

11: Changing the sustainability conversation to Future Proof Africa

The eleventh [Thought Leadership Digibate](#), recently hosted by [Aegis Media](#) in conjunction with [Bizcommunity.com](#) focused on how business can change the sustainability conversation to Future Proof Africa. If you missed the Digibate, download or listen to the podcast which is now available.



Deon Robbertze

Few businesses have made sustainability a core part of their strategy, some are doing the minimum for compliance sake, the majority are on a carry on a "business as usual" path without stopping to question their negative impacts on society or the environment, let alone looking at the full life cycle of their brands.

While we are seeing certain countries displaying improved political leadership, the African continent is still characterised by self serving leaders, political instability, corruption and social and environmental sustainability not very high up on the

majority of Africans national agenda, despite all of this, Africa is becoming the darling of emerging market, investors and growth rates in Africa are above 5%.



Chris Loker

Africa as a growth ticket

Not only is Africa attracting investors looking for good yields, but an increasing number of global, multi-national companies are seeing Africa as their growth ticket both in terms of supply of, and demand for their products many South African companies know they have to move north of their borders to maintain their growth trajectory, with many Asian, especially Chinese companies moving in an aggressive way with not much political governance or legislation and little consequences to perpetrators for environmental and social exploitation.

So we have to ask - will these multinational companies do the right thing and tread lightly on Africa while it consumes its resources above and below the ground?

A tough subject to tackle, but one that the panel of Dawn Rowlands, CEO Aegis Media; Deon Robbertze, founder Change Agent; Mike Freedman, partner Freed Thinkers; Chris Loker, founder Water Financial and moderator Kevin James, founder Global Carbon Exchange were eager to engage on at the eleventh Aegis Media Thought Leadership Digibate, which took place in Cape Town on 7 November 2013.

Panel comments

"People have begun to realize that we are all part of the problem, but also part of the solution, and due to apathy, most governments are not accountable on this issue especially in Africa. The main avenue for change will be from business and consumers working together to change the mindset that exists in today's society."



"Consumers are not fools, they will very quickly work out if your communications is bulls**t." - Dawn Rowlands, Group CEO, Aegis Media SSA

"Africa needs to follow its own model, because the continent is only now enjoying sustained high economic growth, many initiatives or mind-sets that are established

now will carry on for years to come. Create instead of sustain"

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"We are disassociated from many industries we profit from and it's up to us as communicators to get the message across. You have got to give people the facts." - Mike Freedman, partner, Freed Thinkers

"Lay the groundwork's for the future today! Do we want a future for the continent similar to the pollution clogged cities of Asia and the first world or one where biodiversity is still maintained, with all the economic and cultural benefits that come about from living in a healthy environment? Only 28% of people know what the term sustainable means." - Deon Roberttze, founder, Change Agent

"We all need a change in personal accountability - if governments and companies know that the environment/how we exploit the environment is a top priority issue, then they will respond due to purchasing power or the need to have your vote at the next election."

"Change the flow of money and your will change the sustainable issue in Africa." - Chris Loker, founder, Water Financial

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