

# The power of disruption - lest we forget!



## CEO's Note

Disruption is brought about by visionary individuals exposing the flaws of a prevailing system or technology. It results in innovative solutions to solve social, political or technological problems of the day. The companies born during the era of technological revolution came about intending to solve communication problems and identified deficiencies. If you consider how much is invested in communication technology, you will agree that communication technology is the pillar of the economy. Technology is the fuel that drives other industries and presents solutions that increase efficiencies.

The South African democratic state could not have been attained had it not been for the political and social disruption driven by a democratic revolution. Disruption is necessary for change to happen, and the disruption of the 1970s and 1980s produced the change in government to what we have in South Africa today. And we have the youth of 1976 and the 1980s to thank.

The youth of every era have their own challenges to solve, and every revolution is generally led by young people. This cuts across every sphere of society, whether it be the faith, political and social, or technological revolution.

The much-talked-about fourth industrial revolution (4IR) has created a multitrillion-dollar industry. The many unicorns born were a result of the youth revolting against the technological status quo. Think of Facebook, which was born from the idea of students sitting in their university residences, trying to find a better solution to the problem of information-sharing. Think of Microsoft, which was born from the experimentation and curiosity of youth asking themselves the "what if?" questions as they sat in their garage writing software. Then they asked themselves, "so what?" and "then what?" next. This resulted in a personal computer (PC) revolution driven by the microprocessor, which drove the demand for PCs. The revolution was aimed at the demand and the need to place a computer on the desk of every home. Think of the mobile communication revolution that led to the ubiquity of communications devices like smartphones – another result of technology disruption.

As we think of many other revolutions driven by young people in their 20s and 30s, we must remember that there is no doubt that the youth are the drivers of revolutions. This applies to all spheres of life. Every era has its challenges that require unique disruptive forces and ideas that will bring about change. As we deal with our challenges of economic stagnation that has led to extreme unemployment, especially among the youth, we need to throw away the boxed thinking and be radical about how we can make a difference in the economic emancipation of our youth.

The brave stance taken by the cohort of 1976 should inspire our youth of today to take a deliberate stance to disrupt our economy through various ideas that will emancipate them from unemployment. Those of us who lived through the 1976 revolution should promote and give platforms to the youth to innovate and develop a new revolution of technologies that will bring a better life to all.

We should think back to those years and ask ourselves what the cost of our freedom was and how we are maximising our hard-won freedom.

I invite every youth in our organisation to step forward and contact my office to share with me any disruptive ideas we can support to deal with youth unemployment in our country.

In conclusion, we need to be less satisfied with the status quo of our economy and dream of a future where there is access to economic opportunities for all. We need to think of how we can finance innovation and incubate start-ups in this country. We must ask ourselves how we can disrupt the status quo and usher in a new technological and economic revolution. Let us celebrate the contributions of our youth and continue to support them.