

Africa Business Reporting Awards 2009 winners announced

Diageo announced the winners of the 6th Africa Business Reporting Awards at a gala ceremony at Sheraton Park Lane, Piccadilly, London last night, 2 July 2009. Xan Rice from *The Guardian* and the *New Statesman* won the award for Journalist of the Year 2009.



"The current economic environment demands new ways of looking at African business. In a world marked slowing industrialised economies, Africa offers immense opportunities for technology firms, FMCG companies, and power and water companies - to name just a few sectors. Our perspectives on Africa must change too, or we will miss one of the greatest opportunities to do great business, to develop new markets and to enrich the lives of almost one billion consumers - a population equal to that of India," said Paul Walker, chief executive officer of Diageo, and chair of the judging panel.

"Investors and companies know that Africa is open and ready for business and that a new generation of traders and entrepreneurs are revitalising economies across the continent. Initiatives like the recent North/South Corridor, which will strengthen infrastructure and significantly improve transport across eight African countries are helping to attract new investment in the region," commented keynote speaker, Gareth Thomas, Minister for International Development.

"The media has an important part to play in creating awareness of the opportunities available and reflecting the reality of a continent with great market potential which is being realised by business.

"The Africa Business Reporting Awards are a clear demonstration of how journalists and editors are helping the continent realise its full potential."

Presenting the awards, Dr Nick Blazquez, managing director of Diageo Africa, added: "The media plays a vital role in supporting Africa's investment and private sector development. Today, more than ever before, the quality, quantity and relevance of information regarding Africa's economies is extremely important. This year's winners showcase economic activity on a local, regional and international stage. Throughout the year they have helped to shape opinions and create an enabling environment for individuals, communities and businesses to innovate and create wealth."

2009 winners:

Best Published Feature 2009

Richard Cockett, *The Economist* - 'Opportunity Knocks'

Judges comment: "An excellent 'state of play' article and overview of the economic situation in view of the

impact of the financial crisis on Africa. Evidently topical with an eye for detail through solid research - 'a on-stop-shop' for accessible information. This goes beyond telling the story — it describes why it is happenin

Best Radio Feature 2009

BBC World Service and Business Team - 'Africa Slowdown Series'

Judges comment: 'This is exceptional radio programming and production. Bringing together high quality presentation from three country locations on a highly important and topical issue. It is complete, balanced and insightful'.

Best Television Feature 2009

Sue Beukes, Thabo Mathebula and Amanda Diergaardt, CNBC Africa - 'Doing Business in Africa'

Judges comment: "This is high-quality reporting. It's extremely well filmed to the highest technical standard and the producers have done their homework ensuring excellent access to top-level interviewees. This is a comprehensive, lively and thoughtful piece, which leaves the viewer wanting to see more."

Best Published Photograph 2009

Finbar O'Reilly, Reuters - 'The Search for Gold in Congo'

Judges comment: "Remarkable photography. The journalist is clearly a gifted news photographer who bears witness to events that most of us would prefer to imagine simply can't be happening in a modern world."

Media of the Year 2009

This Is Africa - Financial Times Ltd

Judges comment: "This publication provides a new look and feel to business coverage for the African continent. Its fresh approach through original presentation and engaging writing makes Africa's economic affairs highly accessible to a broader audience. It breaks the mold and has ushered in a new era of reporting on Africa."

Journalist of the Year 2009

Xan Rice from *The Guardian* and the *New Statesman*

Judges comment: "Xan has written several outstanding pieces, covering a lot of ground, with deep insight and stellar writing. Potentially complex subjects receive top journalistic research and analysis that ensure the topics tackled are relevant to all readers. Focusing on a non-specialised audience, this journalist provides with accessible, engaging and thought-provoking work, presenting key issues concerning Africa today in an easily digestible format."

Winners received a bronze statue titled "News" by the sculptor Loni Kreuder and a cheque for £500.

