

AfricaSIF.org ESG Masterclass 2012 Cape Town Grows Capacity for Institutional Investment in Sustainability

CAPE TOWN, South Africa: Africa's institutional investors and sustainable investment experts emphasized the opportunities – and the needs – for sustainable investment in Africa, and the huge role retirement funds can play. Lecturers included the largest pension fund in Africa, the most significant investor in private equity in sub-Saharan Africa and leading providers of ESG research and indexes.

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"GEPF was again delighted to have participated in the second AfricaSIF.org ESG Masterclass for 2012. The Masterclass brings together local and international thought leaders in asset management and their approaches to ESG integration across asset classes and markets. GEPF was pleased to share best practice and learn best practice from fellow Masterclass participants, including asset owners, such as pension funds and life companies, trustees, multi-managers, investment managers, advisors and members of academia using facilitated real life case studies as the basis for discussion," said Adrian Bertrand, ESG Manager, GEPF

The AfricaSIF.org ESG Masterclass was introduced in 2011 because of a perceived lack of training in this critical area of investment and finance in Africa. The uptake on the inaugural programme proved that the need is indeed out there. 2012 is the second year that AfricaSIF.org has presented an ESG education programme demonstrating the best in local and global investment trends.

"Moving beyond aspiration to action requires building a more advanced knowledge of ESG factors", said Graham Sinclair, President of AfricaSIF.org. "AfricaSIF.org is pleased to work with partners to scale awareness, increasing technical skills, into action – investing in Africa's sustainable investment."

Invited lecturer faculty included leading thinkers, academics, and representatives of institutional investors representing more than US\$ 200 billion, including Samantha Lacey (CDC), Jon Duncan (OMIGSA), Adrian Bertrand (GEPF), Mark van Wyk (Mergence Investment Managers), Barbara Evans (Bloomberg ESG), Gareth Allison (MSCi), Deon Botha (PIC), Malcolm Gray (Investec), Sunette Mulder (ASISA), Suzette Viviers (U.Stellenbosch), Justin Smith (Woolworths), Jonathan Mort (MortLaw), Jimmy Winfield (UCT), Claire Rentzke (RisCura), Narina Mnatsakanian (MN), Camila Yamahaki (PhD Candidate Middlesex University), Prof Walter Baets (UCT GSB), and Graham Sinclair (SinCo & University of Exeter Business School / HEC Paris).

The ESG Masterclass was designed for AfricaSIF.org by SinCo, the sustainable investment company, using an open source model to deliver a public good: a bigger and better ESG knowledgebase in Africa for more informed investment decisions.

Six seminars covered global ESG updates, investing in Africa, integrating ESG factors, legal & governance context, performance and shareholder engagement & initiatives. The 2012 AfricaSIF.org ESG Masterclass mixed a selection of important academic and research work on responsible investment with experiential learnings from applied theory and case studies.

UCT GSB Director Professor Walter Baets expanded on the unique African context, and a society that is crying out for innovation and creative business solutions to entrenched social and environmental problems.

The lectures ended with a certificate ceremony during the AfricaSIF.org ESG Networking event that evening.

AfricaSIF.org is an independent, pan-African, not-for-profit network, knowledgebase and advocate promoting investment in sustainable development across the continent launched in June 2010. The AfricaSIF.org Project is run by volunteers building a network of institutions and individuals promoting sustainable investment in Africa by investors in public, private and philanthropy sectors across asset classes, countries and stakeholders from our platform @ africasif.org.

Source: Claire Densham Communications

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