

FIVE HONORED WITH AFRICA LINK SOLIDARITY AWARDS



By Africa Link

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The third edition of the Africa Link Solidarity Awards will honor a select group of Africans and Swiss individuals and corporate citizens for their various outstanding contributions to Africa on 8 May 2010 at a ceremony that will also mark the 10th Anniversary of the Africa Link Organization.

A statement released by the Awards Committee named the recipients as Dr. Apolinario J. Correia, the Angolan envoy to Switzerland and Dean of African Ambassadors in the Swiss capital, Berne, who is honored for his consistent and outstanding support to the aspirations and ideals of the Africa Link Organization, also the Embassy of South Africa is honored for its consistent and outstanding support to the organization, Dr. Martin Uhomoibhi, the Nigerian Ambassador to Switzerland, and Permanent Representative to the United Nation Office at Geneva who is honored as African Envoy of Excellence and Dr. Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko the Governor of Sokoto State in Nigeria who receives the award of Champion of Development. A Swiss non-governmental organization, Water for the Third World (Wasser Für Die Dritte Welt), bags the solidarity award of Friend of Africa for its water projects in some African countries which help farmers and rural dwellers to get convenient access to the precious commodity.

Elaborating on the criteria for selection of the honorees, the committee highlighted Dr. Uhomoibhi's engagement of the serious organized business community of his country with its Swiss counterpart for the promotion of effective business relations and concrete projects within a relatively short period of interaction. The statement also commended the competent and outstanding manner in which Dr. Uhomoibhi had handled the sensitive chairmanship of the Human Rights Council.

Commenting on the contribution of the Angolan Ambassador to the support of Africa Link Organization, Africa Link President, Mr. Johnson Oduwaiye said Dr. Correia had been an untiring advocate for the entrenchment of Africa Link as the continent's voice in the Diaspora and had contributed both morally and financially to the sustenance of the organization. He also disclosed that the South African Embassy in Berne has since 2004, irrespective of the ambassador on seat the embassy has always been very supportive of Africa Link activities.

It will be recalled that at its second awards gala, Africa Link had introduced the Champion of Development Award to honor sub-national leaders who had impacted positively on the lives of their citizens through demonstrated good governance and tangible development projects. Governor Magatakarda Wamakko of Sokoto State, the first recipient of this honor is being recognized for his government's outstanding achievement in the area of energy, provision, a thorny problem in Nigeria, and for moving Sokoto state from a low-income state to the second highest generator of internal revenue among Nigeria's 36 states.

The Solidarity Awards were instituted in 2006 by the Swiss-based Africa Link Organization, a non-governmental organization committed to the promotion of a positive African image in the Diaspora and the encouragement of positive integration of African Diaspora communities in the countries in which they live. The organization also publishes the Africa Link Magazine that provides an African voice and networking platform for the African community in Central Europe. Reacting to their awards, the recipients expressed delight at their recognition. Dr. Wamakko said the award was no doubt a demonstration of the appreciation of the people of Sokoto and the impartial observers who decided on the awards of the impact that his government's development projects had had on the lives of the people of the state.

The President of Water for the Third World, Dr. Anton Kohler expressed surprise that his organization had attracted attention and recognition from totally unexpected quarters. "How did you know about us?" he asked in amazement. "Our readers nominated you and we confirmed their assertions," he was told.

Dr. Uhomobhi in his own remarks said the award was an honor not only to him but his country whose highest ideals he sought always to uphold and pledged to continue to do so in whatever capacity he was called upon to serve. Dr. Uhomobhi has since been appointed Permanent Secretary of his country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Signed
Atsen Ahua
Editor Africa Link

Photo: Amba Uhomobhi, right, and Amba Correia