



By: Abimbola Olukunle – South Africa

The 24th Annual FIDIC-GAMA Conference was indeed a power packed event that spanned over four days, with it beginning with the Young Professionals (YP) congress on the 7th of May and ending with the workshop on the 10th of May.

Each day offered an array of inspiring talks, engaging conversations and ending off with the evening events (which received an A++ from everyone present and offered a number of cultural and talent display by the Chris Hani Arts and Culture High School). The overall event was fantastically organised and visually pleasing with a welcoming ambience. The exhibition stands represented their respective companies well with each stand offering an array of information, products and service offerings.

Kicking off with the YP congress Yolana Pillay opened the day with the welcome note and introduction. Francis Kofi Yankey, the outgoing chairperson of GAMA YPFSC shared with the group a snapshot of 'where we are now' in context of "**looking back on the GAMA Young Professionals Forum (YPF)**" and the areas where improvements were needed.



There were also motivational talks by Danai Magugumela and Malani Padayachee-Saman on '**Leadership beyond Engineering**'. This was particularly touching to me because although the engineering discipline is mostly male dominated, here were woman making positive waves within the industry with clear understanding on how to run successive engineering businesses. The entire FIDIC – GAMA leadership was present to grace the day with their plans and vision for the engineering sector within 'Afrika' as a whole. The day ended with Lynne Pretorius wrapping up the day and giving the forum insight on the way forward of the engineering industry.

Day two was graced with several key note speakers from Councillor Patricia de Lille who gave a better understanding on what the plans are for Cape Town as a city to Chris Baloyi who was on the panel discussion on "**Infrastructure funding and investments**" to Richard Kiplagat who presented on "**Managing above-ground risk for infrastructure projects**". This day dealt with the daily struggles of project funding, engineering contracts and partnership and the relationship between infrastructure and the socio-economics impacts inherent in projects.



On Day three, Jeshika Ramchund opened the day with her mind probing topic **"Consulting Engineering in the face of disruptive technology"**. This talk left me with the message that says, adapt or get left behind! Which is the case for our ever-evolving engineering industry. The day spanned with discussion raging from the engineering service and how this is sustained to skills development within our sector and how this is crucial sustaining the engineering industry as a whole within Africa.

The last day of the conference was geared at collaborative thinking within the delegates with workshops on Water and Energy which was facilitated by Tumisang Maphumulo and ending off with how we connect African communities with infrastructures that promotes sustainable development and growth within the continent.



This conference has been a platform for me to meet and share ideas of making Africa a formidable continent with my fellow engineering counterparts within Africa. It has been an overall pleasing conference and I am already making plans to be in Mali for the 2018 FIDIC – GAMA Conference.