Of Leaders and Leadership…

Posted At : 08 June 2011 05:03 | Posted By : African Sun Editor
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The world is full of leaders, but the mark of good leadership is defined by the capacity of the leader to see beyond their limitations and strengths. This knowledge defines the playing field for those aspiring to such positions and opens the space for others to participate. An ideal scenario for leadership should be one which is balanced without losing the cutting edge. It must have absolute parameters and these must be defined in a gracious way. This type of platform for leadership is needed in our current market from both a business and country perspective and it is imperative that principles be well articulated for this role and must emanate from a shared value system. Problems occur where there is a divergent value proposition with too much focus on the leader's vision and not his/her values. While much emphasis is placed on visions by most existing or aspiring leaders, the best starting point is the values on which the vision is based. This will invariably resonate with the various constituents that one wishes to lead and thus making the task easier. As I travel across Africa and engage in many different transactions, whether it is meeting potential partners, business people, or government leaders and their representatives, I am finding that the value proposition is critical for good leadership. Visions are easy to come up with and yet it is not so easy for most to outline their values. I once conducted an exercise with my executive team where each one of us had to come up with their values in their personal capacity and how it guides their lives. The exercise was met with some groans, but at the end of it was worthwhile. It gave me a better insight into my team and has informed me of their values. It allows me to know my boundaries regarding their values and that guides what I can or cannot ask them to do which would affront them. We then took this a step further and plotted their values against the company's values! This has resulted in a unified team which understands one another better and works cohesively to achieve our vision! I challenge you to do the same. Would certainly be interesting to hear your results! Best,

Shingi