



MINDS DIALOGUES

"Interrogating current paradigms and promoting change through dialogues"

1. Background and concept

The Mandela Institute for Development Studies (MINDS) is a continental institute that seeks to address the short, medium, and long-term development challenges in Africa in a holistic and comprehensive manner. MINDS emerged out of the observation that development efforts in Africa have failed to meet expectations with respect to social, institutional and economic outcomes in comparison to other regions of the world.

The central hypothesis in setting up MINDS is that effective and sustainable development can only be achieved if development policies and practices are founded on the cultural heritage, value systems, knowledge systems and institutions of the people who are the subjects or beneficiaries of the development programmes.

MINDS' mission is to provide a forum for dialogue, information dissemination and networking, underpinned by rigorous research on the different elements of African heritage in order to shape policy and practice on governance, economic development and the evolution of African institutions.

The Institute will be launching its dialogue series in April 2012 on the theme:-

"In a World and an Africa that is changing fast and fundamentally, how can Africa best prepare its leaders of tomorrow?"

The dialogues will bring together key African stakeholder groups to interrogate current challenges in Africa's development efforts, to discuss innovative approaches and to offer up options for policy formulation and implementation on governance, economic development and the evolution of African institutions. The general approach in formulating policy options will be to look closely at what can be borrowed from African Heritage practices in order to create the broadest possible ownership by the general African public.

2. Objectives of the Dialogues

There are several initiatives that bring together decision makers on issues of development in Africa. MINDS dialogues will be complementary to those existing platforms. Our innovation is to introduce a platform for dialogue that interrogates current paradigms to address Africa's development challenges by revisiting its rich cultural heritage to shape the debate and to influence policy formulation and practices.



MINDS dialogues will be constructed around its three specific programme pillars and through the following leading questions:

Culture Issues – What is, should be, the role of Africa’s cultures in shaping the development and governance debate?

Governance Issues – Are the models of government and governance that most African countries are trying to operate appropriate for Africa?

Economic Issues – How does Africa effectively use its rich indigenous practices to stimulate a broad based economic resurgence so as to catch up with the rest of the world?

The dialogues’ three main objectives are: -

- To provide stakeholders with a platform for interrogating current approaches to development;
- To revisit Africa’s traditional political and governance systems and cultural practices in order to identify elements that can form the basis for a broadly owned approach to the development effort;
- To offer up policy proposals that seek to ground African institutions, governance systems and the choice of development models on African heritage.

3. The first Dialogue

The theme: " In a World and an Africa that is changing fast and fundamentally, how can Africa best prepare its leaders of tomorrow?"

The stage for the dialogue will be set through a paper that will be distributed to the participants in advance. The paper will summarise the major changes that are taking place globally as well as those changes that are specific to the African continent. It is expected that the author of the paper will cover a range of issues including, but not limited to: -

- a. The crisis in global leadership
- b. The underlying causes of the global economic crisis
- c. Climate change
- d. Population growth versus dwindling natural resources
- e. The scramble for African natural resources

The participants will be expected to attempt to answer the theme question in light of the discussion paper together with President Mbeki’s opening remarks.

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The Format

Former President Thabo Mbeki will give a keynote address to open the Dialogue.

Professor Adebayo Olukoshi has kindly agreed to produce a discussion paper as indicated above.

The event will provide participants with the opportunity to exchange ideas and network as well as to come up with concrete recommendations for leadership development as well as to inform future MINDS work.

Participation

Participants will be invited from the following stakeholder clusters:

- Political leaders
- Civil servants
- The media
- Women groups
- The youth
- The private sector
- Academics
- And civil society

Venue and date

MINDS first dialogue will be held in Addis Ababa on the 17-18 April 2012.

END.