

## **“INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP-MANAGEMENT TO ACHIEVE IMPACT”**

*Speech Giving by Prof. Abdulai at UNFPA Regional Consultative Meeting*

*26-29 March 2012, INDABA HOTEL, JOHANNESBURG*

Mr. Bumi Makiwa, Regional Director of UNFPA Africa, Dr. Jean Damascene Ntawukulirayo, Senate President of Rwanda, H.E. Ambassador Radhia N. M. Msuya, High Commissioner, United Republic of Tanzania to South Africa, Mr. Achmat Dangor, CEO of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, Distinguished guest, delegates from other regions of UNFPA Africa and abroad, ladies and gentlemen. All protocols observed.

In our fast-paced, dog-eat-dog, volatile World of today; a World full of “I got mine, to hell with them” attitude; a World of grab as much as you can, and let the “devil take the hindmost,” inspirational leaders are a rare commodity like water in the Sahara. But they are there and they can be developed. The topic of discussion at this session of the UNFPA African Regional Consultation Meeting is: **“Inspirational Leadership-Management to Achieve Impact.”**

So what is Inspirational Leadership? I will define inspirational leadership as **“leaders who literally inspire those around them to achieve great things.”** But I will like to add that inspirational leaders are more than just great motivators or charismatic people. They are people who enhance the lives of others, indeed people they encounter in their daily lives.

Here are a few examples of inspirational leaders randomly picked from around the World. During the Cold War and the time when there was the race to space, the Soviets were the first to put a man in space. A young American President, John F. Kennedy motivated his countrymen and women to send a man to the moon. At Rice University in Houston, Texas in 1962, Kennedy inspired his people with this speech:

**“We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard---“**

He continued by saying, **“many years ago, the great British explorer George Mallory, who was to die on Mount Everest, was asked why he wanted to climb it. He said, ‘Because it is there.’ Well space is there, and we’re going to climb it, and the moon and the planets are there, and new hopes for knowledge and peace are there.”** The Americans did put a man on moon and brought him back safely.

During the Civil Rights era in the United States of America, a young black Southern Baptist preacher known as Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1963 gave a speech that inspired a nation and a government into the signing of the Civil Rights Bill into law. At the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, he gave a rousing speech that went like this: **“I have a dream that one day, on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. ---- I have a dream my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today!”**

Closer to home in Africa, we have had inspirational leaders like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana who inspired the independence process from Africa’s colonial masters by leading his country to be the first black African country (Ghana), South of the Sahara to attain its independence from colonial rule: In march 1960, he declared, **“Ghana’s independence is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of Africa.”**

Finally, Nelson Mandela’s Inspirational leadership and sacrifice helped to lead a nation out of the bondage of apartheid rule to freedom. His inspirational rule helped lift a nation from a brink of war to destruction to peace and tranquility. He said:

**“If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.”**

**“I stand here before you not as a prophet but as a humble servant of you, the people. Your tireless and heroic sacrifices have made it possible for me to be here today. I**

**therefore place the remaining years of my life in your hands”.**

So what are the characteristics of inspirational leaders?

1. **They set the pace:** Inspirational leaders set the pace and will not ask their people to do anything that they are unwilling or not prepared to do.
2. **They believe in the future:** Inspirational leaders are able to paint a vivid picture and a different reality and by doing that they are able to give their people hope that things are gonna get better; and they have a plan to prove it.
3. **The connect people to the larger story:** Inspirational leaders make people know that they are not cogs in a wheel but that their lives have meaning and that their work matters. They thus connect people to the larger story, something big, significant even epic.
4. **They help people believe in themselves:** As we go through life, we all get bumped and bruised. A lot of things impact us that make us lose our esteem and begin to doubt our abilities. It is thus refreshing when a leader makes you believe that you can and gives you the confidence to rise up to the challenge.

The three panelists here today are going to share with us their experiences and understanding of “Inspirational Leadership.” Each panelist will have 10 minutes to address on the topic. Thereafter there will be questions and answers from the RCM participants. Enjoy these wonderful presentations.

Thank You.

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