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## **Media Advisory**

**To all editors**

**01 November 2016**

### **CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS – ICT ACHIEVERS AWARDS 2016**

On Thursday, 27 October 2016, the South African Communications Forum (SACF) launched the inaugural ICT Achievers Awards 2016 in a glittering celebration at the newly established The Galleria, in Sandton, Johannesburg.

The event saw esteemed guests from the government and private sectors, decision-makers and influential role players of the ICT sector come together to honour individuals and organisations that have made noteworthy contributions to ICT in South Africa.

The awards were structured under the theme: “Celebrating Excellence, Innovation and Leadership” and are the country’s only awards aimed at rewarding the twin ideals of innovation and transformation in the ICT sector. They seek to celebrate and reward ICT achievers, increase awareness of the contribution made by the ICT Industry to national economic growth and development and uncover new pathways of innovation in the sector.

Nominations opened on 01 September 2016 and submissions were invited from those in the ICT sector as well as the general public, making these awards open to all South Africans nationwide.

Winners were recognised in seven categories after stringent online and face-to-face judging processes, adjudicated by highly renowned professionals, entrepreneurs, leading figures in the ICT sector and public servants.

***The winners are:***

**TOP ICT SMME**

**Siyafunda Community Technology Centre**

**TOP ICT INNOVATOR**

**GoMetro**

**and**

**ITSI School Project**

**TOP ICT YOUTH LEADER**

**Tumelo Komape – Digital Manager, City of Joburg**

**ACCESSIBILITY EXCELLENCE AWARD**

**Meraka Institute – Text to voice African languages**

**and**

**Robobeast 3D Prosthetics**

**ICT LOCALISATION OF INDUSTRIALISATION**

**Geekulcha**

**TOP WOMAN IN ICT**

**Charmaine Houvet – Public Policy Director Africa, Cisco Systems (SA) Pty Limited**

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

**Michael Lawrie – Internet Pioneer, Retired**

The highest honour of the night, the Lifetime Achievement award, was conferred on Internet Pioneer, Michael Aymer Lawrie, for his role in getting South Africa connected to the Internet in 1991 – this amidst technical and political difficulties in the country at the time. Mr Lawrie led an informal team at Rhodes University that established the first Internet networking in South Africa and set up Rhodes as a gateway to other African countries. In due course, there were links to Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. His distinguished service and commitment spanning more than 25 years made this a noteworthy honour.

A special award was conferred upon Ambassador Sonwabo Eddie Funde, founding Chairperson and President of the South African Communications Forum.

This year's awards were proudly supported by Vodacom, MTN, the Department of Telecommunications & Postal Services, Huawei, Sentech and many other ICT industry players. Sekela Xabiso was the auditor. Times Media Group was the print media partner.

Victor Kgomoeswana, well-known African business expert was the MC for the evening and set the tone with his relaxed presentation style and broad knowledge of the ICT sector.

The keynote address was delivered by Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services, Dr Siyabonga Cwele. He emphasized the need for the sector to work together to address challenges of localisation, transformation and inclusive growth. He further stressed the need to bridge the gap between policy directives and implementation in order to realise overall growth in the ICT sector.

He expressed his encouragement at the inclusion of the ICT Localisation of Industrialisation award, which seeks to recognise those organisations who contribute towards South Africa's agenda to establish and develop local ICT industrialisation.

ICT industry leaders expressed their willingness to engage with the Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services (DTPS) on the White Paper.

The evening was one of celebration for all and it is envisaged that these awards will become an annual flagship event in the ICT industry calendar.

If you would like to arrange to interview the winners, please contact Lwazi Sibisi on 010 330 0730/ 072 178 2544 or if you require further information on the winners, please visit the awards website: [www.ictachieversawards2016.org.za](http://www.ictachieversawards2016.org.za)

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**Background:**

The South African Communications Forum (SACF) is a non-profit industry association whose members include some of the leading stakeholders in the Telecommunication, Electronic Media, Postal, Information Technology, Electronic Manufacturing, OTT and Broadcasting Industries.

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