



Mandela Washington Fellowship Summit

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Leadership for the Future: Resilience and Inclusion

Tsholofelo Letsholo Ignite Talk Transcript

Speakers

- Tsholofelo Letsholo, 2021 Mandela Washington Fellow, Botswana

Session Transcript

I would like to greet you in my native Kalanga language. *Dumilani bakanyikwedu!* My name is Tsholofelo Letsholo, a 2021 Mandela Washington Fellow all the way from Botswana in southern Africa.

“Leadership for the Future: Resilience and Inclusion.” When I hear those magical words, I am reminded of the pineapple: my source of inspiration. A pineapple withstands all kinds of harsh weather conditions through its thick skin for a purpose. In the midst of it all, it does not lose its sense of purpose, which is represented by its green crown.

I get so excited when I talk about this because in 2019 I kickstarted a relationship with a pineapple. It reminded me of a crown that I possessed for a purpose for the reason of my own existence. Subsequently, I founded a growing inspirational business venture called Green Crown, which seeks to inculcate the concept of self-worth. Green Crown is in existence for the sole purpose of empowering young people faced by various complexities of life such as substance abuse, indulgence in criminal activities, and the crisis of high unemployment. It seeks to remind young people to invest in their naturally-given gifts and talents for the transformation of the world.

It is in this regard that a pineapple remains purpose-driven. As it gets ripe, it does not lose its sense of purpose, but produces a sweet, succulent fruit which will feed people from various walks of life; that is resilience and inclusion. Similarly, the world needs a leader who will represent a legacy of purpose, inspiration, and transformation; a purpose-driven leader – that is, who seeks to strategically prioritize on institutional objectives to create a path for a defined destination of the future.

The world as a whole needs a “people builder,” a leader who will instill charisma, engage and unite people from various walks of life to create a sense of purpose. We live in an era of troubled and unpredictable times. The emergency of COVID-19 is the best lesson of resilience and inclusion. An emotionally intelligent leader is needed to define the unimaginable that the world may present. Africa needs an empathetic and considerate leader who will prioritize the needs of others before his or hers. The future is bright when the leader is liable and answerable to institutional events.



Africa needs effective decision-makers. The world needs effective decision-making to change its landscape. A leader who is inclusive and resilient is the one who will establish a strategic cause of action for success, notwithstanding existing circumstances. The leader for the future is the one who will serve as a catalyst for inspiration and transformation, a leader who will shape the status quo and accelerate progress for citizens. In the words of Nelson Mandela, “It is in the character of growth that we [should] learn from both pleasant and unpleasant experiences.”

I, therefore, subscribe fully to that a resilient and inclusive leadership for the future is prescient leadership that will strive to create a legacy which will serve generations to come. Leaders, let us remain resilient and inclusive. We are standing in the corridors of hope. Thank you.