

## Political leadership, stumbling block for Africa

Political leadership is a major stumbling block to the development of Brand Africa - that is why Africans should not rely on politicians to fix the continent's brand, London-based Zambian economist Dr Dambisa Moyo told delegates at the Brand Africa 2010 Forum held on Thursday, September 2010, in Johannesburg, South Africa.

 By [Issa Sikiti da Silva](#) 17 Sep 2010



London-based  
Zambian economist  
Dr Dambisa Moyo.

### Economic goods not supplied

"Don't waste your time by waiting for politicians because most of them have been in office for several year but they have done nothing to provide at least economic goods, but they get paid every month," the Oxford University and Harvard University-educated economist said, fuming.

Economic goods include basic healthcare, clean water, sanitation and education.

"Our leaders are shameless because all they do is begging," she added.

Moyo is the author of *Dead Aid* and serves on the boards of Barclays Bank, SAB Miller and Lundin Petroleum.

### Heads of state hog power

Some experts believe there are more heads of state in Africa who overstay in power more than any other place in the world. This list comprises, among others, the likes of Angola's Jose Eduardo dos Santos (31 years), Cameroon's Paul Biya (28 years), Libya's Muammar Gaddafi (41 years) and Equatorial Guinea's Theodore Obiang Nguema (31 years).

She regretted that many political leaders on this continent were allowed to stay in power even if they did not deliver. "I just heard that Museveni is running again for president in Uganda."

While former cabinet minister Jay Naidoo said there is a link between building democracy and building the brand, Moyo however begged to differ, stating the example of China, which she said did not practise democracy but has now become the world's second-biggest economic power in terms of GDP.

### Citizens should get involved

Moyo said instead of waiting for these power-mongers, Africa's ordinary citizens should team up with

international organisations that care about the continent to start fighting for the development of brand Africa:

"We should also stand up and finger those who believe they have vested interests in Africa that give them the right to speak on behalf of the continent. Where are the leaders when these people plead for the continent? Nowhere to be seen!" she said.

"How come only 16 countries out of 53 in Africa have credit ratings, and my own country Zambia does not have any. Credit rating is an important tool in the sense that it makes the market believe in you and that you are doing something because you have good policies in place.

She decried that there are countries in Africa where you have to wait for two years to get a business licence

### **Corruption in government and private sector**

Naidoo said: "Not everything is bad in this continent. Look at MTN, IDC, the Treasury and DBSA. These are the success stories. But when you are talking about corruption, don't just look at government. Also, take a look at the private sector. When business is fixing the price of bread, isn't that corruption?"

Moyo said: "I am an Afro-optimist. Yes, there are good things happening. But overall, this continent is moving in the wrong direction. Look at the global trade. Africa accounts for only less than 2%.

"Let's me say clearly that no country is an island. Don't believe that branding one country will help all the countries on the continent. Unless we put serious policies in place, we won't change anything."

### **ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA**

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.  
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