

## **SABC International**

### **Point Blank**

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**Presenter:** Today's discussion: What will SA look like in 2020? Well, the Dinokeng Scenarios is a team, a group of 35 South Africans from various sectors of society, business and across the board. They have come up with three scenarios for South Africa's future. The aim is to stimulate debate and encourage communities to participate in governance. Joining us now in the studio are Lebohang Pheko. She's a Trade and Policy analyst and Rick Menell. He's one of the conveners of the Dinokeng Scenarios. Thank you both for joining us here on Point Blank this afternoon. It's a very interesting concept at this time of a new administration taking place in South Africa – the need for economic and policy development and development of the country and society as a whole. Rick lets start with you. The development of the Dinokeng Scenarios, just give us a bit of insight on why the team came together.

**Rick Menell:** Around the middle of last year there was a strong sense among, anybody I talked to certainly, that we were at a point of transition – political transition and economic transition and this was before the economic crisis we faced later in 2008. We've had fifteen years of a new democratic dispensation. We've made some great advances. We've also got some very large problems and there was a sense among many people that there wasn't sufficient debate about the track record and the future opportunities that we had. So round about the middle of last year the Old Mutual, to their credit, decided it would be very food to support a dialogue or discussion without imposing any editorial or organisational constraints of their own. They simply put up the resources to allow five of us to put this team together and through a pretty thorough process over five months of debating where we've come from and where we might go, what sort of choices we face right now.

**Presenter:** I'll come back to you about the gathering, the group in itself but Lebohang, the need of such a body, such a team at this point in time in South Africa's history, especially after 1994 just give us your insight on the importance of something like this.

**Lebohang Pheko:** Its critical. It could be potentially very influential. I think that it offers the incoming administration the opportunity to examine three different roadmaps – at least three

different roadmaps. It also offers the opportunity to perhaps hinge policy on a kind of a public sentiment, a well thought-out public sentiment and government is so busy governing, which is important work in itself, the opportunity, the space, the resources and the political imperatives that contest, don't often allow for this sort of reflective process and I think it could be potentially a very interesting interaction and synergy, although of course some of the scenarios are incredibly bleak. I think some of the indicators and some of the frameworks perhaps may have been framed differently but as an instrument, as a model, as a potential roadmap, it may offer interesting opportunities for engagement.

**Presenter:** Interesting insight. When we talk about the development of the 35 members of this, how were these 35 members decided upon to actually participate in the development of the report that you also have there – the three futures?

**Rick Menell:** Well the key was coalescing a convener group. That was led by Mamphele Ramphela who was recognised as a strong [Unclear] for us, with the capacity to lead a team and the team comprised a range of people – Njongonkulu Ndungane, Graca Michel joined us, myself and Vincent Maphai, who at the time was working with BHP Billiton – he's subsequently stayed in the corporate sector and gone to breweries and Bob Head who came out of the Old Mutual, who is actually an Englishman but is a tremendous energy source. Our brief was to create as diverse and representative a group of South Africans as we could. We managed to get hold of a chap called Adam Kahane who actually moderated scenario planning processes in the nineties that became very important and influential.

**Presenter:** Just unpack there for us – previously, in the 1994 dispensation as well, there was a similar group that organised themselves. Tell us a bit about that.

**Rick Menell:** Well there were a couple. There was an Old Mutual Nedcor Scenario Process and there was also something called the Mont Fleur Scenarios that I think had some private sector support but again was an independent group of people which included Trevor Manuel and Tito Mboweni – a number of other, people from the unions...

**Presenter:** So you think they influenced policy during that period of time?

**Rick Menell:** Certainly. I think scenarios are very interesting because they're not predictions of the future. They're really construction of useful challenging possible futures that highlight the choices you've got today.

**Presenter:** Lebohang, I want to come to you. We're looking at policy, we're looking at economic development. What about people development, social development? How do you see something like this influencing methodologies, impacting on society? Do you think this will be a tool vehicle that society would look at, relate to?

**Lebohang Pheko:** You know, this Dinokeng Process, it offers an historical context which is often absent I think in our popular discourse. We often forget that the whole notion of structural deficits from which South Africa post-1994 had to springboard into this great nation. We forget that resource allocation was racially defined and racially constructed as well. And we also forget as well, its a whole lot more people that need to be taken care of, to put it very simply. And I think that one of the most useful things about the Dinokeng Scenarios is this historical perspective which it offers but I also think that it is centred in a – it is slightly corporatist, I would venture – I think some of the discourse on race and the aspirations of people across race lines...

**Presenter:** Would you think that would be because of the make-up of the body itself that's developed this?

**Lebohang Pheko:** Yes. Is possible.

**Presenter:** Rick, I want to come to you on that issue. Incorporation of society at large, I mean you have to get people involved in changing the mindsets of disparities in the country, looking at how society can develop itself, how are you going to incorporate the ordinary citizen into these scenarios, actually the development which should come out of these scenarios?

**Rick Menell:** Well that was central to our thinking from the beginning. In fact it was getting to know your process at first but every single member of that team brought their individual concerns to the table and they all revolved around the tens of millions of people who were excluded in South Africa and this bleak future we have unless we find a way to incorporate them in the prosperity and the opportunity of the country and the team itself as I said, was

very diverse. We had union leaders, we had leaders from political parties, we had young people and old people, people involved in NGOs and directly working with the poor and as we developed our thoughts, our diagnosis of the country as we are and some scenarios we thought would be useful to present, we took that out and discussed that with people across the board from the Head of the Landless peoples' Association who I met with at the Civic Theatre to the Synod of Bishops to the leadership in the ANC, to labour leadership and we had an integrated process both inside and outside of the group that gave us some confidence that we were coming up with what was a very representative voice – not the voice of business or the voice of the ANC. It was a very representative voice.

**Presenter:** Lebohang, Rick mentions a bleak future for South Africa. In your analogy do you see also a similar future for South Africa?

**Lebohang Pheko:** It depends which of the scenarios said things that the government is most likely to follow. I think as Rick said earlier, the potential for any of the above to be given birth and expression is already before us. We've seen that there are already a huge amount of civil society protests, community uprisings, community insurrections. There's also a huge climate which is very much Foreign Director Investment-driven – very much trying to create a climate for investment, issues around wage flexibility which in the Dinokeng Scenarios, the report does allude to issues around different kinds of labour flexibilities which of course in many respects, could potentially rescind hard fought-for labour rights, Labour Relations Act, Employment Equity etc, so one of the other things also around the Dinokeng Scenarios though, is also that I think that its speaks to issues such as the education sector, it speaks to issues around health. It also has quite a large discourse on crime as well. I think the problematic for me is that its crime in a particular context, its crime in the context of making this a safe environment for investment. It would be more interesting for many people to engage in these issues from the perspective of where we are now, particularly most people, most African people, where they are now, how they came to be here and how to migrate to different social, educational, economic circumstances. That would be an incredibly dynamic scenario.

**Presenter:** So your viewpoint, you definitely see the need for such a body at this point in time. Rick, we're going to go back to that point where I mentioned about community involvement, not only in what has been developed as a report, but from this point forward

now. There is a report, it's a concise 80-page document that's there. I'd like to ask you first, who is this document supposed to be presented to? Is it for NGOs, for government?

**Rick Menell:** Well, everybody has the answer. It's interesting. You know, we didn't develop the economic dimensions of our scenarios sufficiently and there's a lot of work going on now to try to do that. The intention is to create a space for open debate at all levels of society, essentially to activate the citizenry. That means talking through whatever means we can get to ordinary people, to unemployed people, to poor people, to people on the workshop floor, the factories, to leadership, to political players, to academics, to young people particularly in schools, through youth groups. We've got a very large network through those 35 people, the people that we talk to. WE have many champions and there's no ownership of Dinokeng. Dinokeng is simply an initiative to debate the roles of the citizenry, to hold our government to account and to activate people and we plan to do that very aggressively over the next few months and see what we get back, put it together again and present it as we go along to government, all our leaders. What is most interesting as I said, is that we didn't end up with the economic discrimination between our scenarios. It ended up being political discrimination and we reflected on that and it was quite appropriate because the real challenges that we saw were ones of redistribution equity and identity. You know, race and identity in South Africa are unresolved challenges – are we one nation and until we can clarify those fraught issues among us it's difficult to see where we're going to go together.

**Presenter:** There's no question about it. Five key sectors, five key areas that the Jacob Zuma administration is saying that his government over the next five years are going to focus on specific areas. The scenarios – key areas that you've also identified as needing immediate intervention or from the previous government as well, over an eight-year period – the President Thabo Mbeki government. What does this research come up with? Is it in line with the Jacob Zuma administration and his vision for five key areas?

**Rick Menell:** It's very much in line but cause and effect are analysed perhaps a little bit differently. Our view was that there are essentially four key parameters that you've got to work on out of which come all else. The first one is leadership governance and accountability. In order to bring people together, to pool our resources which are limited, facing our huge challenges which are really daunting, we need leadership at all levels of society, particularly at the political level. We need an accountable civil service which alas, seems to have degraded over the last few years in our view. That's one area. Another area is

education. You know, it's a cynic in terms of a successful democracy, that you've got an informed citizenry, the skills that are suitable for economic activity. So education is critical and our educational system is in a powerless state at all levels and that's a priority. That too is a priority of the ANC government. The third one of course is unemployment – 50% of people under 30 are unemployed. It's a critical problem that is going to require selfless collaboration to resolve. And the fourth one which hasn't been made explicit as a cause and effect is race and identity. Out of that comes health delivery, and all ranges and spectrum of economic activities so the consequences and the relationships and so forth and so on. But those four we took as the pillars of our thinking.

**Presenter:** I want us to now look at the stark realities that the ordinary citizen of South Africa faces every day, which is lack of education, poverty. Which one of the three scenarios do you think would outline to alleviate those stark realities that the ordinary South African faces?

**Rick Menell:** The second scenario is a state-led developmental state although we didn't use that phraseology where the state basically says we have the responsibility to take the lead and we will, not just in governance and directing tax resources but in economic activity and that has potential for short term gains, you know greater social grants, greater job creation without perhaps some of the restrictions of the private sector and so forth. But it will inevitably require a very efficient public service which we don't believe we have in sufficient measure to support that level of state leadership in all sectors and at the end of the day it has to be managed very carefully or you over-borrow, overspend and it's a crash and burn scenario later on.

**Presenter:** Lebohang, is it a matter of going back to government to create these platforms to incorporate the masses? We look at economic development – what would be your idea of a perfect scenario if we had to look at the scenario to encompass everyone into economic development in South Africa?

**Lebohang Pheko:** You know, it really depends on what we feel, how we define our citizenship and how we define our economic citizenship. That's very critical. It depends on our point of departure. It also depends on whether or not we think that it is sufficient to merely stimulate the economy and hope that the benefits of this will trickle down and that somehow the redistribution will happen spontaneously. We're struggling with different sorts of growth. We have got jobless growth, we have rootless growth which is growth which hasn't

got the redistributing mechanisms and then we also have what we call voiceless growth. And that I think is encompassed in the Walk Apart Scenario because that's the kind of growth where we have a growth in economic activity, a growth in import and export activity but also a distance between citizens, workers and the state where the democratic space becomes increasingly [Unclear] and where the distance between popular aspirations and the state-led interventions and directions are increasingly less and less in tandem and there's a strong possibility that that's where we could go. Now this also depends on whether Mr Zuma's goodwill – he's very intricately reconfigured cabinet...

**Presenter:** May I actually ask you both about that and the [Unclear] of that cabinet as it stands. Doesn't that give a clear indication of the future of South Africa for the next five years?

**Lebohang Pheko:** It all depends on how its run. You know it all depends on whether its going to have a rural development ministry in its own right, linked with land and agriculture which of course are quite rational but it really does depend on how well it is run, whether its merely a public relations exercise etc and I think as Rick has rightly said, the extent to which we are able to de-link bureaucratic processes, technocratic processes for party political cronies is key in these next five years.

**Presenter:** Rick, the scenarios as they have been set up in the report that has been developed, have you worked with government – fine this government has only been instated for over a week now – but the actual participation of the group of 35 that are heading this up – how do you plan on linking this with government intervention and engaging government to become aware of this report?

**Rick Menell:** There are two parts to that. On our team was Maite Mashabane who is now the Foreign Minister for South Africa, but not at the time. I think she was the MEC for Limpopo at the beginning. Mr Motsoaledi who is now the Minister of Health and they were active and engaged participants. So was Frans Baleni who is the Secretary General of NUM and very close to Gwede Mantashe his predecessor. With Frans's help we briefed the leadership of the ANC at an early stage, took their thoughts in, were urged to make our downside scenarios as stark as possible because it was felt it would be very a helpful goad to attach them and certainly the new team since Polokwane feel perhaps less defenceless about the past because it's a new future that they're building. I don't think from the composition of the

cabinet you can read the future. The key perception we came up with is that the challenges we face are too great for one sector alone to deal with and that sector could be the public sector, the private sector, labour, civil society – not one defined grouping in the country can deal with the challenges of education, economic development, rural development and the other major challenges. But it may take crises to force or motivate the sorts of compacts and negotiations that will be necessary to pool resources in the most efficient way. And the recognition of crises is a leadership matter.

**Presenter:** Is that key point number one – leadership? Is that key point number one?

**Rick Menell:** I think we have a situation in South Africa today where President Zuma and his leaders have every opportunity to confront the citizenry as a whole with a crisis that threatens our long term survival as well, as an attractive country to live in and they can use that and people will rally, but we need a proactive citizenry that is conditioned with a good sense of its rights and responsibilities.

**Presenter:** The pillars of change that need to be instated, in your opinion or through this report what would you say are those pillars of change that not only government but society also needs to recognise and uphold? These are the areas that are going to be most critical for us as NGOs, as civil society, as government to uphold these pillars. What would be those strong points?

**Rick Menell:** Well, my answer is a difficult one because its in the soft area of values and that came out right at the beginning of our Dinokeng discussion and it was a theme throughout and perhaps the most fundamental value that we must build on in the country is the value of service – that we are one, that we share our country, that we have more in common than we have that separates us and we have to invest in the future by serving today. That's something from top to bottom that we need to work on. We need to teach our children about service and responsibility. We need to teach them first to read and write and build on that.

**Presenter:** Lebohang, would you agree?

**Lebohang Pheko:** To an extent, but I think that the whole definition of citizenship can't be de-linked with race because we've experienced citizenship very differently and now collective memory is very different. Its painful, its fraught and its relatively recent as well and its in all of

our DNA whether we were conscious and alive citizens of being before 1994. It resides with us and I think we need to resolve that truthfully. We also need to think, bearing in mind that notions around restitution, notions around natural justice, notions around redistribution...

**Presenter:** But what would that be through – through Imbizos, through community? What would be the mechanisms? What would be the methodology in order to get that off the ground?

**Lebohang Pheko:** Its very difficult. I think processes such as this might begin to be catalytic but I think we need a sustained and interactive constant conversation, one where we ensure that we know all the stakeholder communities, churches, the landless, rural people, women's groups etc business as well, the labour sector, has got an adequate voice. Its about rebuilding a critical mass of a kind of citizenship that really belongs to all of us which we can all relate to and ensure that the state, you know reminding the state that the state is accountable to us and they're there because we've placed them there. The government is there because we placed them there and I think that there's a need to really claim back those spaces in a much more meaningful way than I think perhaps institutions such as NEDLAC have been able to do in the last few years.

**Presenter:** Rick, what is the role that the media should play in this particular scenario?

**Rick Menell:** I think the media is incredibly important. If it is symbolic actions that will start to change people's behaviour, self-image and level of engagement then the media is the most potent – television, print, radio – are the most potent ways of doing that.

**Presenter:** But now through the scenarios themselves, are you engaging media? What forms are you using in order to convey this message?

**Rick Menell:** Well, as part of our briefings we talked to management of all the key media, and received only enthusiastic responses about the usefulness of this message. You know we have a very good chopping block and what Lebohang has just said reflects the texture of the conversation at Dinokeng and although you have a lot of articulate able people, there were some not very powerful people in a way because they were younger people and they hadn't built their careers and every one of the people round that table I felt at all times there were a thousand people standing behind them who could have spoken with the same voice.

So nobody owned it. The conclusions were not exceptionally surprising. They were the same as any group of South Africans would come up with. But I think what Lebohang said was critical to our discussion. We have very different perceptions of our country that there is going to have to be sacrifice in South Africa if we're going to build a sustainable future and its going to have to be from the 'haves' and that's a difficult message to get across.

**Presenter:** Well, definitely difficult but the road is still well travelled. We have a long way to go in South Africa and with this sort of intervention this seems to be a tool to assist our growth and development. Rick Menell who is one of the conveners of the Dinokeng Scenarios and Lebohang Pheko: Trade and Policy Analyst, we thank you both for your time here on Point Blank.