



Media Release

For Immediate Release

10 February 2020

AFRICA'S FIRST AFRICA-FOCUSED BRAND LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Johannesburg, South Africa – 10 February 2021: Brand Africa founder, Thebe Ikalafeng, today announced the launch of the Africa Brand Leadership Academy (ABLA), the first Africa-focused specialist brand leadership academy aimed at sharpening the minds that build brands that build Africa.

Every year since 2010, *Brand Africa* has researched and ranked the best brands in Africa. The *Brand Africa 100: Africa's Best Brands* research is conducted independently by Geopoll, Kantar and Brand Leadership. The research, conducted in at least 25 countries, which cover all African economic regions and collectively account for over 80% of the continent's GDP and population. It is the most comprehensive and objective metric on brands and is published globally every year by *African Business* around Africa Day, 25 May. Over the past decade, the survey has established that on average, African brands account for only 20% of the brands that Africans admire.

Recognizing the need to remedy this challenge, ABLA aims to sharpen the brand leadership capability of established and the next generation of executives and entrepreneurs in Africa to build meaningful, distinctive, sustainable and competitive brands that will transform Africa's competitiveness and inspire the world.

Through a cross disciplinary curriculum, ABLA blends traditional strategic brand leadership, intellectual property management, go-to-market strategies with content and immersion in African conditions, culture and creativity to inspire authentic and relevant Africa outcomes.

ABLA's flagship programmes are the *Post Graduate Diploma in African Brand Leadership (PGDABL)* focused on the next generation of brand builders who want to accelerate their career with relevant brand leadership skills and deep immersion in the continental context; the *African Brand Leadership Executive Programme (ABLE)* to immerse, inspire and empower executives leading brands in Africa to understand African consumers and marketplaces, and the challenges and opportunities that will grow their brands and businesses, and *Brand Leadership for Entrepreneurs* to enable entrepreneurs to navigate the challenges of transforming their good products



and ideas into great sustainable brands and to strategically and profitably manage their personal, organisational and product brands. These programmes are complemented by a range of short-term *Short Learning Programmes* for individuals who need short-term learning interventions to sharpen their skills, in inter alia, Responsible Branding; Brands, Boards and the Bottom-Line and Leadership Branding and Public Sector Branding.

“For Africa to compete globally and attain sustainable economic independence, it will have to complement its entrepreneurial skills with brand leadership to transform its many commoditized products into world-class brands,” says Ikalafeng. “Throughout history, brands have proven to be a powerful vector of the image, identity and competitiveness of people, products and nations. There are several exemplary brands such as Nigeria’s Dangote, South Africa’s MTN and Kenya’s Mpesa among several African brands challenging non-African brands in Africa and transformed the image of their nations. With the imminent implementation of the *African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)* which is aimed at boosting intra-African trade, it will be an epic tragedy if in the long-term, the majority of goods and services moving across African borders are not made in Africa.”

ABLA has a global African faculty network of respected specialist practitioners, thought leaders and academics and institutional partnerships which collectively bring a rich blend of deep insights on the continent and building brands in Africa.

ABLA leadership and governance is based on sound and best practice principles for organizing and managing a higher education institution with a pan-African focus and reach. Renowned Ethiopian thought leader and business woman, Dr. Eleni Zaude Gabre-Madhin who founded the highly acclaimed Ethiopia Commodity Exchange (ECX) is the founding Chancellor/President, retired Namibian academic, Professor Tjama Tjivikua, the founding principal of the Namibia University of Science and Technology, is the founding Council chairman and ABLA founder, Thebe Ikalafeng, is the founding principal. This team is led by a Council of diverse and respected Africans who are responsible for the good order and overall governance of ABLA.

ABLA is operating out of its headquarters in Johannesburg, South Africa.

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For more information on the ABLA visit www.abla.academy

About the Africa Brand Leadership Academy

The Africa Brand Leadership Academy is the first Africa-focused and specialist brand leadership academy. ABLA aims to sharpen the brand leadership capability of established and the next generation of brand builders and entrepreneurs in Africa to build Africa meaningful, distinctive, sustainable and competitive brands in Africa, that will transform Africa's competitiveness and image and inspire the world.

www.abla.academy

About Brand Africa

Brand Africa is a non-profit initiative to inspire a great Africa through promoting a positive image of the continent, celebrating its diversity and driving its competitiveness. It is a brand-led movement which recognizes that in the 21st century, brands are an asset and a vector of image, reputation and competitiveness of nations.

The *Brand Africa 100: Africa's Best Brands* is a Brand Africa initiative to survey, rank and recognize the best brands in Africa.

Brand Africa is an independent Non-Profit Organisation registered in the Republic of South Africa (NPC 2013/146300/08) and a signatory to the *Independent Code of Governance for Non-Profit Organisations in Africa*. www.brand.africa.