

# Africa's top innovators announced

ACCRA, Ghana - The 2017 Innovation Prize for Africa awards welcomed hundreds of entries from outstanding innovators. For the first time, IPA nominees include innovators from Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Zimbabwe, and featured a stronger presence of women that in any of the years past.



Three outstanding African innovators walk away with Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA) 2017.

In this, the sixth edition of the coveted [Innovation Prize for Africa](#) (IPA), it is the [African Innovation Foundation](#) (AIF) awarding three more African innovators for their incredible innovations. Out of the total of over 2500 applications, 10 nominees were selected, and from these Aly El-Shafei of Egypt emerged as the grand prize winner; with Philippa Ngaju Makobore of Uganda landing the second prize; and Dougbeh-Chris Nyan of Liberia, winning the special prize for social impact.

Each one of the seven remaining nominees also went home with US\$ 5 000 voucher to be used to further develop their innovations. Moreover, all nominees and winners will benefit from IPA post prize activities aiming at moving their innovations to the next level.

The main obstacle in increasing electricity generation capacity in Africa continues to be the high cost of producing electricity, which is forcing governments to subsidise consumption. Dr El-Shafei's innovation, Smart Electro-Mechanical Actuator Journal Integrated Bearing (SEMAJIB), is a world class solution that supports energy generating turbines and can be used to improve efficiency and reduce costs of generating energy in Africa.

Meanwhile, inadequate medical solutions to efficiently administer drugs or to diagnose diseases continue to affect the quality of healthcare delivery in many parts of the continent. Makobore's invention, known as Electronically Controlled Gravity Feed Infusion Set (ECGF) and Dr Nyan's multiple disease rapid detection test, both offer ingenious solutions aimed at raising the quality of healthcare provision in Africa.

AIF collaborated with the Government of Ghana, represented by the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI), Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC) and Ghana@60 Planning Committee to host IPA 2017, which was themed *African Innovation: Investing in Prosperity*. President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the President of Ghana, presided over the prestigious awards ceremony, held at Movenpick Ambassador Hotel, Accra in Ghana.

Jean-Claude Bastos de Morais, founder, African Innovation Foundation, commented: "This edition of IPA has been all about galvanising support for African innovators in order to mobilise increased investments to help them commercialise and scale their innovations at a greater rate. AIF has rewarded IPA 2017 for developing solutions that can truly add value to the lives of Africans, and I believe that these innovations have incredible commercial potential and will succeed in attracting the right investments to go to the next stage."

IPA 2017 Chairman of the Jury, Prof Nyasse Barthelemy, said that the deliberation was tough as the quality of innovations were high. "Each of the innovations, in their own respective ways, were winners as they represented local solutions to local challenges. It came down to the wire but we believe we have awarded the most compelling innovations this year. We look forward to seeing what comes next for the incredible innovations from IPA2017 innovators and wish them the very best".

The patented innovation, SEMAJIB, by Dr El-Shafei who walked away with the Grand Prize of US\$ 100 000, is a smart bearing that significantly improves turbine performance in single line combined cycle plants as well as conventional generator technology. Patented in the US since 2010 with another patent pending, the device is designed to be used to support energy generating turbines more efficiently and cost effectively in Africa.

SEMAJIB is an innovation that does not currently exist in the West, and already Siemens' has indicated interest in the device. A world class innovation originating from Africa, SEMAJIB reverse Africa's image as a technology consumer to technology producer. Production of these bearings in Africa will also generate jobs and increased revenue for Africa.

IPA has seen tremendous growth in applications and increasing interest from both innovators and innovation enablers over the years. To date, IPA has attracted more than 7 500 innovators from 52 African countries, making it a truly Pan African initiative. IPA 2017 edition witnessed a record number of entries from over 2 500 innovators across 48 African countries. The Foundation has supported past winners and nominees with approximately US\$ 1 million to move their innovations forward. Due to exposure generated by IPA, past winners have gone on to secure over US\$30 million in investments to grow and scale their businesses.

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