

The 2019 Brand Summit South Africa opens its doors

Despite a number of initial logistical glitches, the 2019 Brand Summit South Africa was successfully hosted on Thursday 6th and Friday 7th June in the Sandton Auditorium of Bowman Gilfillan. The event attracted delegates from places like South Africa, Nigeria, Cameroun, Ethiopia, Russia, USA, etc. to discuss how South Africa's country brand image has evolved since the early 1990s; how it is viewed from across the world and what it all means.

At the core of the program were discussions about how the following sectors have and continue to contribute to shaping perceptions about South Africa, at home and abroad, and what it all means for the country's economic performance and global appeal:

- Corporate South Africa/Business in general
- Politics
- Community issues such as the state of education, health, public services, etc.
- The attitudes of South Africans at home and in the diaspora towards the state of the country
- South Africa as seen from the rest of the African continent
- The role of the audit profession
- Views of 'Leaders of the Future'; i.e. dynamic South Africans under the age of 35.
- South Africa as seen from the rest of the world

The Brand Summit South Africa also comprises a variety of awards that are given to shortlisted nominees who meet a set criterion. They are NGO Contributors, Individual Contributors, Corporate Contributors, SMME Contributors, Media Contributors, Political Contributors, and Public Intellect Contributors. There is also a special Convenor's "Influencer of Influencers" that gets awarded to a individuals who lead from the front in living the values enshrined in our country's constitution, especially those of integrity, balance, inclusiveness, building bridges between communities, uplifting and empowering others, etc. In 2018, the Influencer of Influencers Award went to Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng and to former Public Protector, Professor Thuli Madonsela. There were three recipients of this prestigious award in 2019; Auditor-General Kimi Makwetu, Arts Cape CEO Marlene Le Roux, and Business Leadership South Africa CEO, Bonang Mohale.

"With this annual event, we hope to get more South Africans from as many walks of life as possible to become more aware of the crucial link between the country's attractiveness for investments, tourism, fee paying foreign students, etc. and country image and reputation. We want South Africans to insist on clean, ethical, values-driven and lawful leadership because the opposite can hurt its prospects to grow the much needed inclusive economy that we keep hearing about. We also want those who occupy positions of influence in the private sector and in government to always consider public interest in their actions," said Solly Moeng, Summit Convenor.

About the Brand Summit South Africa

The annual Brand Summit South Africa is a "think tank" on positioning options and requirements for country brands, with South Africa at the centre of our deliberations. It explores ways in which South Africa can best position itself to compete favourably against its regional and global peers for FDI, (Business) Tourism, lucrative multilaterally funded Research Projects, fee paying foreign tertiary students, consideration to serve as a preferred regional base for global corporations and other organisations that bring foreign exchange, skills, expertise, etc.

The Brand Summit offers a non-governmental, politically unaligned and unscripted platform for participants (South African, other Africans, and people from other parts of the world) to analyse the evolving image of South Africa. Our aim is to facilitate open, frank, but constructive discussions about what is working, what is not working, and what has to be done in order to improve the global appeal of South Africa. We believe that the country and the continent's domestic and global appeal and, eventually, economic performance, are tightly influenced by image, reputation, economic and political policy stability, as well as performance in areas such as health systems, education systems, sports, other social services, etc.

Over the next few years, the Brand Summit South Africa will be merged with the more Pan-African **Africa Brand Summit** that will be incubated in South Africa before being opened-up to 'host city' bids from around the African continent.

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