

Business Leaders Pay Tribute To Mandela



Millions of us around the world embraced him as our own, and many millions more will be inspired by him for generations to come. Yet perhaps Nelson Mandela's most endearing trait was his humility. His humanity brought people together across traditional divides to build a better world. Now, as we collectively mourn the passing of this giant of history, we reflect on what his legacy can teach us for the future.

Here a number of individuals from across the business community share their perspectives.....

Mandela dedicated his life to fight for the freedom of his people, **Standard Bank** said. "The world has indeed lost one of the greatest leaders of our time," **CEOs Sim Tshabalala and Ben Kruger** said in a statement. "Tata Madiba chose to sacrifice everything to fight for the freedom of his people. He dedicated himself to the upliftment of South Africans and fought throughout his life against intolerance, racism, injustice and inequality.... Throughout his life he was a pillar of strength and source of inspiration to oppressed people all over the world. All of us admired him for his wisdom, vision, humility, intellect, and his integrity."

Telkom chairman Jabu Mabuza said words were inadequate as a means of paying tribute to a man of the stature of Mandela. "The only way for us to pay adequate tribute to Mr Mandela is through our thoughts and our actions. We should reflect on his achievements, attained despite the circumstances of his life. We must remember his values, his sense of dignity and his respect for every human being. And we must all act in a manner that continues the tradition of demonstrating humanity towards others, of reaching out to those who are most in need, and of committing ourselves to be of service to the people."

Telkom CEO Siphon Maseko said the company's employees shared the grief of Mr Mandela's family and the entire country. "We all feel like we have lost our father. But we must constantly remind ourselves of what we have gained from Mr Mandela. We are all here today, living in a free country, because of the unshakeable beliefs of people like him. He was an exceptional leader, one who was willing to die for what he believed in. His name will always be associated with the concept of ethical leadership, applied consistently, regardless of personal sacrifice."

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FirstRand CEO Sizwe Nxasana said: "Nelson Mandela was a unique person, and a role model for every leader in the world, particularly his humility, his grace, his strength and his love for his people. I was very fortunate to meet Madiba on a number of occasions and while I am sad he has left us, his great legacy lives on. What is important now is that we celebrate his life and the impact he had on this great nation. We will miss him, but we will always remember him."

MTN CEO Sifiso Dabengwa said: "Former president Mandela leaves behind a rich legacy of reconciliation, world peace and the triumph of the human spirit over all adversity. He embodied the spirit of human rights and dignity in the way he lived his own life.... Even after 27 years of prison and hardship, only one thing counted for Madiba: creating a democratic, prosperous future for all the people of the new South Africa. This combination of humanity and unique statesmanship made his true greatness manifest for the entire world."

Anglo American CEO Mark Cutifani commented: "Madiba's immeasurable contribution to the country cannot be overstated: he was integral to the ushering in of democracy in South Africa, and led the country with distinction, stature and humility during his presidency. Without his legacy, South Africa would not have become the thriving country that it is today, and South Africa's economy would not have achieved the gains it has in the past 19 years. History will recognise him as a giant among men; as an iconic leader who fought throughout his life not only for equality, but for the basic human rights of all."

Anglo American Director Khanyisile Kweyama

Khanyisile Kweyama, executive director in South Africa for Anglo American, said Mandela would be remembered for his determination to achieve equality for all our citizens, the conviction he displayed throughout his life, and his dedication to uplifting society's most vulnerable.

"As the largest mining company in South Africa, Anglo American will constantly strive to emulate his achievements by committing wholeheartedly to making a real difference in the prosperity and sustainability of our citizens."

"[Mandela's] visionary, inclusive and even-handed leadership were truly the building blocks on which our thriving democracy was built, and the political sacrifices he made during his lifetime continue to benefit everyone in our country."

Cas Coovadia, MD of the Banking Association South Africa, said: "Nelson Mandela was a man of great moral and strategic vision who committed his life to leading the struggle to end apartheid. He was a man of principle and humility whose pursuit of a multiracial, nonsexist and all-inclusive South Africa never wavered through the 27 years of his imprisonment. Nelson Mandela lived to become a free man and to see his vision become a reality. South Africa has lost a father and the rest of the world has lost an icon who worked tirelessly to make this a better world. Madiba instilled the values of nonracism, honesty and selflessness into the democracy he led as the first universally elected president of South Africa."

Transnet CEO Brian Molefe said it was a "devastatingly sorrowful day for South Africans — and indeed for all people around the world", adding: "We have lost a great leader and humanitarian who inspired us and gave hope to millions. Most importantly, we loved him dearly and held him close as one of our own. He was more than an iconic figure, or a poster on a wall. He personified the spirit of forgiveness, love and compassion — rare attributes in any age of our collective histories. Our nation has been blessed with an individual of such rare stature. Let us honour his memory by ensuring that his good deeds live on, embodied in all our actions."

"That is the best we can do. We must continue to celebrate his life."

Business Leadership South Africa said it shared the grief “over the loss of one of the country’s greatest leaders who played a crucial role in unifying our country, leading the transition to democracy and laying the foundations for economic growth”.

South Africa Chamber of Commerce and Industry CEO Neren Rau said Mandela would be remembered “as a political visionary who remained concerned with the everyday issues of his fellow citizens”, adding: “He led the transformation of South Africa into a free and democratic society that has since become the international standard in constitutional development ... South Africa should honour Mandela’s life by reflecting his legacy of nation building and companionship across all walks of life.”

“We shall draw from his visionary and leadership panache, which is undoubtedly the foundation on which the South African mining industry seeks to build on,” said the **Chamber of Mines**.

Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) said it mourned Madiba’s passing. “For us, and indeed for many millions around the world, this is the time of deep reflection and sorrow as we ponder a world and life without him. However, beyond our collective pain we must be inspired to celebrate his life and deeds by emulating his legacy and belief in the oneness of humanity and working for peace and reconciliation.”

Former **CEO** of the **Development Bank of Southern Africa, Prof Ian Goldin**, director of **Oxford University’s Oxford Martin School**, said Mr Mandela stood “in the pantheon of political leaders. He was blessed with an extraordinary ability, intelligence and memory, but it was his character that sets him head and shoulders above other leaders ... His charisma and natural ability meant that everyone — including Queen Elizabeth and Presidents Bill Clinton and Jacques Chirac — felt humbled in his presence”.

Nomura emerging-market economist **Peter Attard Montalto** said he believed that Mandela had left a strong enough country with solid foundations and that South Africans should dismiss the inevitable doomsayers and expect little market reaction.

Philippe Mellier, CEO of De Beers Group, said: “Nelson Mandela’s message of peace in a time of conflict changed South Africa and inspired the world. His life stands as a resolute symbol of hope in the face of oppression, and an unparalleled example of the power of reconciliation to heal a nation. As De Beers mourns the passing of Mandela, we are heartened to know that his message of hope endures. He is a singular figure in human history and, while we will miss him, we know that his spirit lives on and serves as a source of inspiration and strength to us all.”

On behalf of **Deloitte Southern Africa, CEO Lwazi Bam** has expressed his sadness for the professional services industry, for the country, the continent and the international community following the news of the passing of former president and father of the nation Nelson Mandela. “As a firm, we hope to continue to live up to the legacy of Madiba, ensuring we strive to achieve the ideals that he had for our country and society. We know that nothing would make him prouder than for us to live his values each and every day. Nothing would make him prouder than a united South African nation.”

The Financial Services Board said it will continue seeking solutions to realise Mandela’s dream of creating a better life for all in South Africa and the rest of the world. “It is incumbent upon us as an institution to take the baton and continue seeking solutions to realise his dream of creating a better life for all in South Africa and the rest of the world.”

Alan Clark, CEO, SABMiller

We at SABMiller were saddened to hear that former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, has passed away.

Mr Mandela's personal and political commitment and contribution to the social and economic development of South Africa is immeasurable, and his legacy of reconciliation and the promotion of multiparty democracy should be an inspiration to current and future generations.

It is unlikely that SABMiller would have been able to grow into the global enterprise that it is today without the transformative changes which Mr Mandela brought about in South Africa politically, socially and economically.

Muhtar Kent, Chairman and CEO, The Coca-Cola Company

Both personally and on behalf of the more than 700,000 Coca-Cola system associates around the globe, it is with profound sadness that we join the world in mourning President Nelson Mandela's passing.

President Mandela's unshakeable belief in the positive, uplifting potential of humanity has transformed not only one nation, but indeed the entire world.

His commitment to fight for what is right leaves a powerful legacy that will inspire generations to come. In his own words, Nelson Mandela reminds us that "man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished." May we all contribute to advancing his vision.

Tony Elumelu, Chairman of Heirs Holdings

There is much I have learnt from Nelson Mandela's example, not least:

- His passion and commitment to Africa and his country.
- His ability to act as a unifier and healer of wounds. By his own example and by his implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he allowed South Africans, of all colours, bridge the deep, deep chasms that lay between them and learn to be reconciled with the new dawn, in a manner that was bereft of parochialism or partisanship. This was truly extraordinary.
- His clear vision and his resilient approach to realizing it, despite the most difficult of circumstances.

This ability to articulate his vision in such a compelling and consistent way enabled a deeply divided country to begin to come together and taught lessons to the World.

The effect of these actions, transformed a nation, showed the world the power of vision and that a single person can bring about massive change.

We need more leaders like Mandela in Africa, leaders who can help us build this new vision of a continent unshackled and powerful, in spite of its history.

Ann Grant, Vice Chairman, Africa, Standard Chartered Bank

Reflecting on Madiba's life I am reminded that:

Not all politicians are the same!

Not all resistance is futile.

Not everyone is motivated primarily by money.

Seeking out the good in everyone, embracing your enemy, can be so effective, it is a wonder so few people have copied this as a political strategy.

Madiba always stressed the importance of the collective, and of his ANC colleagues; if he was an exceptional person, he was also in a team of exceptional people. He was a fiercely loyal comrade, but also a leader who at crucial moments went against the majority and asserted his leadership, before and after he was President.

He taught us how to be. How to fight, how to behave in court, how to turn life in a horrific prison to a learning experience and preparation for Government. Then how to campaign, to negotiate, how to be a President, when to step down, and how to enjoy life and make a massive contribution, as an "unemployed pensioner".

Michael Lalor, Director of Ernst & Young's Africa Business Centre

As important as Nelson Mandela has been to us South Africans, he is an equally an important symbol of hope and possibility for all Africans and indeed all humanity.

Perhaps his most critical attribute as a leader was his humility - never seeing himself as more important than any other human being, friend or foe, big or small.

His legacy should be a model of African leadership that represents all that is positive about our great continent, and one that should provide a benchmark for leaders and aspiring leaders around the world.

Richard Morgan, International Government Relations Adviser, Anglo American

In terms of Mandela's impact on Anglo American corporate history, two things come to my mind: Clem Sunter's high-road and low-road scenarios for South Africa pre '94 when Mandela allowed him and us to believe that the high-road was possible.

And secondly Mandela's deliberate seeking out of our chief medical officer Brian Brink at some corporate event to support action on HIV/AIDS.

A great mixture of hope and humanity.

Andrew Bone, Director, International Relations at De Beers Group

Nelson Mandela's message of peace in a time of conflict changed South Africa and inspired the world. His life stands as a resolute symbol of hope in the face of oppression, and an unparalleled example of the power of reconciliation to heal a nation.

De Beers was only 30 years old when Mandela was born, in 1918. As our business has expanded around the world during the past century, South Africa has remained not just the country of our founding, but the heart of our company. Which is why we are so grateful for all he did to change the future for all South Africans, and introduce a new South Africa to the world.

As we mourn the passing of Mandela, we are heartened to know that his message of peace and reconciliation endures. He is a singular figure in human history, and while we will miss him, his legacy will endure to inspire us and, most importantly, future generations.

Ida Horner, Ugandan Business Entrepreneur and Founder, Let Them Help Themselves

My first Ugandan passport had a stamp that read all travel to South Africa prohibited. I recall being curious and even confused as to why this was. My confusion was compounded by the fact one of my relatives and several Ugandan physicians of her time, left the country to go and work in South African hospitals.

It would be several years later that I gathered the courage to ask my cousin why this was and she explained the apartheid policy to me in full. Suitably qualified black African physicians were in short supply in South Africa and as whites did not work in black neighbourhoods, she and others had to fill in the gaps.

But that was then, or is it? Mandela himself didn't think that the end of apartheid nor slavery had brought freedom for most in Africa and challenged us to address causes of poverty and free people especially women and children from chains of poverty.

Only last week I received a letter from Eleanor a 15-year-old girl participating in our bike repair initiative for girls in SW Uganda.

In the letter Eleanor, said she was using the money from her work to buy sanitary towels, which means she doesn't have to stay away from school during that time of the month if her parents do not have the money to buy her sanitary towels.

The best way for us to honour and remember Mandela is to step up our efforts in addressing such inequality and create an environment in which girls and women have the tools to deal with day to day challenges and work their way out of poverty.

Graham Baxter, Adviser, Business Fights Poverty

I will always regret not being there at BP's HQ when the great man made a special visit during his 1990 visit to the UK to thank BP for not pulling out during the apartheid years (BP chose to stay and defy segregation employment laws thereby quietly resisting apartheid).

Apparently, as he was leaving the building he smiled and waved graciously to the staff who were crowding the galleries to get a brief glimpse of him – as ever the humble, warm human being the world loved so much.

So if there is one thing I take from Nelson Mandela, it is a shining example of the power of bringing good human values of honesty, humility and forgiveness into the workplace and to be true to those values, rather than leave them at the office reception on the way into work.

I believe this holds true whatever sector of society you choose to work in, be it business, government, civil society or even the media. Mandela was a living example of what another great man wrote "To thine own self be true".

Adrian Ristow, Adviser, Business Fights Poverty

Nelson Mandela made me proud to be a South African and I feel so privileged to have lived out a key portion of my life in the Mandela era.

In my formative years I was not aware of the sacrifice that he had made and even when he was first released from prison I don't think that I fully comprehended the significance of his actions at the time. The then Government did a good job of keeping us sheltered from key information.

I came to fully realise his impact very quickly in the early 1990's. I remember attending a rally not so long after his release and being completely inspired by his grace and his confidence that a miracle was possible to create a unified country in short period of time. And at the same time he was such a normal down-to-earth humble person.

His example definitely inspired my chosen career path and my deep love and belief in my country and my continent. The wisdom that he displayed could only have come from above, as he lived out his massive calling, because it defied logic and yet was readily accepted by the all South Africans. His words and actions will continue to inspire positive change in South Africa and all around the world for the rest of time. Yet his humility would want us not to focus on him but on what he stood for!

JSE

"Nelson Mandela's global statesmanship made him one of the most revered leaders the world has known," said JSE CEO Nicky Newton-King (pictured).

"His attention to all he met, combined with his ability to listen and to understand those on the other side, were just a few of the reasons that so many people in the world today have been influenced by Nelson Mandela, including some who were his former adversaries."

Chairman Humphrey Borkum recalled reaction to Mandela when he visited the JSE trading floor.

“There weren’t many occasions that trading activity would simply halt on the JSE’s old open-outcry floor, but Nelson Mandela’s visits always had this effect.

“I was privileged to meet with Mr Mandela on several occasions, both when the exchange was in downtown Johannesburg and later when it moved to Sandown. In each case he would take the time to greet and share a moment with every person he encountered.”

Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies

Davies said Mandela’s death brought back memories of his 1998 address to the 50th anniversary of the then General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, a predecessor of the current World Trade Organisation.

Mandela stated that no number of rules should be forced on people if there was no justice and he spoke of the need for an outcome in multilateral trade negotiations that would allow the poorest people in the world to benefit from international trade.

“We think those messages remain absolutely relevant even today, as they underpin what we are trying to do here in Bali: to craft outcomes which will take forward the work programme that supports development and the interests of the poorest countries in the world and the poorest people in those countries,” said Davies.

Davies also said South Africans should use Mandela’s death to recommit themselves to the values and practices he stood for.

Shoprite Group CEO Whitey Basson

“The world has lost an iconic statesman and a courageous leader,” said Basson.

“He, with modesty and humanity, devoted his life to changing and shaping our country for the best. Let us continue his long walk and climb every great hill with his devotion and acceptance of the responsibilities freedom brings.

“Although filled with sadness, we are grateful for what he did for us all.”

» Not all companies showed tribute to Nelson Mandela in a statement, as some used their online platforms to pay their respects. The Apple iStore had this famous quote, which Mandela borrowed from Marianne Williamson, blazoned across their website: “There is no passion to be found playing small – in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.”