

Preface

Issues relating to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and responsible behaviour have taken hold of every corner of our world including the continent of Africa. All those actions of irresponsibility—dumping and polluting, human rights abuses, bribery and corruption, reckless and irresponsible governance practices, wasteful use of resources, money laundering and terrorism and several others we are all too familiar with are what CSR discourages globally. We argue that for many reasons, no continent in our world either now or in the future needs to be more socially responsible than Africa. That is certainly the contention of the only African amongst these three editors. But things are far from being that way when one looks at those corporate activities stemming from what scholars have titled or abbreviated as ESG—Environment, Social, and Governance issues—in the continent. Corporate and individuals’ attitudes towards sustainability in Africa still leave a lot to be desired, but things are changing rapidly for the better in this regard; chapters in this very first book on Corporate Social Responsibility in Africa will testify to that. At least this is the view echoed by the 12 chapters from three corners of the continent which took part in this African book.

Africa due to its position in the world’s barometer of development still in many respects has a lot to address when compared with the other continents of the world. This in our view should actually be perceived by everyone in the continent as an advantage rather than a disadvantage. The opportunity to excel, to do things differently and perhaps to do them better is there to grab. After all, the continent will not be starting from scratch, not least as the chapters in this book indicate; many parts of Africa today have thriving economic, industrial and agricultural sectors. Moreover, businesses have opportunities to explore, adopt, adapt and innovate on what has gone within communities, regions and other nations.

Scholars from eleven African countries in these 12 chapters of the book have demonstrated clearly that corporate social responsibility is forming and going through its own different stages of metamorphosis in the continent. To go far south to a country like South Africa, one will discover that CSR has gone far beyond the *caterpillar* stage of development in the life of our imaginary *butterfly*.

Companies wanting to be listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange must comply with a CSR-based code of conduct. Moving further north of South Africa, the stages of development will be markedly different in these other countries, but still, things are changing for the better in all these countries with regard to corporate social responsibility. That can only be better for this generation and future generations of inhabitants of the continent.

It is hoped that chapters in this very first book of its kind on CSR in Africa contribute to knowledge and add to the available literature in the field of CSR which scholars, practitioners, international organisations, NGOs and other stakeholders interested in finding out how CSR is forming in Africa will, in our view, find of value.

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Stephen Vertigans
Samuel O. Idowu
René Schmidpeter

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Vertigans, S.; Idowu, S.O.; Schmidpeter, R. (Eds.)

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