

Women Changing Africa: Barnard's Third Annual Global Symposium
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Panel One: Conversations on Leadership

Debora Spar
President, Barnard College

Thank you so much. It's a pleasure for me to be back with you again this afternoon, and we are going to dive right into the topic that we've already raised in the wonderful first session with Maria Ramos. And this is the question, of course, of women and leadership and of how women are using their leadership talent to change the face of Africa.

Leadership, I just want to put out there briefly, is a very ambiguous term. It's one of those things that everybody is in favor of. Have you ever met somebody who said they don't like leadership? Everybody thinks leadership is a good thing, yet it's not necessarily clear what leadership is or--as several of the questions earlier alluded to--how do you get it? How do you know when you have it? How do you develop it? How do you see it?

I would also say--and I think this is a very positive development--is generally now pretty much wherever you go in the world, whatever kind of organizations you're working with, people will say they need more women leaders. And this, again, this goes back to this question that was raised about the nature of the fight. 30 years ago, most people running organizations didn't want women in the organizations or they'd want maybe one or two, but no more than that.

Now when I meet with CEOs, people who run organizations, who run foundations, everyone says, "We need more women leaders." But again, we don't necessarily know how you get those women leaders. And an even more interesting question I would pose to you, it's not clear how women leaders actually lead differently than men. I suspect that women do lead differently in aggregate.

But we really need to start thinking about why is it that we want more women leaders. Is that just to make us all feel good? Or are there some substantive differences in women's leadership that we need to be concerned with?

So as you can imagine, in my job as President of Barnard, I spent a lot of time thinking about issues of women and leadership and in particular about how we can educate young women to recognize their own leadership potential and to acquire the skills and experiences that they will need in order to lead throughout their lives in whatever careers they pursue.

I don't know that it's clear exactly what skills women need to lead, although we're starting to get some pretty interesting ideas about what those are. But one thing that is clear is that women--and I suspect men as well--learn by example. When they think about their own leadership--again, as the questions raised earlier indicate--they want to hear from other women, and they want to learn

their stories and then figure out what their own paths will be and what they can learn from those who have come before them.

So it is, therefore, a great pleasure to introduce five incredible leaders from across a wide range of sectors. We have agreed not to make this a formal conversation, but instead, I've asked each five of these women an impossible question, which is: Tell us how you did it in five minutes or less, and they have all--proving how brave they are--they have all agreed to this. So they will give us their five minutes story of their lives, answering this question that I think successful women get asked all the time: How did you do it?

So let me very briefly introduce the five panelists, and their more complete bios are in your program brochure. And we're just moving to my left in alphabetical order. First is Ferial Haffajee, Editor-in-Chief of City Press, and prior to that, the first woman to hold the position of Editor-in-Chief at the Mail & Guardian. Miss Haffajee is a working journalist and radio and television commentator who specializes in current affairs, media freedom, and women's empowerment.

Next to her, we are delighted to have a visitor from Rwanda, Senator Aloisea Inyumba who serves in the national senate of Rwanda. She was the country's first Minister of Gender and Social Affairs, serving from 1994 to 1999 and is still deeply involved in gender issues and issues of economic and political development generally in Rwanda. I should mention, for those of you who don't know it, Rwanda has the highest percentage of women in government of any country in the world.

(Applause)

To her left, a woman who I'm sure is known to just about everybody in this room, Gill Marcus, the Governor of the South African Reserve Bank. Again, the first woman to hold that position.

(Applause)

Gill spent, I think, all of her life working with and connected to the ANC. She worked with the ANC's Department of Information and Publicity in London when she was in exile there, returned to South Africa in 1990 and served on the ANC's executive committee for much of the 1990s. She is active in, I think, numerous sectors across this country and including working as a professor of policy leadership and gender studies at the Gordon Institute of Business Studies. I was very lucky to actually co-teach with her several years ago. So thank you, Gill, for being here.

(Applause)

To her left, Justice Yvonne Mokgoro, a judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa from its inception in 1994 until her term expired in 2009. Currently, she is Chairperson of the South African Law Reform Commission, and she's an expert on sociological jurisprudence with a

focus on how the law affects women and children. We are honored to have you here with us today.

(Applause)

Finally, lastly, but by no means least, Dr. Mamphela Ramphele, who is a legend in South Africa and beyond, who has spent her life bettering the lives of the disenfranchised among her fellow South Africans. Dr. Ramphele is currently the Executive Chair of Letsema Circle, where she's director of major companies. Previously, she was Managing Director of the World Bank and was responsible for managing that institution's vast portfolio of human development activities.

Finally, I should add, that we are proud to note that Dr. Ramphele received Barnard's medal of distinction in 1991 and was our commencement speaker just a few years ago. Thank you.

(Applause)

So Ferial is the very brave woman who is going to start us off by telling us how she did it.

Ferial Haffajee
Editor-in-Chief, City Press

Firstly, it's really wonderful to be with you. Your talent and your potential talent over there drips like these chandeliers, all liquid, all beautiful. So when I was appointed Editor in 2004, I really nearly fell off my chair on that day. Call it internalized oppression or call it knowing my place, or call it knowing my craft, but I did not expect it at all, and I'd always bought into the notion that the editor was nearly always a male avatar in the world as I knew it until then.

That avatar was black, black suit, bold, invariably male. Female editors weren't even in the power of my imagination at the time. So how odd is that, I've realized upon looking back. Upon getting the job, I quickly went back to the role models I'd worked with for lessons on how to lead as a woman. Many male colleagues thought that I lacked the balls for the job, which was probably true.

(Laughter)

They were worried that, as a woman and as a quiet one at that, I wouldn't be able to withstand the very real pressure of editing a tough cookie of a newspaper, which was then the Mail & Guardian. So my choice was to play male. I could swagger; I could toughen up; I could take my voice up an octave or two. Or I could lead as the women who had shaped my life from all over the continent had taught me to lead.

So I went to some of them. First, to Rosemary Okello in Kenya, a media pioneer who commandeered loyal teams around her, mostly of women, but not only of women, to write about the lives of ordinary people--ordinary women--through the African Women and Child Feature

Services. She taught me how to edit. Then to Pat Made in Zimbabwe, then the DG of the Inter Press Service in Rome, but she chose to be based in Zimbabwe, and a woman who I call a friend. She taught me to capture the voices of women and to remember that development is an ineluctable process, but it's a contested one, and to succeed, it almost always has to be women-led, and we've got wonderful examples of that today.

Colleen LoMona, who instilled with military precision the view that if the media does not give equal space to women, then what is its value and what is its role in society? Under all this guidance, my role was made much, much easier. I'd been given this honor and this stewardship not nearly to keep business as usual in the media world, but to make it business unusual.

So what did I do briefly? Cultivated women columnists, although I say to a room like this that it is an incredibly tough job. Men will write for your opinion pages about ten times more quickly than women will do so. I counted who wrote our opinions so that ours wasn't only a world shaped by men. We published a book of sources to respond to the view that there are no women engineers out there--doctors, judges, bankers, world bankers, business leaders--people like you've met here today.

So broadly, I see my role as to give women a voice and to make the media a place of equality and representation, but also to hold up a very real mirror to show that--like foot-binding in China, fistula female genital mutilation--a very real war on women is still with us. So we try and hold up a mirror that shows that every potential is women, but to also show how very far we still have to travel. Thanks very much.

(Applause)

Aloisea Inyumba
Senator, Rwanda's Parliament

Thank you, Debora. Thank you for inviting me to be part of this conversation. The question was supposed to address as a panel: How did you do it? And this morning, when I was sharing with Debora, I said, "So have we met it?" But briefly, about my...

(Applause)

Briefly, I just want to take this opportunity to share with you about my story, the story of my country because I think what I am today is greatly attributed to my history--the history of the Rwandan people, our reparation process. Maybe I also talk briefly about my childhood. I was born as a refugee in Uganda. I left my country when I was in my mother's womb. I never saw and enjoyed my parents. So that's the difficult background that shaped me to be who I am today.

So when I finished school--when I graduated at Makerere University, I did social work and social science. Immediately, I knew I had the (inaudible) to participate in the reparation struggle for my country, so I became an activist. I started my organization as a volunteer until the success

of our struggle. I then joined the cabinet. I was the first Minister of Family and Social Affairs, and briefly, for you to appreciate the kind of responsibility I've held in my life, you need to understand what we inherit as a country.

In 1994, there was a genocide in my country, and the whole fabric--the social, the political, the culture--everything was down. The family structures in my country changed. About 36 percent of our households were led by women. The orphan population was very big--about one million--and here, I was assigned to be in charge of that responsibility. I have to be honest with you: Initially, in the early ages, I would also just cry with the women. It's like we didn't know how to go about it, but we just knew inside us that there was a nudge to make things happen and change things for our betterment.

So that's our journey. I'm not going to talk about the many other responsibilities I've held, but briefly I want to concentrate on the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs because that's where I think we contributed greatly as women of Rwanda. And so despite this difficult situation inherited, I have to be proud to tell you that Rwanda is changed today. It's stable; it's peaceful; it's secure; and the women of Rwanda are providing the leadership.

The parliament today...

(Applause)

We've got the highest women representation in our parliament, and we've got 56 percent representation. And it's not just about numbers. The women who hold leadership in our parliament are leading strategic-standing committees like the budget, the economic-standing committees, the human committees. So in parliament, I'd say that the critical presence of the women in parliament is changing the conversation and the way things are happening. If you look at the cabinet, the strategic ministries of planning, agriculture, trade, industry--by in large, I would say that the key policies in our country today are in the hands of women, and that's why things are happening in our country.

(Applause)

So I'd say that with our presence in policy (inaudible), in various programs, it has really changed a lot in the livelihood of our people. We've initiated a number of legal reforms on discrimination and protection of women; we've worked on issues of gender-based violence; we've initiated small microcredit programs to benefit the rural women. And what's special about the women of Rwanda today is there is a new paradigm shift.

There's a new thinking and belief that the women at the national level, the women at the local level and at the family together can make things happen. So that is something special about me and about the women of Rwanda. I know many people will be asking me some questions. Maybe I'll have time to explain and give more details about our work. Thank you.

(Applause)

Gill Marcus
Governor, South African Reserve Bank

Thank you very much. It's a very difficult question that you ask about how did I get there because I didn't believe that that's what happens. I think you get there because other people put you there, and it's the amount of time and respect and engagement that you have with others. And that is why those of us in the positions we're in today have a responsibility to put back into others because people took time with us.

So how do you get there? It's because others took an interest. Part of it is--and if we look at leadership--part of it is, is don't... I mean, one of the questions that I have, Deb, is: Why do we assume that if women are in positions, they're going to actually be progressive? They're part of the population. You have progressive women, and you have women who are not progressive. You have women who lead in sort of very unpleasant ways.

So part of the question for me is we will need to understand the authority of leadership. And for me, leadership is what other people bestow on you because they trust you, because when you are doing things and what you stand for and the way you act resonates with what they would like to see happen. And that when that happens, they put upon you the burden or the responsibility of voice, and it's how you exercise that voice and responsibility that it either builds your leadership because more and more people want to hear what you have to say and would like you to articulate it for them.

Because often, women in that circumstance do not have the same voice. So it's about, for me, the leadership question is not what you seek. I'm very wary of people who seek leadership positions because I think it becomes something with the person and their role is more important than why they're there, and it is something that they don't usually look to how you serve in that position and what that position imposes as a responsibility.

So I think, for me, there are a number of areas here. It's the leadership of the individual--the personal leadership--that people have that matters, and that is something that's given to them. And if they do not behave appropriately, it should be taken away from them. Secondly, you've got positional leadership. The position--Governor of the Reserve Bank. I'm a temporary occupant. I am not there with a sort of glue that sticks me to that seat, and the extent to which I stay there depends on how well I do and whose interests I serve.

Because, again, it's an appointment that comes with huge responsibility, and some of the challenge is, is that these positions come with enormous amount of trappings and enormous amount of authority. And people get confused between the trappings and the authority of the position and themselves. And that also needs to be challenged, and for me, that way, when we're looking at leadership, how do we create the vehicles through which the trappings and the positional authority is not allowed to overwhelm and become something that can be distorted.

So the best leadership comes when the personal and the positional come together in a way that is in the interests of the greater good and is not about personal interest. So those, for me, are hugely important about what we mean by leadership and to recognize that there's bad leadership, and bad leadership often isn't visible so quickly and you get sucked into bad leadership because it offers you something that seems attractive and you cross a line.

Once you've crossed the line, it's very difficult to come back. So we've got to be very clear about what we mean by the leadership and the position and the role. And I'd like to just bring it back to a question that was asked, I think, from a table over there about those of us in our generation had a clearer ability to identify what we were, what we stood for because we stood against something. It's very easy to be against things. It's much harder to be for things.

And if I had to ask you the fight that you need to have now is not justified. It's about the integrity, it's about the values, and it's about what we stand for. And what we stand for as each and every one of us that should be invincible against... It's a very contested terrain in society today, and in that leadership, that what we stand for should be what we stand for in our own integrity, but also what we stand for in society.

What society are we building for? If each of us looked at ourselves, especially the young ones who are still studying, you envision who you want to be, isn't it? You look at it and say, "I actually want to be a doctor or I want to do this. I want to add value in this way." You envision it. We need to envision for the country, and it's very contested terrain right now. And I think just to end on this question, I don't think this is a South African issue. This global recession that we have been in where we're now out of the recession, but we're certainly not out of a crisis.

This is in its fourth year. There are at least, by all the indications, another two or three years to go if we get out of it. And the ability to get out of it depends on what we're going to do. And part of what we have to do is question the things that we have been standing for because what we have been standing for in the world today is greed--that individual sense and what we have seen as a consequence of the crisis is the socialization of the cost and the privatization of the benefits.

And that is something that should challenge every single one of us in the positions we hold to rethink.

(Applause)

So that when we look at leadership, it should be against a measure to say, "What do we stand for, and what is that society we're going to build and how do you represent it--every single one of us in the place that we are working and living and breathing?" And that's part of as we become the professionals we want to be as we finish studying, in whose interest are you doing it? You just want to be somebody because you can get money, or do you want to be a doctor because you can change people's lives? Or do you want to be somebody who can help build that future in which our children can look around and say, "We don't actually have to worry about the things that we used to worry about."

The current generation, I think, has it much harder than we did because the challenges they face are much, much bigger and much harder to resolve. Our societies are much more complex, and therefore, the leadership has to go back to basics. Who are we? What do we stand for? And we need to be judged not by what we say but by what we do. Thank you.

Yvonne Mokgoro
Justice, Constitutional Court
Chairperson, South African Law Reform Commission

Thank you so much for inviting me. Before I was appointed a judge at the Constitutional Court, I was a longstanding academic. And one day, after about five years having served at the Constitutional Court, I met one of my former academic colleagues, and he said, “My goodness. So Yvonne, how does it feel to be in such an important position and have such high status?” I looked at him very disappointed, and I said, “You know what? I don’t think this has anything to do with a position of power; it is a huge responsibility.”

I, as a judge of the Constitutional Court, have an enormous responsibility, which I have to exercise collectively with my colleagues, and we owe it to the people of this country and to democracies around the world to do it just right.

(Applause)

And there is so much work to do; there’s so much change that needs to come. We’ve got to bring about the change, but do it right. I was one of nine children of working class parents of a generation--first generation of high school graduates in the first place. I was, as a person, first in my family to obtain a university degree. My parents don’t know how (inaudible) scholarships they have. Our socioeconomic situation at home had to change.

I had thought I would be a formidable defense lawyer--to defend our people against the system or apartheid. First time when I entered the court of law as an officer of law, I was a public prosecutor. Those were the circumstances at the time. One day, because I understood my role as an officer of the court who is there to assist the court to find the truth. Undefended, accused came before the court, misinterpretation, and actually abuse of power by the interpreter misinterpreting the accused evidence, I stood up. I said, “No, this is not what the accused said.”

The presiding officer called me to his office and told me in no uncertain terms that I must make up my mind. Am I a prosecutor, or am I a defense lawyer? Immediately, I decided that this is not for me. However, I couldn’t walk away from my job because I had family responsibilities. But as soon as I got an opportunity, the university recruited me to serve as a law lecturer--criminal law lecturer. I thought that was the opportunity. I went to the university. I left the job, and I went to teach at the university. I never looked back.

At the university, I knew that I had a responsibility. If I could not become a good prosecutor, then I had a responsibility to train men and women to become good prosecutors, and that is the goal that I pursued as a university lecturer. I went to a new university to teach at some stage--a university where students had never come across a black lecturer or a black professor. When I entered the lecture hall, later they told me, "We thought you were the secretary of the professor"...

(Laughter)

...to make an excuse for the professor not to come to class the first day, and we all laughed about it. But I had responsibilities, therefore my job was cut out. I had the responsibility to do my work in such a way that these young people who would train look up to you and want to be where you are and assist them in doing so. And I'm mentioning my family background deliberately because there's a perception there that when you come from a poor background, nothing is possible and everything has to be handed out to you.

It is not the case. Hard work, knowing what you want, knowing that you have a responsibility to change the status quo and taking every opportunity to do so is the role and function of everybody who finds herself or himself in a situation where change is possible and change is necessary.

(Applause)

When I was appointed judge of the Constitutional Court, very reluctantly because I wanted to become an academic. I wanted to be an academic and argue about change with our new constitution from outside. Look at this new judiciary and almost dictate change to them. And as Gill Marcus says, sometimes people have other ideas. They nominated me to be appointed to the Constitutional Court and very reluctantly because I enjoyed being an academic. I had a ball being an academic. I loved my students. We interacted and related very well to each other.

But eventually, I agreed, and I had the time of my life. The change, the opportunity for change at the Constitutional Court was so immense because each and every case that comes before the court that changes not only the lives of the individuals--individual litigants who come before the court, but we change the lives of so many in the country who are in the same position as those litigants who come before the court. You couldn't ask for more.

And I can go on and on, relating the cases that we dealt with at the court and how the court brought about at least principle changes. There's a fight. There is a fight that needs to be fought. We need to make real these principle changes that have been brought about, make them real in the lives of each and every one of us. The huge gap between ultra well and abject poverty, it is just too huge for a country with such a beautiful constitution as ours.

Lack of information, where even if people have opportunities, they don't have the information. They can't even recognize the opportunities. That needs to change. The principle, the values--they don't need to affect you personally, but because you are part of a society where values, good principles are not respected, it affects you indirectly. You're a part of that society; you

must stand up for change. There are so many issues. There are as many fights as there are issues, believe me, and they need to change.

And each and every one of us is nothing but a change agent.

(Applause)

Mamphela Ramphela
Academic and Activist
Former Senior Director, World Bank

Well, I think I should just say, “Amen.”

(Laughter; applause)

It’s so wonderful to be on a panel of such powerful, passionate women who are not talking about themselves in a way that says, you know, “Just follow me,” but who really are grappling with this whole issue of leadership. If you think about leadership as the capability to make choices, one, two, and very importantly, to touch people’s lives. And you touch those lives for the better.

And my comments are going to be end-cut by my journey of turning challenges into opportunities, and it starts with an understanding that the personal, the professional, and the political have to cohere. You cannot tell me that you have values of integrity, but because at work people behave in a particular way, so you put your integrity at the door and then you pick it up when you go home.

(Laughter)

That’s why the Ladu ask the question (inaudible) about we are all very vague. There is no vagueness. The choices are stuck. You’ve heard what the panels have said, particularly the judge, as judges always are very clear.

(Laughter)

The issue really is: Are we prepared to make sure that the personal, the professional, and the political cohere in our everyday lives because if we are, this country will bloom like a rose garden. This continent will be an amazing... It is amazing. It will be even more amazing. How did I come to this? I come from a stock of very great, big women--big in heart. My great grandma, totally illiterate--my father’s grandmother. She brought us up. She was our one nanny, as they say. And then her daughter, my father’s mother, was also illiterate; so beautiful that my grandmother had to dress her up like a boy because otherwise she was going to be abducted.

(Laughter)

And then my mother's mother--my namesake--was a private teacher. Imagine. She just went as far as the NATU, but she couldn't sit there with people who couldn't read or write, so she started teaching people. And she was the registry of births and deaths in her village and the villages because she had a mind like a computer. And then my mother--woman extraordinaire in every way. Teacher, wife, mother. Tough, tough, but wonderful. And so those are the women who shaped me as Gill reminded us. We don't just drop from the sky.

But I also shaped by a freedom struggle where we had nothing to go by, so people say, "I'm looking for a role model. Excuse me? Or let's create a space for that. Excuse me?"

(Laughter)

We had to create those spaces for dialogue. And this was not dialogue only about the struggle for freedom in terms of race and apartheid. We had to wrestle with this thing about how do we make these three P's come together? So we had to say, "How do you define yourself as black in a white racist environment?" Remember, we were called non-whites? Non-Europeans? And we happily wrote ourselves "non-Europeans." Ne blancs. And the way men also, we laughed, you know, making ourselves look attractive because we're defined by so-and-so's daughter, wife, and so on.

So my generation in this country had the great fortune of turning the challenges of our environment. I don't need to repeat today life stories of the women around you because we share it. We had to say, "This is what we inherited. What are we going to leave behind?" And it wasn't easy. We challenged the men, and the problem we have today, we have women's organizations, women's leagues, youth leagues that don't challenge any idea that the struggle in our days was a struggle of ideas, of values, or of really wrestling with the contradictions, wrestling with the dilemmas.

How do you challenge a black man who rapes another person? You do because if you don't, that person is going to go on doing it and that violates the rights of children and those women who are... Today, we sit on it. Today, we see women willingly marrying themselves of four at a time in the name of culture, and not a single women's organization talks about it.

(Applause)

We have babies being raped within the family. Not a single women's group talks about it. We have girls being raped in schools, and I can go on and on. So the struggle for freedom had to be a fundamental one that married those three P's. And so where we are sitting now, we are in a continent of contradictions. Wealthy in terms of natural resources and people, and yet, the continent that is defining underdevelopment at every stage.

We are a continent where freedom struggles were waged and yet we are the continent where freedom fighters of yesterday become the tyrants of today.

(Applause)

And they're not challenged. We are a continent with a very young population--passionate, talented. Just look at you. Talented. And yet, we allow aging autocrats to mess up our societies.

(Applause)

To accumulate wealth at the expense of ordinary people, and you and I are quiet. We are confused. We need a dialogue space. No, no, no. The dialogue space is here.

(Laughter)

We are a continent dying for value-based leadership, and that leadership is here, is you. As Gill said, it's easy to fight against. It's very hard to fight to build because that means challenging so many comfort zones, starting with the family. The environment, the places where you sit and chill with people. So space is for dialogue, for ideas, for values. That's what you have been born to lead in and you are going to lead. I have no doubt. Thank you.

(Applause)

Debora Spar
President, Barnard College

The comments of our five panelists very underscore for me why I love this country so much. I ask five women to talk about their lives, and they all talk about their countries and it's quite extraordinary.

(Applause)

At the risk of being somewhat trivial, if I had asked this question with a group of five American women--apologies to the Americans in the room--I probably would have gotten five stories about little obstacles and problems that emerged along the way. And we got none of that. We had five incredible speeches about the responsibility that each and every one of us has, not just to solve our own problems, but to solve society's problems. So that's why I love coming here.

Let me just pick up on what seems to be a theme that's emerged from our very first question. Gill said it quite beautifully. It's very easy to be against things; much harder to be for things. I would caveat that a little bit. I think the struggle was harder than it may have just been characterized as. It was not an easy struggle, but I take the point that it's harder to be clear in terms of what to fight for rather than what to fight against. But let's try. We have the next generation in this room; the next generation is clearly demanding specificity.

So what can we say if we want to urge the next generation and our own generations to keep fighting for things? What should they be fighting for? What should they be leaving this room inspired to go do?

Mamphela Ramphela
Academic and Activist
Former Senior Director, World Bank

I guess the first and most important fight you're going to have is with yourself. To define yourself and be true to your inner voice. Because once you do that, you are unstoppable-- completely and utterly unstoppable. Because you will then be clear about those values that you want to define what you do, how you relate to people, and what your bottom lines are.

So when it comes to choosing a career, you're going to make sure you don't get into a career that's going to be in conflict with those values. When it comes to choosing your partner, when it comes to choosing your place of work, when it comes to choosing your political stance, you're going to encourage around the person that you have defined yourself to be.

I'm not suggesting this is easy. I'm suggesting that you've got to at least start. It's like climbing Mount Everest. It's the first step is the most important step. But we are very fortunate in South Africa today because we have a constitution that defines the values for you, and we have a cultural heritage in this country that people defile by talking about [inaudible] when they actually undermine the human dignity of the people that they are supposed to be responsible and accountable to.

But if we wait to draw on that cultural heritage, which in fact is not different from the human rights values that are enshrined in the declaration of human rights, I think it is much easier for this generation than it was for our generation. But you need to make sure that your life becomes one more light for the generations coming after you. And I think if you take it from the personal, it's not going to be easy, but it's easier.

(Applause)

Yvonne Mokgoro
Justice, Constitutional Court
Chairperson, South African Law Reform Commission

And you know, sometimes people say it is more difficult for the younger generation who did not...were not personally affected by apartheid to know what they should be fighting for. But those who are personally affected, directly affected, by apartheid fought a struggle and have achieved at least the principle. And we are now about realizing that principle and making it integral to our lives.

Not only perhaps less our lives as individuals, but the lives of our society--the life of us as a nation, as a society. And I am sure we can identify with the need to realize, to make real, that which have been struggled for. And to preserve that which we have achieved. You don't have to be affected personally in order to believe in the principle, in order to have convictions. And you will fight with courage and courage of your convictions for what is right.

I once spent in jail having been charged with obstructing the ends of justice. When I objected quite forcefully when police, during our apartheid days, arrested a young man who I knew didn't know from a power of self for not having done anything. It just didn't...it was just not right. He hadn't done anything. Every weekend, the police would run through the townships and pick up people who, in terms of some loitering law, they felt had nothing to do and was just loitering. They picked them up and locked them up over the weekend, and they released them on Monday.

It was just not right. It was not. And instantaneously, I just burst out, screamed at the police. You can imagine. Apartheid police running amok in a police van, and this diminutive woman screaming at them, telling them that they have no right to arrest the man. What has he done? He hasn't done anything. Next thing, I found myself in the van, and I spent a weekend in jail. It's about standing up against what is not right.

And as I said, I studied this, the issues are many in this country. They cannot run out of issues to fight for. There are too many for that.

(Applause)

Gill Marcus
Governor, South African Reserve Bank

Perhaps on this question, just a couple of small points. First of all, the question that every one of us has as a fight is to treat people with respect and dignity. And we all know what hurts us most is when people disregard you, when they look down on you, when they don't treat you with what you feel is an appropriate measure of your personal dignity, isn't it? And yet we all find ways in which when it's happening around us, especially in the workplace, that we try not to be involved.

So a part of the challenge for me is we've got to start where we are, and every one of you in the room--every one of us in this room--has a sphere of influence, or you wouldn't be here. So how do you utilize that sphere of influence to be part of what we stand for? And once you're standing for things, don't forget there are things that aren't part of what you stand for--they're things that you're against. But part of our character... I mean, I think that one of the phenomena of South Africa at the moment, at the drop of a hat, we will march on something. We love to march.

(Laughter)

Okay? We even march on ourselves regularly. And part of it is to take that energy and say, "How do we actually march for something that is actually achievable in what we do?" That same energy. And I don't think we're there yet. As I said, I think that this is contested terrain, but I would urge every one of us to think about our own sphere of influence where we play, where we work, where we pray. We've all got different areas.

And precisely because we come from a society where education is valued, but we have a very undereducated population as a whole, those of us who have education are looked to in a particular way. And it's that value system that comes back. If you ask people today in our society how we perceive teachers, I'd be very interested in get the range of views depending on where you live, where you teach, and so on. Yet historically, a teacher was the person who informed, who played a very particular role in society, was trusted, was respected. So for me, part of this question of what we stand for is not only for ourselves, but don't ignore yourself.

Your question about...one of the things that you're able to do is because you succeed. And let's face it. If you look around this room, a vast majority of people in this room are black women. Black women, you're going to have it ten times harder. Don't ask for it to be fair because it's not going to be. Part of what you need to do is be better...

(Applause)

...so that you cannot have anybody questioning your capacity, your professional, your technical knowledge, your ability to deal with issues that are around you, these things of who you are is absolutely important in that. And the more you know who you are, the more your sphere of influence broadens.

(Applause)

Debora Spar
President, Barnard College

So I want to take things in a slightly different direction here. Aloisea mentioned the incredible fact that Rwanda now has a majority of women running the government. We also spoke about the fact that you were the first woman in a position of power within your own organization, so let me ask either one of you--whoever wants to go first, and the others can chime in--do women lead differently?

Gill mentioned that not all women lead the same. There are progressive women, non-progressive women, good women, less good women. But are there generalizations we might make about how women behave when they are in leadership positions?

Aloisea Inyumba
Senator, Rwanda's Parliament

Maybe. From my experience, looking at the critical mass of women who hold leadership positions today, I'd say that something is happening and changing. If you look at the number of women who are serving in parliament today, a number of them were either serving in community-based organizations before. So when they come to national level--the policy level--they come with a lot of expertise, a lot of experience, and they're familiar with the subject.

When they are talking about issues of poverty, this has been in their livelihood. Their contribution, their participation, and their input will be greatly unleashed. So that is our particular experience that the women who, for the first time, are getting a platform to contribute, are more conscious, are more aware of the issues and the grassroots, and in most cases, they contribute better than the men.

(Applause)

Yvonne Mokgoro
Justice, Constitutional Court
Chairperson, South African Law Reform Commission

Every time as a political observer, I think that I've struck how women lead differently. The next day, I'll meet someone who thoroughly challenges that stereotype, often in horrible ways. But this week, I have noticed with the South African women leaders--and I thought I might share with you-- a strand of decisiveness. South Africa, as some of you may well know, has developed the odd tendency of molycoddling dictators, as we've been doing with the guy across our border for too many years now. But this week, it took our foreign minister, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, to tell Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan dictator, exactly what South Africa's position was when the president had found it quite hard to do so.

And I thought that set us on the correct track.

(Applause)

In addition, we have years of trouble with a convicted fraudster who was let out of jail early. His name is Schabir Shaik, and he's been hitting journalists on golf courses at the weekend heat; another man outside the mosque, he threatened our journalists. He boxes parole conditions. And it finally took a woman minister yesterday, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, to put him back in jail.

(Laughter; applause)

And then just my final example is Thulisile Madonsela, our public protector, who I think deserves our protection and thanks and gratitude...

(Applause)

...for acting like a proper public protector when the two men before her had failed miserably. And she's made a series of excellent findings. The most recent of which is that our police chief really didn't need a 500 million Rand office block, so we're waiting to see what the outcome of that would be. But I do detect a new decisiveness in our women leadership.

(Applause)

Aloisea Inyumba
Senator, Rwanda's Parliament

It's wonderful to hear those positive stories because I really think that women leaders have the potential, as has been demonstrated in Rwanda. It probably because they bore the brunt of that genocide. They got out of it, determined to make a difference. And I think there is also something about Rwanda, which is different from many other African countries. The president of Rwanda may have many other shortcomings, but the one thing is he believes in meritocracy. And so if you are a woman in parliament or in government or you're a man in parliament or in government, you are going to have to use a computer, modern technology, and get yourself upskilled.

And that's why I think Rwanda is going to be an amazing country. Probably some people say this was certain of Africa. It's not impossible. And it is about leadership. It's about leadership that understands that the way to lead is to bring out the best in people. And not to assume, as we in South Africa have assumed, that our children as incapable of doing math, they're incapable of doing science, they're incapable of doing...of reading, and I'm told we might just do away with grammar altogether in schools.

(Applause)

That's the road to mediocrity. That is destroying the seeds of our future. We have disarticulated what Gill was talking about, which is that education or teachers were seen as the role models in society. We have disarticulated the majority of teachers in this country. They are role models of rapists, drunkards, people who when they are on strike, they hit their federal colleagues who don't want to go on. So it's how we define ourselves, and I think in the same way that you can talk about the wonderful women in Rwanda doing what they're doing, it is sadly true that in an environment of mediocrity, women also gravitate towards mediocrity.

We have great ministers in South Africa and great MPs, but we also have people who arrive to sleep and then leave to go and sleep. And that's because they can. That's because they can. And I think it's very, very important for us, as women and as leaders, never to descend into mediocrity because that's what we've found. Our job is to raise the standards beyond what we've found so that when we leave, we leave a legacy of excellence. And I think if we take advantage of the experience we'll be bringing as outsiders into the leadership position, the experience we bring of multi-tasking to the job of leadership, we can really be fantastic leaders.

(Applause)

Yvonne Mokgoro
Justice, Constitutional Court
Chairperson, South African Law Reform Commission

And the good thing about women leadership is that women are not afraid to express themselves. Women are not afraid to bring into the decision-making process their own experiences. And they always bring in a perspective that is most of the time lacking around the decision-making table. Now if you bring in a perspective, it must be based on knowledge, on know-how. And in order to make that perspective believable, you have to know, so you have to work. You have to work hard.

At the Constitutional Court, we were 11 judges sitting embanked together in each and every case. All 11 judges sat together, deal with the same case every time when a case comes to court. At an individual level, you had to study the case, the papers, the arguments, and sometimes it would be (inaudible) like this. At an individual level, you had to make up your mind what your views are, and you had to base it on information. It's not enough to have a woman as part of the Constitutional Court. You had work and it was hard work. I have never worked so hard in all my life.

Hard work. 24 hours around the clock. You take work home; you bring work back. When I was an academic, I had mastered the art of preparing my lectures way beyond the day of the lecture, and I made sure that when I go home, I'm not taking my briefcase home. At the Constitutional Court, I took hours and hours of work home. It didn't matter how you managed your time. Time management is very important, but hard work. Sheer hard work. When you sit around that conference table, 11 judges, you had to make your views known. Go around the table like this.

You had to know as much, if not more, because you wanted to bring in a perspective, know what everybody knows, look at it from your side, from your experience. If the perspective is lacking, make sure that you bring it in. A gender perspective. If it is lacking, you bring it in, but you need to know what you're talking about.

(Applause)

Debora Spar
President, Barnard College

I was going to ask a final question before opening it up. I'm not going to ask that question, but I will just say the question I was going to ask, if we had had more time, was: What piece of advice would you all give to, and particularly, the high school girls and boys who are here with us today? And I think if I can sort of pick up on what I'm hearing you all say, there are some fabulous bits of advice there, which are, in fact, very specific. Know your stuff. Know the facts. Know your subject. Develop the expertise. There's no shortcuts out there. If you want to succeed, you have to know your area really well. I love your points, Ferial, about the ability to be determined and disciplined and to speak your mind, which is something--you know, at the

risk of making broad generalizations--that women just seem to be quite good at: speaking their mind presumably, or at least hopefully, backed up by the fact.

It's always better when you speak your mind and you know what you're talking about.

(Laughter)

I think what we're also hearing again and again, which is so simple but so powerful: Work hard. That there's no easy road to the top, and as we just heard, when you do get to the top, there's just more work waiting there for you, and that's critical. And that means you're setting yourself up for a lifetime of hard work, but hopefully work that is rewarding and as fulfilling as I think all of our panelists have expressed their own work to be.

So I'm going to stop talking here. I've promised, because people need to get places, that we'll end the panel precisely at 3:15 so we have time to move to the next panel, but that gives us a good 20 minutes for questions. So please, put your hand up. We'll get a mic to you and cease this opportunity.