

AGA

AFRICAN GENIUS AWARDS

20 23



FINAL REPORT

RELEASE DATE: 25 MAY 2023





ABOUT

THIS REPORT

This is a report of the African Genius Awards (AGA). It is intended to explain the work of the AGA and the processes followed to nominate and award African geniuses for 2023. The main product of the AGA as an institution are the annual recipients of its awards. The primary and main award conferred in the African Genius Awards is the conferment of the status of being a genius.

A secondary award category is that of Outstanding Achievers. Outstanding achievers are drawn from the outstanding AGA nominees that the judges deemed to be exceptional achievers but have not quite met the requirements in the consideration period to be awarded genius status.

DISCLAIMER

While the African Genius Awards will make every effort to unearth geniuses, our processes, while transparent and open to the public, do not guarantee that every genius that exists will be nominated and awarded.

The AGA will therefore not imply that persons who were never nominated and/or never awarded do not qualify to be geniuses. We will therefore not be held liable on any criteria of evaluation, other than that which we use to reach the conclusion of genius status.



WHAT IS A GENIUS?

A genius is an individual with an exceptional ability and exceptional intelligence. This rare quality is manifested in its application in creativity and innovation in a particular field or area of expertise. A genius would normally possess a natural aptitude for a variety of things, often showing advanced abilities in numerous areas beyond the average person's capabilities. However, being a genius also includes having a strong work ethic, curiosity, and dedication to one's work. The AGA have identified specific areas in which the application of such a rare ability would be most helpful given the continent's current problems. The AGA recognises these problems as requiring urgent resolution and has identified qualities that geniuses possess that could make a difference.

- a) Problem solving skills, to solve problems competently and in little time.
- b) Global competitiveness, to use African resources to bring Africa closer to an economic level that is reflective of its natural endowments.

- c) Self-love, to demonstrate autonomy, independence and confidence in oneself, in fellow citizens and in the continent of Africa.
- d) Patriotism, to act in ways that show the desire to make sacrifices for the country and to persistently act in a loving way towards the continent. This means minimising all exploitative tendencies that are associated with both external and internal behaviour towards the continent and maximising its ability to leverage its assets.

The AGA knows that genius is not limited to one specific area of exceptional achievement and skill, and as such recognises the following categories as potential sources of its geniuses:

- a) Academics and Literature
- b) Technology and Innovation
- c) Science and Mathematics
- d) Business and Commerce
- e) Sport
- f) Music, Arts and Drama
- g) Social Entrepreneurs and Activists
- h) Earth and Environment

WHAT IS AN AFRICAN?



An African is an individual who is a citizen of any of the 54 countries on the African continent. The AGA does not define an African by ethnicity or race. Africans in the diaspora and those that have traceable parents or grandparents to the continent of Africa will also qualify as Africans, provided they have an active interest and involvement in African development initiatives.

WHY ARE AFRICAN GENIUSES IMPORTANT?

The African Genius Awards are run by the business Priority Performance Projects. The awards were established in 2021 by Dr Sifiso Falala, with a decision made to announce winners on the 25th of May each year, this being Africa Day. The 2023 event marks the third round of awards.

A thorough process of nomination and judging is followed over a period of approximately eight months prior to deserving African geniuses being confirmed.

Africa has often unjustly attracted negative stereotypes such as 'the dark continent', and has been host to some of the most devastating famines, wars, and poverty – this, in addition to its subjection to slavery until abolition in the 19th century; between the 16th and 19th centuries approximately 15 million Africans were forcibly transported across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas as part of the transatlantic slave trade. This gross assault on the rights of Africans as a group, which was typified by despicable

treatment, did untold harm to the self-esteem, reputation, and progress of Africans and of the continent.

When slavery was abolished in the 19th century colonialism began, with Africa being divided into countries by European governments in Berlin in 1884 and 1885. This division gave control and management authority of Africa to European masters. Liberation wars that were waged in the 20th century resulted in most African states gaining independence in the post-World War II era, for a period of about 50 years, until the mid-1990s. Since the 16th century, the 21st century is the first to have begun with Africans and African countries being politically free, although the vestiges of colonial control still render most states without any economic might to control the extraction and trade of their minerals.

Given this history, it is evident that Africans have long played a subservient role in their own affairs, a position that muted their skills and their desire to achieve self-determination. Africa's potential has been circumscribed by adverse circumstances, and the prevalence of African resource exploitation by western countries. This, over years, may have established a feeling that Africans cannot be fully independent and that they cannot exploit their own resources profitably. In the post-colonial period, many African leaders have entrenched this view about lack of self-regulation, while other views hold Africans as chief accomplices in the foreign exploitation of the continent's riches.

A new path is needed for Africa. A new way of infusing confidence into all Africans to overcome historic subservience and endorsement of former masters at the

expense of the continent. African geniuses can play a role in this new journey. The political angle, while important for liberation, has been compromised by the quest for power and the strange desire to continue in the path of colonial masters of ignoring Africa's destitution. Geniuses can construct a new narrative because of their exceptional creativity, innovation and skills. The words 'genius' and 'African' seem to be contradictory because of the past status of the continent and of Africans. 'Genius' is one of the highest accolades that can be given to a human being. In the opinion of the AGA, it is not only necessary but imperative to identify African geniuses and to use them as a small step towards restoring the pride and self-worth stolen through many years of human and territorial exploitation.

These geniuses can be and should be a catalyst for the rebuilding of an Africa that can walk tall among the other nations of the world. Conferment of genius status by an African organisation should be regarded as doubly more significant as it marks a complete recovery from the vestiges of control of merit and excellence by western countries.

African geniuses are important because the continent is often portrayed as a place of poverty, disease, ignorance, and war, and, as such, its contributions to humanity are often ignored. It is a pressing priority to change that, not only because it is patently unfair, but also because doing this reminds Africans of their own ability in a world that passively assumes that they are inertly deficient of critical skills.

THE JUDGING PROCESS

In order for the AGA to sift through a pool of nominees it was necessary to appoint a credible panel of judges. Our judges represent various areas of academic and professional interest and are drawn from South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya. The profiles of the judges were assessed in order to minimise the risk of bias. The following judged the nominations received in 2023:



PROFESSOR STEVEN FRIEDMAN: Director of the Centre for the Study of Democracy at Rhodes University and the University of Johannesburg. He has conducted research and written studies that concentrate on the transition that South Africa has/is making to democracy prior and after the 1994 elections. He is an acclaimed political scientist whose work emphasizes equality, economic growth, and citizens' active participation in embracing democracy.



MR FULUFHELO NTSANDENI: Mr. Ntsandeni has a BCom in Accounting, Auditing, Financial Management and Management Accounting obtained from the University of Cape Town. He is currently the CEO of MIH Advisory and has 12 years' experience in the industry.



DR PULANE MOLOKWANE: Dr Pulane Elsie Molokwane is a nuclear physicist and an environmental specialist with expertise in ground water remediation, nuclear waste, process, and solid waste management. She is a registered radiation physicist and holds a PhD in Environmental Engineering, M.Sc. (Applied Radiation Science and Technology), Post-Graduate Diploma (Applied Radiation Sciences and Technology) and B.Sc. (Physics).



DR ROSAIRE IFEDI: Dr Rosaire Ifedi, an associate professor in the United States of America in the Department of Educational Foundations and Instruction, joined the Ashland University faculty in 2008. She examines the intersections of race, identity, gender, and achievement in the lives of immigrant, transnational and second language learners as well as in the professional lives of those who educate them. She is author of *African-born Women Faculty in the United States: Lives in Contradiction* and teaches graduate programme courses in curriculum, qualitative inquiry, education of ELLs and global perspectives in education.



MR SIMON GATHUA: Mr Simon Gathua is a thinker and an author. He holds a senior position at Chartall Business College and has more than 15 years' business and academic experience. He has participated as a research collaborator in various research projects and worked as a senior manager and lecturer in various positions at The da Vinci Institute for Technology Management. He is a member of the following bodies: Golden Key International Honour Society, South African Statistical Association (SASA), Institute of Information Technology Professionals (IITPSA), and the Institute for the Management of Information Systems (IMIS - UK).

JUDGES' FEEDBACK

The consolidated feedback from the judges reflects that the 2023 nominees for the African Genius Awards were more diverse. Unlike in the past, where nominees tended to be drawn largely from sectors traditionally associated with intelligence, especially those in academia, 2023 saw an inclusion for the first time of sports personalities. The judges also discussed the dichotomy of nominating a genius based on, for example, business success compared to an invention-based nomination, where the genius quality may be a lot more latent than in the case of business success. The judges expressed an interest in unearthing geniuses at community level, including from among marginalised communities, and lamented that unearthing such geniuses could prove difficult.

A remark was made that since the African Genius Awards began, the organisers had not encountered enough questions about what a genius was, probably because audiences felt that they knew what genius was, and believed it to be a human trait worth celebrating.

It was noted that mental, or brain efficiency and uniqueness was one possible way of understanding what a genius was, but not the only way. Uniqueness of ability in any field of endeavour, with the capacity to produce rare and inimitable outcomes, could qualify for genius status. It was interesting to note that the quality of being a genius was not seen as a static variable, but one that was energetic, and precipitated characteristics that led to a unique identity. Being a genius was productive, and in many settings inspirational.

The obligation to improve the wellbeing of Africans and Africa as a continent resides primarily with Africans themselves. The African Genius Awards themselves set a high benchmark because the continent has an obligation to restore pride based on merit and exceptional skill. Such an obligation needs to be embraced by all Africans around the world.

The principles that shape the judging include balance and unerring objectivity. The judges are well aware of the fact that any counterclaims made should not be able to stand, and hence the importance of processes relating to validation of claims made about the nominees. Armed with their set of benchmarks and criteria, the judges are in a strong position to deliberate over nominations. As the judges are from different professions, they have the ability to provide a balanced view of candidates presented to them for judging.

There is a need for careful discernment in judging to assess candidates that are household names and contrast them to potential geniuses that nobody knows about. It is an AGA requirement that a genius should not expressly be a measure of fame or popularity. This, however, does not suggest

that a famous person cannot be a genius, and, conversely, it also does not follow that an unknown person cannot be a genius.

The judges concluded that it has been an honour to adjudicate for the African Genius Awards for the past three years. The experience had been rewarding and an exciting opportunity to identify and celebrate African geniuses who made a positive impact on the continent and the rest of the world. The awards are important in that they are designed to inspire innovation, encourage leadership, and promote excellence among Africans.

GENIUS NOMINATIONS

Public nominations are open for a period of six months from August to January of the next year on the website priorityperformance.co.za. Nominations made by the judges and the public are done so annually and concern potential geniuses that satisfy the criteria, with the nomination process leading to screening and judging processes. The nomination requirements include provision of the following important information:

- i. The talents, attributes, and skills (and their rarity) of the nominee need to be specified, identifiable and substantiated on the nomination form.
- ii. The relevance of the skills of the nominee in relation to the needs of Africa and the specific issues, challenges, opportunities, and/or problems they address should be clearly stated.
- iii. Evidence of unique application of the skill or unique talent to resolve or address unique African challenges is required.
- iv. Professional or official recognition, awards and endorsements received, or justification of exclusion (from recognition) for marginalised and disadvantaged groups must be provided.

As is customary for the AGAs, the judges were given an opportunity to nominate possible geniuses. All the nominations, regardless of the nomination source, were screened and those that made it past the screening phase were shortlisted.

Nominations opened to the public from the 1st of August to the 31st of January; during this time nominations were made using the nomination questionnaire found on the Priority Performance website (<https://priorityperformance.co.za/africangenius/>).

The opening of the nominations to the public makes the process transparent. It also allows for a large pool of nominations to be received. In 2023 a total of 121 valid nominations were made. From this list a total of 25 were shortlisted for judging. Of this list of 25, two (the equivalent of 1.7% of all nominations) achieved genius status.

VERIFICATION OF NOMINATIONS

The AGA sets high standards for its awards. As such it is important for all conferrals to be beyond reproach and for all nominees to be subjected to a scrutiny process undertaken by a professional market research company that is a member of the Southern African Market Research Association.

Research on the shortlisted nominees was conducted by Plus 94 Research to validate claims made about the qualities of the nominees. The research was conducted between the 1st of January and the 30th of March. From the research conducted a report was created about each nominee.

The reports are of comparable length and thoroughness. It is these reports that were then submitted to the judges for scoring. Information that could not be validated was not included in the reports given to judges for scoring.

SCORING THRESHOLDS

The scoring by the judges falls into these categories:

- i. Demonstrable contribution to problem solving
- ii. Leadership/ inspirational qualities
- iii. Exceptional skills
- iv. Impact and outstanding contributions relevant to the community or society
- v. Official recognition, awards, honours, and prestigious appointments

After the judges have individually scored the shortlisted nominees out of 100, an average is calculated, and the result becomes the final score for the nominee.

SCORE THRESHOLD	CATEGORY OF AWARD
Up to 79%	No Award
80 - 89%	Outstanding African Achiever
90% and above	African Genius Award

There are no revisions of scores or approximations. The status of each nominee is wholly dependent on the combined individual judge scores.

RESULTS OF THE NOMINATION

At the close of nominations on the 31st of January 2023 the AGA had received a total of 121 nominations.



Of these, 10 nominations came from the judges



The remaining 111 from the public.



A total of 25 nominees were shortlisted



AFRICAN GENIUS AWARDS 2023 SHORTLIST

The following is a shortlist of nominees that met the criteria for the African Genius Award:



1. **WANGARI MAATHAI**

Wangari Maathai was a Kenyan environmental and political activist. She founded the Green Belt Movement in 1977, an organisation aimed at empowering rural women in Kenya through environmental conservation and community development. The organisation has since planted over 50 million trees in Kenya and trained thousands of women in sustainable agriculture and forestry practices. Throughout her life, Maathai was a vocal critic of the Kenyan government's policies, particularly regarding environmental protection and human rights. In addition to the Nobel Peace Prize, Maathai was recognised with numerous awards and honours for her work, including the Right Livelihood Award, the National Geographic Society's Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She passed away in 2011 at the age of 71.



2. **ARTHUR ZANG**

Arthur Zang is a Cameroonian engineer and entrepreneur who is best known for inventing the Cardiopad, a touchscreen medical tablet that enables remote heart examinations. He was inspired to do so after witnessing the difficulties faced by people in rural areas of Cameroon who needed heart examinations but did not have access to the necessary medical equipment or specialists. The Cardiopad enables a patient's heart examination data to be captured and transmitted to a specialist in another location, who can

then provide a diagnosis and treatment recommendations. The device has the potential to greatly improve access to healthcare for people living in remote areas. Zang's invention has received numerous accolades, including the Rolex Award for Enterprise in 2014 and the African Innovation Prize in 2013.



3. DIDIER DROGBA

Didier Drogba is a retired Ivorian professional footballer considered to be one of the greatest African footballers of all time, who played as a striker. Drogba began his professional career in France with Le Mans and later moved to Guingamp, where he scored 17 goals in his first season. In 2004, he joined Chelsea for a fee of £24 million, which was then a record for an African player. Drogba also represented the Côte d'Ivoire national team, where he is the all-time top scorer, with 65 goals in 104 appearances. He played in three World Cups and two Africa Cup of Nations tournaments for his country. Drogba had a highly successful career at Chelsea, winning four Premier League titles, four FA Cups, and the UEFA Champions League in 2012, scoring the winning goal in the final against Bayern Munich. After leaving Chelsea in 2012, Drogba played for Shanghai Shenhua, Galatasaray, and the Montreal Impact before retiring in 2018. He has since been involved in various charitable and philanthropic efforts, including the Didier Drogba Foundation, which aims to provide healthcare and education to underprivileged children in Africa.



4. DR ANGELA NYAMBURA GICHAGA

Dr Angela Nyambura Gichaga is the CEO of the Financing Alliance for Health, a partnership of over 40 organisations including governments, multilateral institutions, foundations, and private sector organisations, which work together to improve health outcomes and achieve universal health coverage. Dr Gichaga has extensive experience in global health and healthcare financing, having worked in various leadership positions at organisations such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Development Programme. She holds a medical degree from the University of Nairobi, a Master of Science in Health Economics from the University of York, and a PhD in Health Economics from the University of Cape Town.



5. **PROF. ABDULRAZAK GURNAH**

Professor Abdulrazak Gurnah is a Tanzanian-British novelist, academic, and literary critic. He has published several critically acclaimed novels, including *Paradise*, *Desertion*, *By the Sea*, and *Afterlives*, which was shortlisted for the 2021 Booker Prize. In addition to his literary work, Professor Gurnah has had a distinguished academic career. He has held teaching positions at universities in Tanzania, England, and the United States, and has published widely on African and postcolonial literature. He was awarded a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) in 2006 for his services to literature, and in 2020 he was elected as a Fellow of the British Academy.



6. **SADIO MANÉ**

Sadio Mané is a professional football player from Senegal who made his name playing for Liverpool FC and the Senegal national team. In 2016, he signed with Liverpool for a transfer fee of around £34 million, making him the most expensive African player in history at the time. Mané helped Liverpool to win the UEFA Champions League in 2019 and the Premier League in 2020. He is known for his speed, skill, and goal-scoring ability, and has been recognised with numerous individual awards, including the African Footballer of the Year award in 2019. Mané is known for his philanthropic work, particularly in his home country of Senegal, where he has funded the construction of schools, mosques, and hospitals, as well as providing financial support to families in need.



7. **TONY ELUMELU**

Tony Elumelu is a Nigerian businessman, entrepreneur, and philanthropist. He is the founder and chairman of Heirs Holdings, a family-owned investment company, and the Tony Elumelu Foundation, a philanthropic organisation focused on empowering African entrepreneurs. He began his career in the banking industry, working for Union Bank of Nigeria before joining Standard Trust Bank, where he rose to become the CEO. He later merged Standard Trust Bank with United Bank for Africa (UBA) to create one of Africa's largest financial institutions.



8. ZAKES MDA

Zakes Mda is a South African novelist, playwright, and poet. Mda is known for his powerful and thought-provoking works that explore issues of race, identity, and politics in South Africa. He has written several novels, including *Ways of Dying*, *The Heart of Redness*, *The Madonna of Excelsior*, and *Black Diamond*. His works have been translated into numerous languages and have won many awards, including the Commonwealth Writers' Prize and the Sunday Times Literary Award. Mda's works have been praised for their insight into South African society and their ability to capture the complexity of the country's history and culture. He remains a prominent figure in the South African literary community and beyond.



9. DR BIBI AMEENAH FIRDAUS GURIB-FAKIM

Dr Bibi Ameenah Firdaus Gurib-Fakim is a former politician and the first female president of Mauritius, serving from 2015 to 2018. Before entering politics, Gurib-Fakim was a biodiversity scientist, specialising in the study of plants and their medicinal properties. She obtained her PhD in organic chemistry from the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom and went on to become a professor at the University of Mauritius, where she taught chemistry and headed the Centre for Phytotherapy Research.



10. MOCTAR DEMBÉLÉ

Moctar Dembélé is a young inventor from Burkina Faso who created a soap that can repel mosquitoes and prevent malaria. The soap is called "Faso Soap" or "Mosquito Soap" and is made from all-natural ingredients including shea butter, lemongrass, and other local plants. The idea for the soap came to Dembélé when he was studying microbiology at the University of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso. He wanted to find a way to combat malaria, which is a major problem in the region, without relying on insecticides, which can be expensive and harmful to the environment. After experimenting with different ingredients and formulations, Dembélé eventually created the soap, which is effective because of the natural properties of the plant extracts used. These create an odour that repels mosquitoes, making it less likely that someone who uses the soap will be bitten and infected with malaria. Overall, Moctar Dembélé's work represents a powerful example of how innovation and ingenuity can be used to address some of the world's most pressing health challenges. By developing a simple, low-cost solution that harnesses the power of natural ingredients, he has helped to improve the lives of countless people and communities affected by malaria.



11. MORRIS MBETSA

Morris Mbetsa is a Kenyan inventor and entrepreneur. His interest in technology began at a young age, and he started experimenting with electronics and programming as a teenager. He went on to study computer science and engineering at the University of Nairobi, and later founded his own company, Mbetsa Innovations, to pursue his passion for invention. In addition to this, Mbetsa is also a public speaker and mentor, and is involved in initiatives that aim to promote science and technology education in Kenya. He has received several awards and recognitions for his work, including being named one of Africa's top 30 most promising young entrepreneurs by *Forbes* magazine in 2016.



12. ELIUD KIPCHOGE

Eliud Kipchoge is a Kenyan long-distance runner who is considered one of the greatest marathon runners of all time. Kipchoge began his running career in the early 2000s, and he quickly made a name for himself. He won the junior race at the IAAF World Cross Country Championships in 2003 and went on to win several other international races. He became a household name in 2015 when he won the Berlin Marathon with a time of 2:04:00. He followed that up with a win at the London Marathon in 2016, setting a course record with a time of 2:03:05. Kipchoge has also won several major marathons, including the Chicago Marathon, the Rotterdam Marathon, and the Berlin Marathon (four times). He has also won multiple gold medals at the World Championships and the Commonwealth Games.



13. HENRI NYAKARUNDI

Henri Nyakarundi is an entrepreneur and social innovator from Burundi. He is the founder of ARED (African Renewable Energy Distributor), a social enterprise that provides a platform for small-scale African entrepreneurs to sell solar-powered mobile phone charging kiosks (called "Mobile Solar Kiosks" or "MSKs") to off-grid communities. The kiosks are powered by solar panels and can charge up to 80 phones a day. Though born in Burundi, Nyakarundi grew up in Rwanda and later moved to the United States, where he worked as a software developer. He returned to Rwanda in 2013 and founded ARED as a solution to the lack of reliable electricity and mobile phone charging services in rural communities. His work has also been featured in media outlets such as CNN, *Forbes*, and the BBC.



14. AGNES MATILDA KALIBATA

Agnes Matilda Kalibata is a Rwandan agricultural scientist and policymaker. She served as Rwanda's Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources from 2008 to 2014, and later became the president of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), a non-profit organisation aimed at increasing food security and agricultural productivity across the African continent. As president of AGRA, Kalibata has continued to promote policies and programmes aimed at improving agricultural productivity and food security in Africa. She has been a vocal advocate for the use of science and technology to address agricultural challenges, and has worked to strengthen partnerships between governments, private sector actors, and civil society organisations in support of these goals.



15. AISHA YESUFU

Aisha Yesufu is a Nigerian activist, entrepreneur, and philanthropist. She is known for her advocacy work on social justice issues, particularly in the areas of human rights, gender equality, and good governance. Yesufu gained prominence for her involvement in the #BringBackOurGirls campaign, which was launched in response to the kidnapping of over 200 schoolgirls by the terrorist group Boko Haram in 2014. She was a leading voice in the campaign, which drew international attention to the issue of girls' education and the ongoing conflict in north-eastern Nigeria. In addition to her advocacy work, Yesufu is a successful entrepreneur and businesswoman.



16. DANAI JEKESAI GURIRA

Danai Jekesai Gurira is a Zimbabwean-American actress, playwright, and activist. Gurira is best known for her roles as Michonne in the hit television series *The Walking Dead* and as Okoye in the Marvel Cinematic Universe films *Black Panther*, *Avengers: Infinity War*, and *Avengers: Endgame*. She has also appeared in other films including *Mother of George*, *All Eyez on Me*, and *The Visitor*. In addition to her acting career, Gurira is also an accomplished playwright. Her plays include *In the Continuum*, *Eclipsed*, and *The Convert*, all of which have received critical acclaim; *Eclipsed* was nominated for several awards, including a Tony Award for Best Play in 2016.



17. LUPITA AMONDI NYONG'O

Lupita Amondi Nyong'o is a Kenyan-Mexican actress, author, and producer. She grew up in Kenya and later studied film and theatre at Hampshire College in Massachusetts, USA. Nyong'o made her acting debut in the short film *East River* in 2008, and she later starred in the Kenyan television series *Shuga* in 2009. Her breakout role came in 2013 when she played the character of Patsey in the historical drama film *12 Years a Slave*. For her performance, Nyong'o won several awards, including the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress, becoming the first Kenyan and Mexican actress to win an Oscar. Since then, Nyong'o has appeared in several films, including *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, *Black Panther*, *Us*, and *Little Monsters*.



18. DR ASMERET ASEFAW BERHE

Dr Asmeret Asefaw Berhe is a soil biogeochemist and political ecologist, who is the director of the Office of Science for the US Department of Energy. Dr Berhe is currently on leave from the University of California, Merced where she holds the Ted and Jan Falasco Chair in Earth Sciences and Geology, is a professor of Soil Biogeochemistry, and previously served as associate dean for Graduate Education. Her research focuses on the role of soil in global carbon and nutrient cycles, particularly in response to climate change and land use change. She has published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals on topics related to soil science, biogeochemistry, global change science, and equity and inclusive excellence in science. Dr Berhe has received numerous awards and honors for her work. She is a member of the US National Academy of Engineering and a fellow of both the American Geophysical Union and the Geological Society of America.



19. PROF. TSHILIDZI MARWALA

Professor Tshilidzi Marwala is a South African engineer, computer scientist, and academic. Marwala obtained his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Case Western Reserve University in the United States in 1991. He then obtained a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Pretoria in South Africa in 1996, and a Ph.D. in Engineering from the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom in 2000. Marwala is currently the vice-chancellor and principal of the University of Johannesburg, where he was previously the deputy vice-chancellor for Research and Internationalisation. Marwala is a fellow of the South African Academy of Engineering, the African Academy of Sciences, and the Academy of Science of South Africa.



20. DR DENIS MUKWEGE

Denis Mukwege is a Congolese gynaecologist and human rights activist who has dedicated his life to helping survivors of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Dr. Mukwege is the founder and medical director of Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, which has become known worldwide for its treatment of survivors of sexual violence. He and his team have treated thousands of women who have been raped and subjected to other forms of sexual violence during the long-running conflict in the eastern part of the country.



21. DR HELENA NDUME

Dr Helena Ndume is a Namibian ophthalmologist who has dedicated her career to providing eyecare services to people in need, particularly those living in remote and underserved communities in Namibia and other parts of Africa. She is the head of Ophthalmology at Windhoek Central Hospital in Namibia, and is also a member of several international organisations and committees focused on eye health, including the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, the World Health Organization's African Regional Committee for the Prevention of Blindness, and the Africa Vision 2020 Steering Committee. She is widely regarded as a leading figure in the field of ophthalmology in Africa and a champion for the rights of people with disabilities.



22. ERIC YIRENKYI DANQUAH

Eric Yirenkyi Danquah is a prominent plant breeder, agricultural scientist, and the founding director of the West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI), which is based at the University of Ghana. Danquah is known for his work in plant breeding and genetics and has focused much of his career on improving the productivity and sustainability of crops in Africa. He has worked extensively on crops such as cowpea, cassava, and maize, among others.



23. SIR MOHAMMED IBRAHIM

Sir Mohammed "Mo" Ibrahim is a Sudanese-British businessman and philanthropist who is best known as the founder and chairman of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation. He worked for several telecommunications companies, including BT Group and Cellnet, before founding his own company, Celtel International, in 1998. Under his leadership, Celtel became one of the leading mobile phone operators in Africa, with operations in over 20 countries. In 2006, Ibrahim founded the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, a non-profit organisation that aims to promote good governance and leadership in Africa. The foundation is best known for its annual Ibrahim Index of African Governance, which measures the quality of governance in African countries based on a variety of indicators, including safety and security, rule of law, and human rights. In addition to his work with the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Ibrahim serves on the board of several organisations, including the Clinton Global Initiative and the African Union Foundation.



24. LEYMAH GBOWEE

Leymah Gbowee is a Liberian peace activist who is best known for her role in ending the Second Liberian Civil War in 2003. Gbowee's activism began in the 1990s, when she became involved in protests against the regime of Liberian dictator Charles Taylor. She was later forced to flee to Ghana, where she continued her activism and became a leader of the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement, which organised protests and sit-ins to demand an end to the war. In 2003, Gbowee led a women's peace movement that helped to bring an end to the civil war in Liberia, which had ravaged the country for over a decade. Her efforts were recognised with several awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011, which she shared with two other women for their nonviolent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work. Since receiving the Nobel Prize, Gbowee has continued to work as an advocate for peace, human rights, and women's empowerment, both in Liberia and around the world. She has founded several organisations, including the Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa and the Women, Peace, and Security Network Africa, and has served as a UN Women Goodwill Ambassador. She is widely regarded as a leading voice for peace and justice in Africa and a symbol of hope for women's rights and empowerment globally.



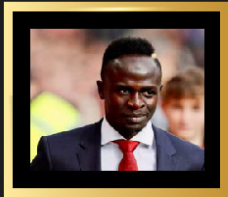
25. OUIDED BOUCHAMAOU

Ouided Bouchamaoui is a Tunisian businesswoman and the former leader of the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade, and Handicrafts (UTICA). Bouchamaoui's career in business began in 1982 when she joined the family company, the Hedi Bouchamaoui Group, which specialises in food processing, distribution, and logistics. She served as the managing director of the group from 1996 to 2011. Bouchamaoui's leadership and contributions to Tunisia's economic and political development have been widely recognised both in Tunisia and internationally. In 2013, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize along with three other civil society leaders for her role in the National Dialogue Quartet, which helped to establish a peaceful and democratic transition in Tunisia after the 2011 revolution. Bouchamaoui continues to be involved in business and social initiatives in Tunisia and is a member of several national and international organisations, including the Women's Forum for the Economy and Society.



2023 AGA OUTSTANDING AFRICAN ACHIEVERS

2023 AGA OUTSTANDING AFRICAN ACHIEVERS



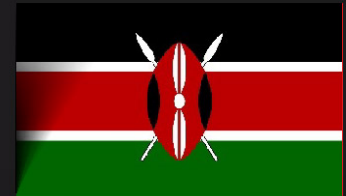
SADIO MANÉ
SENEGAL



ARTHUR ZANG
CAMEROON



PROF. ABDULRAZAK GURNAH
TANZANIA



WANGARI MAATHAI
KENYA



ZAKES MDA
SOUTH AFRICA



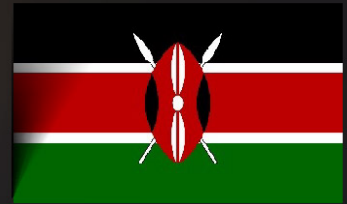
DANAI JEKESAI GURIRA
ZIMBABWE



AISHA YESUFU
NIGERIA



AGNES MATILDA KALIBATA
RWANDA



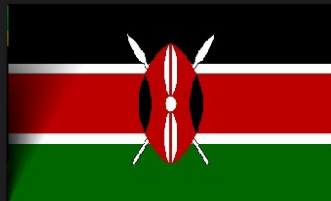
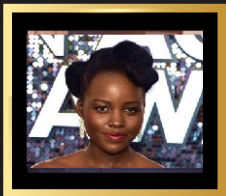
ELIUD KIPCHOGE
KENYA



DR BIBI AMEENAH FIRDAUS GURIB-FAKIM - MAURITIUS



DR ASMERET ASEFAW BERHE
ERITREA



LUPITA AMONDI NYONG'O
KENYA



ERIC YIRENKYI DANQUAH
GHANA



DR HELENA NDUME
NAMIBIA



OUIDED BOUCHAMAOU
TUNISIA



LEYMAH GBOWEE
LIBERIA



DIDIER DROGBA
IVORY COAST

2023 AGA AFRICAN GENIUSES

From the shortlisted candidates, below is a list of winners of the African Genius Award.



DR DENIS MUKWEGE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



PROF. TSHILIDZI MARWALA
SOUTH AFRICA

ACCEPTANCE OF NOMINATION AND CONFERMENT OF AWARDS

Prior to the conferment of awards, all shortlisted candidates or their representatives are contacted in order to verify that they accept the nomination and the prospect of receiving an award. If a shortlisted nominee, or their representative, is persistently unreachable or rejects the nomination, they are removed from the shortlist of potential award recipients. The aim of the AGAs is for all recipients or their representatives to be contactable and in agreement with the issuing of an award on their behalf.



Congratulations

TO OUR AFRICAN GENIUSES



DR DENIS MUKWEGE



PROF. TSHILIDZI MARWALA

