

Africa Awards for Entrepreneurship announces winners

The African Leadership Network, the membership network of new generation leaders in Africa, and Omidyar Network, a philanthropic investment firm, on Friday, 12 October 2012, announced Dr. Richard John Pelwana Maponya as the winner of 2012 Africa Awards for Entrepreneurship Lifetime Achievement Award.



Maponya was honoured at the 2012 Africa Awards for Entrepreneurship ceremony, which is part of the African Leadership Network's Annual Gathering in Accra, Ghana. The award captured Maponya's achievements in his seven-decade career in entrepreneurship, and consolidates his distinction as an iconic African entrepreneur.

During his acceptance speech at the awards, Maponya said "At the time I started my first business in the 1950s, it was difficult for a young African to dream of political freedom, let alone entrepreneurial success.

The African economy is growing

Today, Africa is free and democracy is taking root. The African economy is growing, and presenting opportunities for entrepreneurs that at my time were a pipe dream. I am pleased to accept this award, as it is a reminder of what we can do as individuals and collectively, to create wealth for Africa and a better life for our people. There is nothing to stop Africans from doing what they want to do now."

Dr. Maponya began his entrepreneurial career in his twenties in the 1940s, and over the last seven decades has built a retail empire in South Africa. Among other outstanding achievements, Maponya's business successes include building the Maponya Mall, one of South Africa's biggest shopping malls with over 200 shops in Soweto.

Maponya's career has seamlessly blended entrepreneurship and social involvement, and apart from building a chain of successful businesses, has throughout his career served in key business leadership roles. He is the Founding President of the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce in South Africa, is a trustee of the Nelson Mandela Children Fund and sits on several other boards.

"Dr. Maponya is a hugely inspiring businessman who has served as a beacon for different generations of entrepreneurs over the last seven decades," comments Fred Swaniker, CEO and co-founder of the African Leadership Network.

"We are deeply inspired and humbled by Dr. Maponya's great achievements. The story of his life is a powerful reminder of

the fact that for the entrepreneur, there are always opportunities, even when others might only see challenges. His life is testimony to the resilience, patience, determination and focus that makes a good entrepreneur. Dr. Maponya is an inspiring role model to many entrepreneurs in Africa, and is a brilliant example of the kind of leaders that will build wealth and prosperity in Africa."

Other winners included:

- La Laiterie du Berger won the Outstanding Small and Growing Business Award, a prize of US\$50 000, and a commendation from the African Leadership Network. The company is a Senegalese dairy company that sources and processes milk from semi-nomadic Fulani pastoralists living along the Senegal River.
- Bridge International Academies was the runner-up for the Outstanding Small and Growing Business Award, also a prize of US\$50 000, and a commendation from the African Leadership Network. In 2007 the company developed a strategy that would allow it to launch a large-scale network of high-quality, ultra low-cost, for-profit private schools.
- Secure ID won the Mature Business Award, which also came with a grand prize of US\$100 000. SecureID is Nigeria's foremost Smart Card manufacturing company. It is the leading Europay, MasterCard and Visa - certified card plant in West Africa, one out of only six on the continent and a member of the elite club of only 80 such companies in the world.
- Quality Chemicals Industries Ltd. (QCIL) won the Transformational Business Award. The prize is bestowed on a notable business leader who has had a major socio-economic impact in Africa by building a business with revenues greater than USD 50 million. QCIL is a leading sciences and distribution company that locally manufactures anti-malarial and antiretroviral drugs to combat two of Africa's greatest challenges malaria and HIV/AIDS.

For more, go to www.africanleadershipnetwork.com.

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