

GLOBAL MARATHON 2006

Female Engineer, The African Perspective

Clementina Saduwa

IEEE Women In Engineering Nigeria

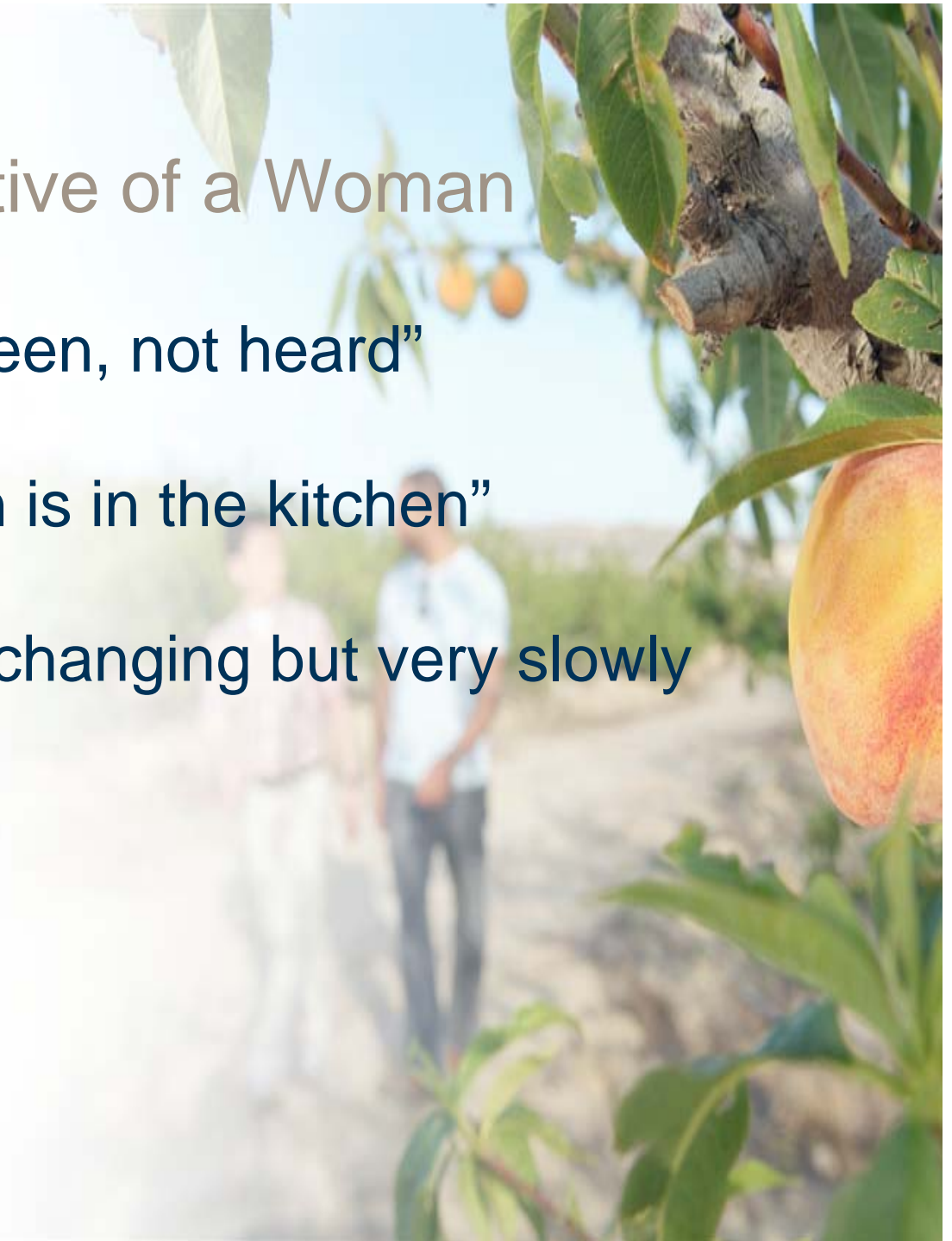


The African Perspective of a Woman

“A woman should be seen, not heard”

“The place for a woman is in the kitchen”

These perceptions are changing but very slowly



African Perception of Engineering



If I ask the average man/woman on the streets of Lagos, who they think an engineer is, they probably would come up with one of the following:

A “man” who handles heavy duty tools and fixes things

A person who loves complicated things

A person who is good with his hands

A person who works with bolts, nuts, screwdrivers, spanners etc

Who really, is an Engineer?

An engineer is someone (irrespective of gender) who applies scientific knowledge to solve the problems of mankind.

The engineering profession is noble because it is dedicated towards making life better for the whole of humanity



Why few women in the Engineering Profession???

- Misconception that the job is physically tasking and tedious. Muscles are needed to be an engineer
- Fear of being classified as lacking feminine qualities
- Some fear that they may never get married because men will be intimidated by their career,
- Fear that they shall be mixing with too many males, this is not encouraged in some African cultures
- Fear that they shall be discriminated against

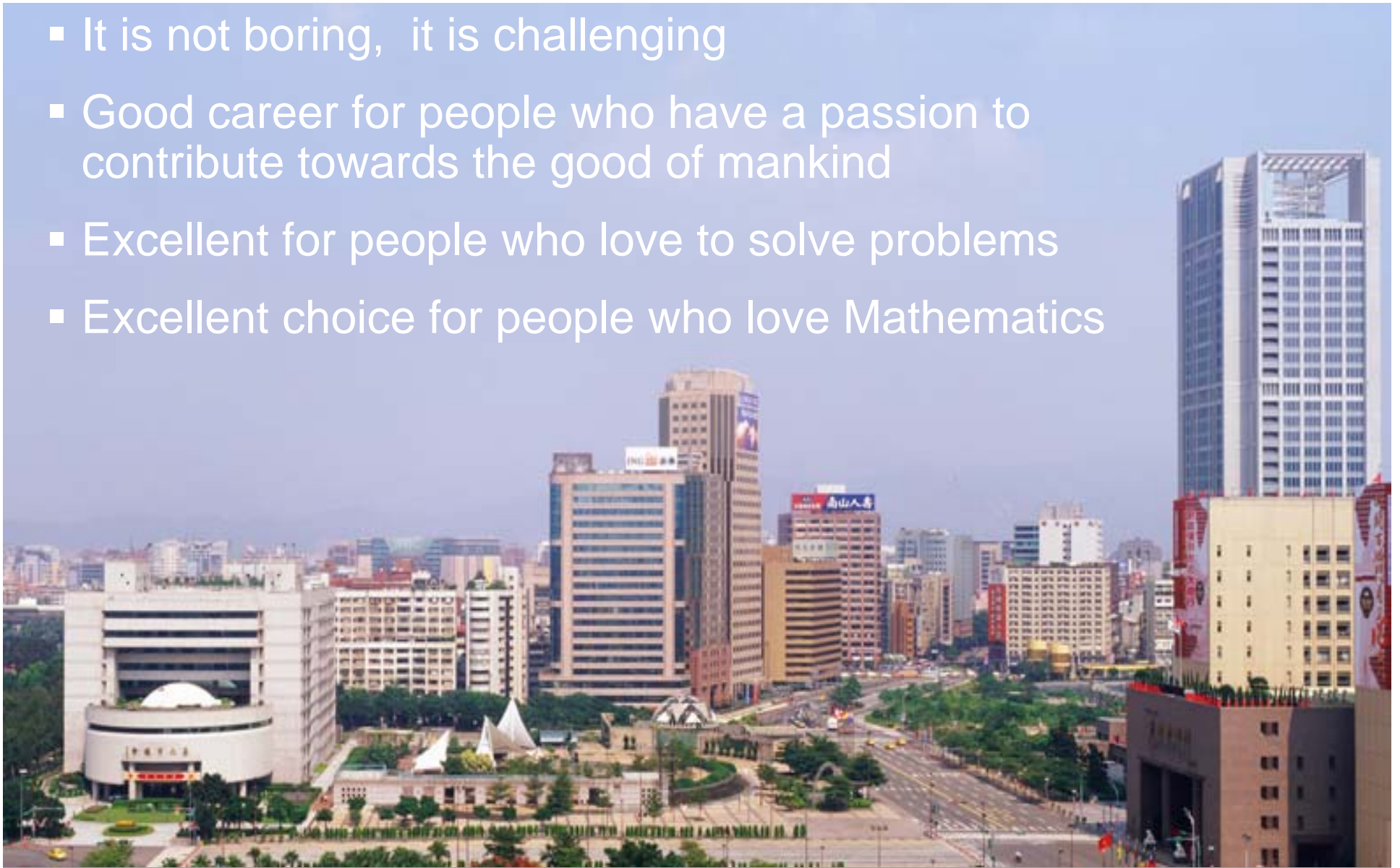
But are these Perceptions really true?

- An engineer works with his/her brain
- Engineering is a profession for smart people, we have both male and female smart people, being smart is not being masculine
- A man that is intimidated by a woman's career will be intimidated anyway
- Discriminations can and should be fought



Why choose an Engineering Career?

- It is not boring, it is challenging
- Good career for people who have a passion to contribute towards the good of mankind
- Excellent for people who love to solve problems
- Excellent choice for people who love Mathematics



The African Engineer..... Rewarding

- Practicing the engineering profession in Africa is extra challenging and exciting!!!
- Apart from the core engineering skills, it is also important for a female engineer in this terrain to acquire soft skills to relate with men who are not used to seeing themselves work with women as colleagues or bosses



Conclusion

It is important that women in and outside Africa make their contributions to this noble profession because women too are smart and have a natural passion to contribute to the betterment of life for mankind

