

International Women's Day Summit



The Motsepe Foundation Women's Unit hosted another successful Women's Summit to celebrate International Women's Day. The summit inspired change for a balanced society, keeping with the UN theme: Balance for Better.

The Day kicked off with Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe Ringing the Bell for Gender Equality at the JSE.

"WEF Gender Gap reports show that at the current rate of change it will take 135 years for us to reach gender equality, and that's unacceptable!" Dr Moloi-Motsepe said before blowing the Kudu horn at a breakfast attended by business leaders and women's business organisations.

The powerful sound of the bells and horns emphasised the silence of women in JSE boardrooms and positions of decision-making.

This was followed by the main event, held at the Sandton Convention Centre, where more than 550 women and men joined in the celebration of women's excellence and considered the course for achieving gender balance. Women in attendance included leaders and representatives from organisations: International Women's Forum; the Black Business Council, 30% Club, Business Unity SA, Advancement of Black Accountants of Southern Africa, Business Women's Association of South Africa and high school students.



South Africa at a glance

- Female CEOs = There are currently no female CEO's in top 40 JSE listed companies.
- Women on boards = Only 10% of JSE-listed companies have achieved gender parity on their boards.
- Women in top positions in government = 50% of ministers in the South African government are women.
- In the Fortune 500, in the US, only 24 companies have female CEO's.



Proceedings were energised by Bothale Boikanyo's rendition of a poem that spoke to the strength and value of women.

In her welcome message, Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe, the CEO and co-founder of Motsepe Foundation said "What we do at this summit together, every year, is spread a message of power. There is power in inclusion and there is power in collaboration, especially in the midst of diverse identities and passions. Together, we can all build a world that is accepting, where we are all able to be free."



An inspiring keynote address was delivered by Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng. The main takeaways from his message were:

1. The need for "viciousness in execution" leadership and signaling from the top
2. The importance of performance monitoring and a data-driven approach to solving issues of gender parity
3. The need to deal with the socio-cultural ills that underpin women's marginalisation including "toxic masculinity" and gender-based violence

In thanking the Chief Justice, the Chairman of the Motsepe Foundation, Dr Patrice Motsepe emphasised the need for society to support women. Responding to the challenge by Chief Justice for women to be more intentional about their course for gender equality, the CEO of Motsepe Foundation remarked that a think tank and strategy around gender equality is a priority for Motsepe Foundation Women's Unit and is being pursued with urgency.



The day was filled with two interactive panel discussions.

TOPIC 1: Creating an environment that enables women's access to opportunities and to exercise agency without fear

- Key take aways:
1. Prioritize development and implementation of sexual harassment policies in the workplace
 2. Set deliberate policy through visionary leadership
 3. Break up silos between women organisations and corporates



TOPIC 2: Strategies adopted by pioneering women

- Key take aways:
1. Celebrate one another, by building teams of women that change mind-sets through performance
 2. Embrace individual value through inclusion, without assimilation to dominant cultures
 3. Understand gender gaps in consideration of other social problems (intersectionality)

Most moving were the essays from Grade 12 pupils on the topic "Closing the Gender Gap: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls"

More than 200 essays were adjudicated, and the top 10 learners were flown to Johannesburg to join the IWD celebrations.

Some excerpts from these essays:

"According to ancient norms, men were protectors of society. Do we still label them protectors when they kill us to cure their bad luck and financial instability like Sandile Mantsoe did to Karabo Mokoena?" Busisiwe Khaueo (16).

"In order to jumpstart the road to gender equality, there should be workshops around South African schools where young girls will be taught skills such as entrepreneurship, public speaking and machinery work," Lindelwa Yvette Sambo (16).

For the full speeches please visit www.motsepefoundation.org

The following prizes were given to the students

- All the students were awarded a Motsepe Foundation scholarship to further their studies at universities in SA next year.
- Top two winners received R50 000, contributed to their schools towards books and library materials
- Top ten winners received R10 000, contributed to their schools towards books and library materials

Launch of the Shining Light Awards

In introducing the Shining Light Awards, Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe echoed Mr Mandela's sentiment when he quoted Marianne Williamson in his inaugural speech, "Our deepest fear is not that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us".



The following people received awards for outstanding work in their fields and impact in society:

1. Ms Thando Hopa – model, activist and lawyer for social justice and diversity
2. Ms Marianne Fassler – Fashion designer and activist for empowerment
3. Ms Khosi Nkosi – Fashion designer and inclusivity
4. Ms Lindiwe Matlali – scientist for social entrepreneurship
5. Ms Kiara Nirghin – young scientist for innovation
6. Ms Sibongile Sambo – aviation executive for pioneering leadership
7. Ms Keneilwe Hlahane – scientist for environmental sustainability
8. Ms Khadija Patel – editor for transformation
9. Ms Desiree Ellis – sports coach for excellence in leadership
10. Ms Thembi Kgatlana – soccer player for excellence in sports
11. Ms Caster Semenya – gold medalist for social justice

For the first time this year the Summit was livestreamed, allowing people from around the world to actively engage.



The event ended on a high note, with a fashion extravaganza brought together by African Fashion International.

The runway featured designers:

1. AFI Privé
2. Khosi Nkosi
3. David Tlale and
4. Orapeleng Modutle.

