

Press release, 7th July 2009

President Paul Kagame of Rwanda honours African business leaders at a gala ceremony in London on 6th July

At an awards ceremony organised by *African Business* magazine and the *Commonwealth Business Council* (CBC), President Paul Kagame together with African government officials and top leaders from all regions of Africa celebrated the achievements of prominent businessmen and women driving growth and development in the Continent.

Paul Kagame presented the *Lifetime Achievement* award to Pascal Dozie, who was honoured for his outstanding contribution to the development of the private sector in Nigeria. *African Business of the Year* went to Equity Bank while Cyril Ramaphosa, Executive Chairman of Shanduka, won the *Business Leader of the Year*. Maria Ramos, CEO of Absa received the *Outstanding Businesswoman of the Year award* from Baroness Amos. Another exceptional leader, Engr. Ernest Ndukwe, Vice Chairman of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) received the *Special Recognition for Outstanding Public Service*.

Rama Sithanen, Deputy Prime Minister of Mauritius, picked up the *Award for Most Improved Investment Climate* on behalf of his country. Two new awards, *Best Agricultural Development* and *Tourism Destination of the Year* went to Malawi and Morocco respectively for their exceptional performances. Finally the *Award for Improvement in Good Governance* went to Lagos State in Nigeria.

Airline of the Year went to Ethiopian Airlines and *Telecoms Company of the Year* to MTN. Diageo won the *Best Global Business in Africa* while Standard Chartered Bank was honoured with the award for *Best Corporate Citizenship / Social Responsibility*.

The event was co-hosted by *African Business* magazine and the CBC, and sponsored by BHP Billiton, Ecobank, IGI and Laurent Perrier. In line with its mission to bolster Africa's economic development, the Awards were also partnered with the Alliance for a Green Revolution (AGRA) and supported by the African Development Bank. A distinguished panel of judges selected winners in 8 categories from a pool of nominees that came from all over the African continent. The winners of the four remaining categories were selected by the advisory board comprising of the editorial team of *African Business* magazine, various associations and experts from the CBC.

One of the nominees commented: "It was very competitive since most of Africa's top players in business are here tonight. I am truly honoured to have been recognised by the prestigious *African Business* magazine in front of this impressive international audience!"

Omar Ben Yedder, Associate Group Publisher of *African Business* magazine, the organiser of the event said: "We had here in London tonight an impressive gathering of African leaders, from business, government, investors, Africa watchers as well as members of civil society. We have celebrated the good and the great of Africa and it is encouraging that this list is getting longer and the pool of talent from which to choose larger, year on year."

Dr. Mohan Kaul, CEO of the CBC, stressed the importance of these Awards: "At a time of economic turmoil and uncertainty, awards such as these become even more important. The African Business Awards contribute to the reappraisal of Africa's economic potential through a competition that recognises business innovation and achievement, and offers role models for aspiring entrepreneurs."

Afif Ben Yedder, publisher of *African Business* added: "Investments in Africa are safe and very profitable. The opportunities for the private sector are limitless in all sectors of the economy and not only in telecoms or banking. Africa continues to grow at a fast rate despite the slowdown. The *African Business Awards* have become a major event to promote the continent and give a greater visibility to the most successful business leaders and best enterprises of the year in Africa."

IC Publications holds two annual awards ceremonies. The next one will be the *African Banker Awards* which will coincide with the IMF-World Bank meetings, which this year will take place on the 5th October 2009 in Istanbul.

AFRICAN BUSINESS AWARDS 2009 WINNERS

Award for Good Governance

Lagos State, Nigeria

Tourism Destination of the Year

Morocco

Airline of the Year

Ethiopian Airlines

Best Global Business in Africa

Diageo

Award for Most Improved Investment Climate

Mauritius

Lifetime Achievement

Pascal Dozie, Founder and Chairman Diamond Group & Chairman, MTN Nigeria

Best Corporate Social Responsibility

Standard Chartered Bank

Special Recognition for Outstanding Public Service

Engr. Ernest Ndukwe, Vice Chairman of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC)

Telecoms Company of the Year

MTN

Award for Best Agricultural Development

Malawi

Outstanding Businesswoman

Maria Ramos, CEO, Absa

Business Leader of the Year

Cyril Ramaphosa, Executive Chairman, Shanduka

African Business of the Year

Equity Bank, Kenya

Organisers:

African Business magazine, the Commonwealth Business Council (CBC), IC Events

Sponsors:

BPH Billiton
Ecobank
IGI
Laurent Perrier

Supporting organisation:

The African Development Bank

Partners:

AGRA Alliance for a Green Revolution
BusinessinAfrica Events UK Ltd

About African Business magazine:

After 40 years of continuous reporting on Africa's economic landscape, the London-based *African Business* magazine has justifiably earned its reputation as the most influential business publications in the continent. Published by IC Publications, *African Business* is distributed in over 100 countries around the world and has become essential reading for organisations, institutions, companies and individuals involved in the economic development of Africa. IC Publications produces in total ten pan-African titles in English and French.

About CBC:

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting established the Commonwealth Business Council (CBC) in October 1997 to involve the private sector in the promotion of trade and investment. The CBC acts as a bridge for co-operation between business and government, concentrating on efforts to help remove barriers to trade, mobilise investment into Commonwealth countries, foster a good environment for business and investment, promote good practice in corporate governance and corporate citizenship, and facilitate the engagement of the private sector in information communication technology for development initiatives, especially in less developed countries.

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African Business Awards

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