Dr Gachao Kiuna

PROMISING POWER MAN

The CEO of TransCentury, a leading firm involved in investment opportunities related to infrastructure across 14 African countries, was the guest speaker at the ABAX Forum held last week on the theme 'Investing in Africa'.

He is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of TransCentury, a leading infrastructure company listed on the Nairobi Stock Exchange. Dr Gachao Kiuna, 36, is considered by Forbes to be among the ten Youngest Power Men in Africa. Holder of a PhD in Biotechnology from the Institute of Biotechnology in Cambridge, "I also hold a First Class Honours BSc degree from Imperial College, London in Biochemistry," he adds. After his studies, back to his continent, Africa, he joined the sub-Saharan Africa Office of McKinsey & Company. He was appointed as a Management Consultant.

Immediately, the young Kenyan shows that he has the ability to develop great ideas, to design good projects and to guide people. Hence, he soon becomes the Engagement Manager of one of the biggest projects of McKinsey in Africa, the Vision 2030 – Kenya’s National Economic Blueprint. “In collaboration with the Kenyan government, private sector, local and international agencies and many other key stakeholders in the country, we developed the Vision 2030 Strategy.” His obsession for perfection encouraged him to work with experts across the globe to understand the best examples relating to all parts of the Vision 2030 Strategy. He still remembers how, as the Engagement Manager, he led the day-to-day work of the broader Vision 2030 team, which consisted of McKinsey consultants, ministerial team members and NESG team members. He was also one of the two McKinsey experts who presented the Economic Pillar of the Vision 2030 Strategy to Kenya’s President, Vice President, Head of Civil Services and all government ministers, assistant ministers and Permanent Secretaries.

In April 2009, Dr Gachao Kiuna joins TransCentury. “The main reason why I decided to join that firm in particular is that I believe in the strong role Domestic Direct Investment (DDI) can play in economic transformation”, he says. Dr Gachao Kiuna is at present the CEO of TransCentury and is responsible for managing the company’s infrastructure business across 14 African countries. “TransCentury is a leading company involved in investment opportunities related to infrastructure and infrastructure services across 14 countries in East, Central and South Africa,” he explains. And the ambition of TransCentury is to expand across sub-Saharan Africa. “Currently, the main focus has been on power and transport infrastructure which are the main pillars of infrastructure spend and growth across the continent.”

According to Dr Gachao Kiuna, the vision of this listed company is to become the largest infrastructure player in Africa. However, the CEO explores that infrastructure development has not kept pace with the economic transformation of the continent and that threatens to be a major hurdle on the way to continued economic growth. He mentions specially domestic energy and transportation, “where the absence of major disruptive technologies remains a serious bottleneck.” Fortunately, he adds, “in areas such as telecoms where disruptive technologies have been developed, the gap has closed much quicker”. In consequence, the challenge is to replicate what has happened in the telecoms sector in other sectors such as power and transportation. As one of the largest domestic investors in Kenya, TransCentury is helping to lead the transformation of investment in critical sectors by domestic capital providers.

What about investments in Mauritius and other Indian

He likes
- Reading
- Learning
- Socialising

He dislikes
- Wasting time
- Selfish people
- Lack of teamwork

"WE WOULD INVEST IN POWER OR TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IN MAURITIUS IF THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITY EXISTED."