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Q *What is your outlook for M&A activity over the next 2-3 years?*

A My outlook for M&A, particularly in South Africa, is positive, despite political shifts, infrastructure challenges, logistic and port problems, and power outages.

The rebound will be driven by increasing deal appetite and domestic consolidation in certain sectors. For global companies, valuations in South Africa are still attractive, and this will continue to drive deal flow.

Many PE firms have struggled to generate returns over the last few years, which has had an impact on their capital raising, but there is still a healthy level of dry powder in many PE funds which needs to be deployed. More PE deals can be expected, as capital must be returned to investors.

Now more than ever before, corporates are required to focus on their core businesses and strategically optimise their balance sheets. This will lead to divestitures/spin offs and/or acquisitions.

The President's ongoing focus on renewable energy and infrastructure development should present attractive M&A opportunities for investors.

In terms of global trends, the value of M&A deals has increased in the first half of 2024, and this trend is expected to continue.

Q *When things go wrong, what advice would you give about moving on?*

A Be honest with yourself, take an objective look at the issue, be kind to yourself, and don't give up. Seek support from trusted friends and work colleagues to gain new perspectives. Focus on the lessons gained from the experience, as this fosters growth. Also, don't dwell on the problem; rather look at the opportunities it presents, and move on.

Q *If you could have dinner with any woman in history, who would it be and what would be the first thing you asked her?*

A The women that I would invite to dinner are Doctor Naledi Pandor and the Princess of Wales.

Doctor Naledi is the embodiment of the principles and values I so treasure: fearless advocacy for the downtrodden, principle-based leadership, her integrity, intelligence, and determination for the truth.

The first thing I would ask Doctor Naledi is, "How do you remain fearless when the odds are against you, and when faced with arduous and challenging tasks?"

Being part of the British monarchy, holding such an influential social role, and as a mother to three young children, my questions to the Princess of Wales would be, "How are you coping with the news of your diagnosis? What's been going through your mind, and what are you feeling?"

FUN FACTS

Favourite colour: Green, as this is a symbol of growth and new beginnings, and evokes feelings of calmness and serenity. It also falls in the middle of the colour spectrum, which symbolises moderation and equilibrium. I would like to believe that these characteristics resonate with my personality.

Unusual hobbies: Baking is a hobby that allows me to express my creativity by experimenting with different flavours and textures. Patience and precision is also required. Other hobbies include karate and kick boxing. Karate has shown me that I can always push past my perceived physical boundaries, and that no physical challenge is insurmountable with adequate preparation.

Item on your bucket list: My bucket list reflects my desire for adventure, self-discovery and personal growth. At the top of my list is hiking the Inca trail to Machu Picchu, and exploring the ancient city of Petra in Jordan. Next on my bucket list is visiting war torn geographies like Palestine, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, to assist the youth and the elderly to rebuild their lives.

Your worst trait: Procrastination and delaying tasks that I find boring, confusing and intimidating. However, I seem to generate the most creative ideas whilst under pressure.

What is your favourite quote? "Four traits lift a person to the highest ranks, even if their works and knowledge are little: forbearance, humility, generosity and good character." - Imam Ghazali. 🤝