

ECA and AIF launch prestigious February 2012 African Innovation Prize

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Innovation Foundation (AIF) are delighted to announce the African Innovation Prize (AIP) to be awarded for the first time in February 2012. This prestigious and well-endowed award aims at encouraging innovations that contribute to sustainable development in Africa.

With this award, AIF and UNECA acknowledge, support and encourage innovators and entrepreneurs- the group of stakeholders who till now have been neither considered nor benefited under Africas development cooperation agenda.

"Innovation is a combination of identifying problems, and finding groundbreaking implementable solutions; we hope the prizes will contribute to tapping into the ingenuity of Africans to solve Africas problems, says the ECA Executive Secretary and Under-Secretary General, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh.

He adds: Currently, ideas, innovation and knowledge are what is driving the world, and transforming economies. It is therefore fitting and appropriate that the African Innovation Prize is targeting a unique group of stakeholders - innovators and inventors in the area of ICTs, Green Technologies and Health & Food Security.

The AIF is very proud of the cooperation with ECA and expects numerous innovation projects to compete for the prize. There is so much untapped talent on this continent, adds Mr. Walter Fust, Chairman of the AIF.

The amount allocated towards the winners for the selected innovators and entrepreneurs, in the three thematic areas of ICTs; Green Technologies; Health & Food Security are two generous prizes: First prize USD 100,000; and USD 50000 for the second prize.

The registration deadline for the 2012 prize has been set for September 30th, 2011 with no possibility of extensions.

The organizers expect the prize to promote among young African men and women the pursuit of science, technology and engineering careers and business applications. The aims are to:

- Create a platform for identification of innovative concepts and projects submitted by applicants that could be supported by AIP;
- Promote innovation across Africa in key sectors of interest through the competition;
- Promote science, technology and engineering as rewarding, exciting and noble career options among the youth in Africa by profiling successful applicants; and
- Encourage entrepreneurs, innovators, funding bodies and business development service providers to exchange ideas and explore innovative business opportunities.

In pursuing those aims, the AIP expects the following outcomes:

- Increased commercialization of research and development (R&D) outputs in Africa;
- Increased development of start-up, adoption of new and emerging technologies and accelerate growth of an innovative and dynamic private sector; and
- Increased general economic activities that result in long term sustainable development

Over the coming five years, AIP will be targeting innovators/entrepreneurs in different thematic areas to be determined each year by the Technical Advisory Committee.

For detailed information of competition categories, conditions of entry, and submission procedures, please visit: <http://www.uneca.org/AIF/AIP>