

## **WINNING SPEECH**

### **COCONUT'S MANIFESTO...**

By Bonolo Cebe  
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Ladies and gentlemen, I have been labeled many things in my short life time- From fat, dark, semi-retarded to beautiful, intelligent, a pioneer! But there is one label I refuse to wear today. I refuse to be labeled a...

COCONUT!

Not because I am not tough on the exterior and soft and juicy within. Not because my mother isn't a pine-tree, but simply because I am not a white person trapped in a black girl's body- this girl knows who she is, and it's definitely not a coconut...

what is this "Coconutism" anyway?

I embarked on a fruitful mission to uncover what it truly means to be a Coconut and to compile what I would like to call today-the ***Coconut 's Manifesto*** -so upon doing my research I was made aware of 3 'tell-tale signs' to identify a Coconut. And I quote:

1. A coconut-speaks English more than it does its mother tongue.
2. A coconut-wants to be white and therefore acts superior.
3. A coconut-has no consciousness of its heritage and the history of black people!

Friends, some of us present here today attend schools where English is the medium of instruction-as is the case in most South African schools. That means we spend most of our day conversing in English. ENGLISH-the universal language... the language of business! Then is it not right that our children practice this language in order for them to be effective and eloquent communicators one day? And that they too may part take when granted opportunities such as this one?

I acknowledge the fact that our mother tongues should not be compromised- Indeed, we should be proud of our complex indigenous languages! but members of the house, the fact that I continue to converse in English with my fellow black friends, even outside the confines of my school does not mean that I am ashamed of my mother tongue-it simply means that I choose not to switch the English button off to activate the vernacular button in order to please .

Ladies and gentlemen, what is white? (if not a colour) what is the definition of white? See the founders of Coconuts seem to believe that Coconuts want to be white therefore pretend to be like white people-by acting and sounding like white people and by wanting nothing to do with fellow black

people...

Well some of my best friends are white, but that doesn't mean I want to be like them-further more it doesn't make me a coconut. It is 2009- 15 years of democracy and 32 years since the Black Consciousness Movement-yet I am embarrassed by the fact that there are still people who continue to categorize anything superior as being...white!

I was listening to a show on the radio the other day and the DJ was relating a story of how-when a "coconut" was asked if she knew who Steve Biko was the coconut said-"Is he some kind of kwaito star? If he is...I don't know him!"

Now ladies and gentlemen that is a clear indication of one girl's ignorance-ignorance is not a black, white, or "Coconutistic" trait-but ignorance is the bosom buddy of most young people today but instead of criticizing young people on how little they know about their cultures-society should instill a sense of pride in young South Africans, ooMakhulu nooTatomkhulu should not seize to relate stories of the past, in order to conscientize our young people. After all is that not part of the spirit of Ubuntu?

I have been labeled a coconut because of my accent and because I attend the school that I do. Others are being accused of wanting to be what they are not.

But the thing is, nobody has the right to judge you, especially if they do not know you...not even the "Founders" of this Coconutism.

So let it be known-

My name is Bonolo Cebe a black South African, born of the Sotho people- as a matter of fact the very shape of my thies was inspired by the hills in Maseru-where my clan name originated-"Mamofokeng".

I am a young communicator who is conscious of her heritage, proud of who she is and passionate about the future.

I refuse to be labelled a...

COCONUT!

## First runner up      'I DARE YOU'    by MATI DHLOVU

Truth ... Dare and Command.

Truth - The world is in shambles and we sit as immobile spectators- Truth. Dare - I dare you to take it upon your hands as an individual to make a difference to what is left of our world. Impossible ... Rejected. Command- I command you to abandon all ignorance and despondency and pick up the broken pieces of our world.

The dare has been made. The challenge posed. Are you up for the challenge? I DARE YOU. Good morning to the contest chair, fellow speakers and the house at large.

Now the theory of evolution states that humankind evolved from apes. Quite frankly, I do not take kindly to this theory as I for one would not like to be classified as the descendant of an ape! Today, however, it would be quite accurate to say that humans are regressing to mere apes!

It is said that humans are the most intelligent species on earth. Members of the house, I beg to oppose, I do believe that our intellectual acuity can be easily compared to that of a teaspoon! I don't mean to offend anyone in the house who happens to think that they are quite the bright spark - I, too, am human.

Ladies and gentlemen, can it be true that progress is not progress? That progression is in fact regression? We all know that our world was created miraculously as our home- our only home. And yet industrialization and urbanization initially perceived as marks of civilization have in fact compromised the beauty of our planet, reduced and diminished it to a monstrosity which today threatens all life on earth.

As a teenager living in South Africa, I am forced to having next door neighbours living with AIDS and watching them wear down living corpses that will eventually become nothing ... but distant memories. I live in a society that dictates the person that I ought to be and the manner by which I ought to conduct myself in order to be recognized and successful. The eyes of my community are critical of me. I must conform, but all around me, I see little children- overwhelmed, discarded, abandoned. What picture is painted of Africa on World News? Do we see little children happily and safely at play? No. The stereotype is of African toddlers - stark naked with inflated bellies, empty stomachs and crushed dreams. The world views Africa with pessimism ... with fatigue.

And yet our Africa is a masterpiece of creation and beauty which is why we have a duty, an obligation to resurrect to maintain. Yes, cynics may laugh in the face of sadness and devastation, but I ask you: For how long will we turn a blind eye to the devastation of our world? For how long will we choose immobility and ignorance?

Ladies and gentlemen, the dare has been made. The challenge posed. The command stated. Today, I dare you to abandon all ignorance, apathy, despondency and truly make a difference to a world that is hungry for difference makers. Every single person in this room today has formed opinions and dreams for change, yet so often our dreams are pushed aside to gather dust.

But I do believe that a difference can be made and has been made. Consider the posters of the 1970s and 1980s- "Save The Whales" ... Oh but wasn't that just some hippie brigade

pulling a stunt? No, it wasn't the whales were saved, and whaling is now illegal, and on the coast of South Africa, the tourism industry is making a lot of money from whale watching. So who saved them? People. People. People just like me and you- and you- and you.

So ladies and gentlemen- once again- I dare you to take a stand in redeeming our world, in redeeming our beloved Africa. I dare you to live. I dare you to question and challenge, the status quo. I dare you to express who you are- to be real, to be involved, TO BE.

Please: Accept the dare, challenge the cliché, go out there and make a difference.

## Second runner up

# Imagine a country run by teenagers...

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By: Lisa Dondashe

Riebeek College Girls' High School- Uitenhage

Do adults ever take teenagers seriously? NOOOO! Instead they blatantly ignore us. And we are sick of it! Adults, politicians in particular, think teenagers are clueless when it comes to the goings on of the world. That is, of course, a foolish thought and we know better than to argue with foolish people because we would come out looking like fools ourselves. These adults are all a bunch of clowns who have turned our country into a circus at which the entire world laughs. And it is now up to all teenagers to stand up and say we refuse to be disregarded any longer!

Mr Chairman, Adjudicators, friends young and old, my topic, and what I am asking you to do today, is: imagine a country run by teenagers.

We really have to stop living in the past and look towards the future. What better way to do that than to allow teenagers to be in charge! In this way we could put an end to all the empty promises we often hear and they could put their "teenagers are the future" slogans to the real test. Imagine a country run by teenagers. We would do a remarkable job. And, no, they can't use the "you're not qualified" line because if a person could fail matric and still be in a high leadership position, imagine the miracles we could achieve with the amazing education offered by our esteemed National Curriculum Statement.

It's not such an outrageous idea. Everyone deserves a chance, right? Right! In this country people get more than one chance to prove themselves. If we, teenagers, were given just ONE chance then firstly, Youth Leagues would consist of the youth and not 30 something year old has beens who have clearly reached their expiry date. We are still young and fresh and that's why they should use us before we reach our sell-by date. It's true what they say; hire teenagers while they still know everything.

It may come as a surprise to all the adults but young minds, are honest and fair-minded- not yet corrupt-like theirs. Isn't it funny how it's these very same adults who get caught for doing unimaginable and stupid things, giving new meaning to the term "act your age not your shoe size".

Teenagers would not run the country into the ground, like they think we would; we, teenagers always get the job done. Now don't get me wrong. This isn't merely a protest against adults but also a campaign for teenagers. There are so many of us who achieve such great things, such as being a part of this competition. However, when we do good things no one notices and when we do wrong, no one forgets. It's not right. We are oppressed you know. Adults always seem to be telling us what to do.

We would also like to know how it feels to be in power. They won't even let us vote; we have to wait until we are adults and would have been brainwashed along the way. It's a treacherous cycle.

In conclusion, just one question: If 16 is the legal age to give sexual consent and to buy cigarettes, why, then, isn't it the legal age to vote or even better, form your own political party? The answer is they know we are the majority and that if we were to form our own political party, all the teenagers would unite against the common enemy; ADULTS! They are very clever creatures, these adults. I've got to hand it to them; that is a very strategic move. They may be able to take that opportunity away from us but they can't take away the power to dream. Teenagers, like Martin Luther King Jr., have a dream, that one day our intelligence and good judgement will not be judged by the wrinkles, or a lack thereof, on our faces, but by the content of our character.

Thank you Mr Chairman