools in the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga. In addition, we planned to host our annual projects, the International Women’s Day (IWD) Dialogue as well as the 11th Thabo Mbeki Africa Day Lecture.

We are happy to report that we hosted a successful IWD event on 7th March 2020, attended by well over 750 delegates from across the business, government, youth, diplomatic corps and NGO sectors and our Patron President Thabo Mbeki was also in attendance.

Unfortunately, our Annual Thabo Mbeki Africa Day lecture had to be postponed in support of efforts to combat the spread and impact of the Coronavirus and Covid-19 disease.

The tragic situation imposed on the world by the Coronavirus and Covid-19 has forced the world to come to terms with consequent realities of the manner in which we have elected to order and lead human affairs. The social and economic maladies inherent in the way we live have become stark and unavoidable. Chief among these has been the hierarchy of death, itself a by-product of inequality.

It is in this context that the TMF thus reiterates messages we have made on previous occasions, calling on “all our people here at home, and especially on the rest of our Continent and the African Diaspora to fully respect the directives issued by the WHO and our national governments in the fight to defeat the coronavirus and the Covid-19 pandemic.”

We further once again convey our appeal to all our Governments that they must take the lead in preparing Reconstruction Programmes which would result in our peoples enjoying better socio-economic conditions than they did before the onset of the novel coronavirus.”

It would be remiss of us not to mention the positives that have come out of the
Covid-19 crisis as it has forced all of us to dig deep inside ourselves and extend a hand of solidarity to preserve the dignity of those less fortunate.

The contributions made by fellow citizens to the Covid-19 Solidarity Fund set up by our government, going in the tune of billions of Rands are testament of the capacity we have as citizens to pull together to achieve a well-defined common purpose under the right leadership. In this regard, we wish to congratulate one of the Trustees of the TMF, Mrs Gloria Serobe, for her appointment as the Chairperson of the Solidarity Fund.

We thank her for always being ready to answer the national calls of duty and executing her tasks conscientiously. We also congratulate our Chairperson, Dr Brigalia Bam though belatedly, on her well-deserved receipt of the Ubuntu Lifetime Achievement Award by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO). According to the DIRCO website, “The purpose of the Ubuntu Awards is to recognise South African citizens for their distinguished service and contribution to promoting South Africa’s national interests and values across the world.”

Lastly, but not in the bit least, we convey our hearty congratulations to another of our Trustees, Adv Mojanku Gumbi, on her recent appointment as the first female Chancellor of the University of Venda.

We have no doubt that the UniVen will benefit greatly from Adv Gumbi’s vast leadership skills and experience. As the TMF, we remain immensely proud of our name being associated with individuals of such high and sterling calibre. That they serve on our governance structures is a feather on our cap and each day spurs us on as a matching reflection on them and our Patron.

With these words, I am happy to comment to all of you this of many issues of our newsletters to come.

Max Boqwana
Chief Executive Officer

LATEST ON THE TMPL

The TMF is pleased to announce Sir David Adjaye (pictured left with Pres. Mbeki) as the principal Architect for the Thabo Mbeki President Library.

The library aims to be an African Centre of Excellence in Learning, Research and Discourse for the transformation of Africa. It will connect to similar
centers around the continent and beyond, with a common aim of advancing the Renaissance and unity of Africa. The library will also be a repository of Mr. Mbeki’s documents, papers, artifacts and all materials and intends to become a ‘living Library and Museum,’ which will not only focus President Thabo Mbeki’s life and work, but uses it as a peg to archive the efforts of others leaders and activists from around the continent and the Diaspora.

With an incredible career spanning nearly 25 years, and widely regarded as a leading architect of his generation, Sir David Adjaye’s design invokes a strong sense of African identity, reflecting a space that encourages its visitors to explore and learn more about true essence of African’s origins.

The design will reflect contemporary African architecture, inspired by Africa’s creativity, culture and innovation, and will embody Sir David’s unique artistic vision, which has been demonstrated through prominent global projects such as the Smithsonian National Museum of African, American History and Culture in Washington DC and the Ghana National Cathedral in Accra.

For the TMPL project, Adjaye has partnered with high-profile South African based architects, MMA Design Studio, who are renowned for their cutting-edge designs, such as the Freedom Park project.

Sir David Adjaye has been responsible for some of the most striking and innovative architectural designs in the world. It is for that reason that we appointed him to design this continental legacy project.

THABO MBEKI SCHOOL OF PUBLIC & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Thabo Mbeki Foundation (TMF) and the University of South Africa (UNISA) are delighted to announce the establishment of the Thabo Mbeki School of Public and International Affairs and the appointment of Professor Sibusiso Vil Nkomo as its Interim Director of the Thabo Mbeki School.
The Thabo Mbeki School of Public and International Affairs will be constituted by the merger of the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute (TMALI), the Institute for African Renaissance (IARS) and the Institute for Dispute Resolution in Africa (IDRA).

The TMF-UNISA BOARD has great confidence in Professor Nkomo capacity to lead this transition and will be relying on his extensive experience as an academic and institution builder to provide the much-needed safe hands during this exciting period in the life of the Thabo Mbeki School.

Prof Nkomo is a former member of the Executive of the University of Pretoria and Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. Prof Vil-Nkomo contributed significantly to the development of the Enterprises at the University of Pretoria and served on the boards of these entities. He was Public Service Commissioner under President Nelson Mandela.

He is a member of the Academy of Science in South Africa and the South African Association of Public Management and Administration which has established the Annual Prof Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo Lecture.

The TMF was pleased and honored to be involved in the organization and preparations of the Africa & African Diaspora (AAD) Conference Launch, which took place online from 25 to 27 May 2020.

The theme of the AAD Conference was “Revisiting the 1945 Manchester Conference” as 2020 marks the 75th Anniversary of the watershed Pan-African Manchester Conference. The AAD aims to assess how far the objectives of the liberation of Africans and
Africans in the Diaspora have been achieved.

The AAD Launch brought together leaders and participants from Africa and the Diaspora including the USA, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, to discuss various topics ranging from Politics, Economics, spirituality and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

The launch also received messages of support from President Cyril Ramaphosa and our Patron Former President Mbeki. The three day program also included keynote addresses by the South African Convener and Spokesperson of the AAD Reverend Frank Chikane, Dr. Brigalia Bam and Professor Barney Pityana as well as messages from host committee members including Dr. Isabel Apawo-Phiri of the World Council of Churches, Bishop Mpumlwana, Mr. Maurice Radebe, Mr. Nkosinathi Biko as well as Adv. Max Boqwana the CEO of the TMF. The event received much media attention and was broadcast locally on SABC TV and talkradio 702 as well as on Joy TV in Accra, Ghana.

On Saturday, 7 March, 2020, the TMF in partnership with UNISA hosted their Annual International Women’s Dialogue at the Terfontein Racecourse.

The theme for this year’s Dialogue was “The Power of Memory: Rewriting Women into History” and was addressed by Dr. Samah Jabr from Palestine. Dr Jabr was later joined in a panel by Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas and Ms. Linet Miriti, while Mrs Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi steered the ship as the moderator.
Dr Jabr drew from the plight of the Palestine women and children the imperative for women to use their experience and narratives to not only heal themselves but also to repair the broke fabrics of their society.

The book discussion and art exhibition by young upcoming black female authors and artists was inspiring and a huge draw card for the youth that was present, specifically the 60 high school learners, some of whom might now consider a career in fine arts and/or publishing.

We are proud that the IWD Dialogue has grown over the years to attract a varied cross gender audience. This year's Dialogue was attended by well over 700 participants from various sectors and demographics in society, including business, academia, NGO's, the Diplomatic Corps.

The Patron of the TMF, President Thabo Mbeki was also in attendance and made some valuable observations and reiterated the TMF's commitment to advancing gender equality and supporting efforts geared towards the empowerment of women.
The TMF is proud to announce the publication of Part 3 of Volume 4 of its Road to Democracy In South Africa programme.

This volume tackles the debate on whether the real locality of the South African struggle for liberation was urban or rural. Based on the extensive research conducted, it comes to the conclusion that the struggle was a national struggle and that it permeated all parts of the country. This publication is due to be launched later in the year 2020.
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TRUSTEES!

Dr Brigalia Bam
Recipient of the 2020 Ubuntu Lifetime Achievement Award

Mrs Gloria Serobe
Appointed as Chairperson of the Covid-19 Soliderity Fund.

Adv Mojanku Gumbi
Appointed the first female Chancellor of the University of Venda