

GREEN BUILDING CONVENTION



Dorah Modise, CEO of the Green Building Council of South Africa.



Above: Nkosinathi Manzana, chairperson of the Green Building Council of South Africa.

Left: Minister of Public Works, Patricia De Lille, announces a major green makeover for the country's law courts.

respect, her department has earmarked and approved government funding to bring the goals forward. Furthermore, the department will be starting with a green building refurbishment programme within the Department of Justice, where priority will be given to getting South Africa's courts of law functioning in an optimal way.

The opening speakers for the GBCSA were GBCSA chairperson, Nkosinathi Manzana and CEO, Dorah Modise, who in separate speeches mapped the green building scenario in South Africa, one in which numerous significant gains have been made since the inception of the Convention some 12 years back.

The leading keynote speaker was Jason McLennan, a renowned green building architect, thought leader and consultant on the global stage. He is, among other things, the recipient of the Buckminster Fuller Prize, the top global award for socially responsible design. He spoke in his capacity as the founder of the Living Building Challenge, the most demanding and progressive green building programme in existence. Having previously spoken in Cape Town, this was his second GBCSA Convention appearance, courtesy of a very forward-thinking local carpet manufacturer, Belgotex.

McLennan promised his audience would experience a roller-coaster ride during his presentation, which they did. There were highs and there were lows. He mapped a realistic scenario of where every major environmental battle on the planet is currently being lost, but did not leave the audience without hope. In his view, mounting public consciousness on the issue is reaching a peak and 2020 should see a significant number of changes rolling out in both government policy, implementation and consumer response. For example, 2020 is seen to be the 'year of the electric car', in which its adoption in cities will become a serious reality.

Over the past 10 years, localised projects, including those of his own practice, provided a roadmap on the way forward for society. This is indeed a space to watch in the short term.

South African corporates are also rising to the challenge. For example, in South Africa, leading bank, Nedbank, has adopted a surprising corporate positioning for a financial institution: 'Companies need a purpose beyond profit,' said Nedbank's Keri Savin, who heads up sustainability strategy and reporting for the banking group. **T**