

VIETNAMESE ENTREPRENEUR WINS PRESTIGIOUS BUSINESS AWARD, PART OF UNCTAD 14

Nairobi, Kenya, 21 July 2016 - A women entrepreneur from Viet Nam received gold at the EMPRETEC Women in Business Awards 2016 on Thursday in recognition of her business success, one of 100 women nominated for the awards.

The awards honor women from developing countries, and countries with economies in transition, who have founded successful firms, created jobs, and become role models in their communities. And all nominees are graduates of UNCTAD's EMPRETEC program, an entrepreneurship initiative offering training in 37 countries and administered by UNCTAD and national partners.

Tran Thi Viet runs Viet Trang Handicraft, which specializes in basket-woven goods using seagrass, jute, water hyacinth, corn leaves, banana leaves, and bamboo. From a small start the company now exports goods to the European Union worth more than \$100 million and employs 250 weavers preserving the traditional weaving culture of Ms. Tran's region.

"I'm very happy to be here with the other finalists, who are a great inspiration to me to carry on in my business," said Ms. Tran. "it is actually my first time to the beautiful Africa."

"When I go back, I will try to keep our business moving forward to create more jobs for more local women in our village. I want to thank all my artisans back home with whom I have worked for forty years," she said.

Other prizes included:

- **Green Prize**, won by Mariana Andrea Nallim, CEO and Founder of REICLARG from Argentina for her outstanding innovative approach to recycling and upcycling, with a focus on producing zero waste and pollution.
- **Social Prize**, awarded to Fatou Saine Gaye, CEO and Founder of Gaye Njorro Hair Plus (Foundation for The Empowerment of Youth) from Gambia for achieving astonishing results by training young people to increase their employability. Her mission is to "get young people off the streets" and 80% of her clients have found jobs.
- **Public Vote**, won by Gladys Ileana Ramos de Orellana, Managing Director of Bhoga, the first company in Guatemala to use cereals, sea salt, dried herbs and pure vegetable oils as ingredients in 100% natural cosmetics. This is the first time that a public vote was held as part of the Women in Business Awards.



UNCTAD Secretary-General Mukhisa Kituyi and International Trade Centre Executive Director

Arancha Gonzalez, presented the award at the ceremony, which marked the close of the World Investment Forum, part of UNCTAD 14.

Before presenting the awards Dr. Kituyi announced that the EMPRETEC entrepreneurship programme will be extended to Kenya in the near future.

South African television personality and humanitarian Gerry Elsdon and Kenyan TV anchor Terryanne Chebet co-hosted the evening, which included a videotaped goodwill message by the Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngucka.

Notes to the Editors

- *The organizers would like to thank: the International Federation of Football History and Statistics and General Electric for the cocktail party. The Maasai Warriors entertainers were sponsored by Pikolinos, who also provided finalists with handmade Maasai patterned shoes. Study tours and expertise mentoring vouchers were offered to the finalists by Bisila Bokoko, Grenoble University and ASEAN Japan Centre. Fresh flowers were kindly contributed by Beatrice Gaku-ba of the African Women Entrepreneurship Group.*
- *The 12 finalists had been selected by a distinguished panel of over 20 world experts in entrepreneurship using criteria such as innovation, leadership and community impact. The other 2016 finalists were (in alphabetical order by country): Bonou Née Zanou Berthe (Benin), Mayra Holguin (Dominican Republic), Lidia Isabel Toaquiza Velasteguí (Ecuador), Dr. Vinaya Shetty (India), Aline Wong (Mauritius), Joyce Kyalema (Uganda), Julia Graciela Crescini (Uruguay), Brenda Omba Kayumba Lacey (Zambia)*

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