

Beat: Business

## INNOVATION AND RESILIENCE COMMON THEMES AMONGST WINNERS OF AFRICAN BANKER AWARDS

### HERBERT WIGWE WINS BANKER OF 2021 YEAR

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**USPA NEWS** - Standard Bank Group, Africa's biggest bank, rewarded for its COVID-related and women empowerment programmes; Access Bank's Herbert Wigwe wins Banker of the year for second consecutive year; Innovation and resilience featured highly in this year's entries; Organisers highlighted that economic recovery will only happen with greater equity investments on the continent; African Banker Icon highlights the need for higher savings rates to drive investments in Africa.-----

Winners of the 2021 edition of the African Banker Awards were announced today at a virtual awards ceremony. The Awards, since 2013, are held during the Annual meetings of the African Development Bank, the event's High patron, which are taking place also virtually between 23rd and 25th June. The Awards have become the most respected and recognised industry event celebrating African banking achievements. The organisers this year put an emphasis to recognise and reward institutions that contributed to the real economy which has suffered from the impact of Covid-19 as well as contributed to women empowerment on the continent.

#### HERBERT WIGWE WON FOR THE YEAR 2021-----

Herbert Wigwe won for the second consecutive year African Banker of the Year. Access Bank is now present in South Africa following its acquisition of Grobank. As a result of its rapid growth the last decade, Access Bank has become one of the largest retail banks in Africa with over 40 million customers. Morocco's Minister of Economy and Finance, Mohammed Benchaâboun, won Finance Minister of the Year. He was recognised for the exceptional work of his ministry which coordinated an exemplary response to the economic impact from the crisis, helping to protect both lives and livelihoods. The fiscal stimulus provided has cushioned the impact of the pandemic. The ministry managed to crowd in both public and private sector resources that were used to support the most needy. Lesetja Kganyago, Governor of the Reserve Bank of South Africa, was awarded the Central Bank Governor of the year. Under his leadership, the Reserve Bank has managed to act decisively but also, the Committee noted, in a measured way, managing both upside and downside risk. Felix Bikpo earned the Life Achievement Award for his long and distinguished career. When asked for his outlook on the future of the continent, he remained upbeat saying technological developments and also the human capabilities that we have developed in Africa are cause for optimism. Charlie Robertson, chief economist at international investment bank Renaissance Capital won the African Banker icon category. In his remarks he noted that it was important to drive up savings rates to help spur greater investments on the continent, if Africa is to replicate the Asian miracle.-----

Omar Ben Yedder, Group Publisher of African Banker said: "I was really impressed by the entries this year. It showed that the banking sector is healthy and resilient which will be critical if it is to support the economic recovery post COVID. What will be fundamental to our recovery is the support of the real economy, especially SMEs, and also a focus on more equity investments and investments in general. For that, as our African Banker Icon suggested, we will also need to increase our savings rate across the continent. If I had one comment on the winners, it was dominated by men this year. However I should add that the institutions that were recognised in our ceremony all had strong gender programmes, both in terms of supporting women-led businesses but also strong programmes to promote women and have women leaders within their organisations."

This year the Awards were sponsored by the African Guarantee Fund, Bank of Industry (Nigeria), Banque du Développement du Mali and technology partner TagPay.

#### THE 2021 AFRICAN BANKER AWARD WINNERS-----

##### SUSTAINABLE BANK OF THE YEAR

Commercial International Bank (CIB) Egypt

##### INFRASTRUCTURE DEAL OF THE YEAR

Tanzania Standard Gauge Railway \$1.46bn loan facility

Nedbank | Standard Chartered | TDB

##### DEAL OF THE YEAR - EQUITY

Privatisation of Afam Power Plc and Afam Three Fast Power Ltd

FBNQuest

##### DEAL OF THE YEAR - DEBT

African Export-Import Bank, COVID-19 Support Facility

MUFG Bank, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group

AWARD FOR FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Trust Merchant Bank, DRC

AFRICAN BANKER ICON

Charlie Robertson, Chief Economist, Renaissance Capital

FINANCE MINISTER OF THE YEAR

H.E Mohammed Benchaâboun, Minister for Economy and Finance, Morocco

AWARD INNOVATION FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES Innovation for Financial Services

Bank of Industry, Government Enterprise Empowerment Programme

ENERGY DEAL OF THE YEAR

Nkhotakota Solar Power Plant in Malawi / 7.5 MW Solar PV Power Plant in Burundi

African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI)

Agriculture deal of the year

USD 400m Revolving Trade Finance Facility in favour of ETC Group

African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank)

AFRICAN SME BANK OF THE YEAR

Ecobank

BEST REGIONAL BANK IN AFRICA

North: Attijariwafa Bank, Morocco

West: Banque de Développement du Mali

East: Equity Bank, Kenya

Central: BGFI, Gabon

Southern: Mozabanco, Mozambique

Investment Bank of the Year

ABSA

Central Bank Governor of the Year

H.E. Lesetja Kganyago, Governor Reserve Bank of South Africa

Lifetime Achievement

Felix Bikpo

African Bank of the Year

Standard Bank Group

African Banker of the Year

Herbert Wigwe, Group CEO, Access Bank

For more on the African Banker Awards, please visit: [www.AfricanBankerAwards.com](http://www.AfricanBankerAwards.com) Source: IC Publications.

**AFRICAN BANKER:**

African Banker is a quarterly magazine dedicated to banking and finance in Africa. It taps into the growing demand for information about Africa's banking and financial world, a sector that is consolidating rapidly and reshaping the economy of the continent.

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