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## THE NEXT GENERATION OF AFRICAN BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONALS

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The academia is a veritable source of transformative knowledge and ideas, and the built environment sector is a major determinant the of quality of life. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063 provide a minimum benchmark of the standards to attain in the not so distant future. These include interventions in infrastructure, technology, housing, sustainable and resilient environment, economic growth and standards of living, all of which are linked directly or indirectly to the built environment. In this regard, built environment academics on the African continent should be playing a leading role in ground breaking research that could transform the poor indices that characterize many African nations. However, evidence from the output of the ivory towers indicate that there is yet a long way to go in terms of research, despite some encouraging output in terms of education. It is important to identify research drivers and barriers, while also charting a course to ensure that African academics not only find their place of pride in this world, but most importantly, actively engage in finding solutions to the local problems that plague our built environment. This keynote addresses some of the key areas of intervention that should define our academics and their institutions, and also relevant research areas that should dominate our output in order to build a better sustainable, resilient and innovative Africa. It is therefore recommended that at the meso-level, our Universities need to emphasise more on research alongside teaching. At the micro level, researchers need to improve their digital footprint and literacy skills and be more creative with their approaches to research methodologies adopted in finding solutions to local problems. Three main areas of research intervention would be data (including big data), project financing and innovation.

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