

DStv Eutelsat Star Winners

8 February 2017

The winners of this year's DStv Eutelsat Star Awards, the unique pan-African competition that encourages young minds to explore innovative thinking in science and space technology, were announced on Tuesday 7 February in Nigeria.

The sixth edition shows sustained interest from African learners aged 14 to 19, attracting over 1 000 entries from 20 countries. Levels of accuracy, creativity and originality were judged to be higher than ever before, both in the essay and poster categories.

Prizes from out of space

Nearly 1 000 entrants were inspired by the topic of the essay category, encouraging them to envision the role played by satellite technology in the Africa of the future. The winner in the essay category Leoul Mesfin from Ethiopia's entry particularly struck the judges as it considers continental and country specific needs and closely aligns to the topic. He has won a trip to Paris and onwards to a launch site to witness a rocket blast into space to place a satellite into orbit. The runner-up in the essay category was Davids Bwana from Tanzania who won a trip for two to visit MultiChoice facilities and the South African National Space Agency near Johannesburg.

In the poster category, first place went to Emmanuel Ochenjele from Nigeria for his depiction of a constellation of diverse satellites all contributing towards the advancement of solutions to challenges such as global warming, conservation of biodiversity, as well as stable energy supply. He will visit Eutelsat in Paris to understand how satellites are operated, as well as a satellite factory. Aobakwe Letamo from Botswana was the runner up in the same category. The four winning schools attended by the overall award winners and runners-up were also rewarded with a DStv installation, including dish, TV set, PVR decoder and free access to the DStv Education Package.

Claudie Haigneré, Europe's leading female astronaut and now special advisor to the Director General of the European Space Agency (ESA), chaired the jury of the Awards for the first time. She commented: "Taking part in the DStv Eutelsat Star Awards for the first time has been quite simply a mind-changing experience, especially as this year's topic was particularly challenging. The visionary ideas on Africa's future satellite landscape developed in essays and posters underscore how Africa's youth expect technology to drive positive change for their continent. The Jury engaged in intense discussions to award the most realistic and creative proposals that deserve to stand out on the African stage. Our congratulations go to all the finalists for their work and to the winners for their brilliant ideas."



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She was assisted in her duty by a panel of international skilled industry experts: Ronke Bello, CEO at Innovative Technology Literacy Services Ltd (Nigeria); Elizabeth Ohene, journalist and former Minister of State to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (Ghana); Stephen Simukanga, former University of Zambia Chancellor and now Director General of the Higher Education Authority; Jenerali Ulimwengu, well-known writer, columnist and lawyer (Tanzania).

The winners were announced in the presence of the Permanent Secretary, his Excellency Sunny Echono, representing the Minister of Communication Technology who said: “To my mind, this sixth edition shows sustained interest from African youths, adding fresh impetus to the mission shared by MultiChoice and Eutelsat to encourage young minds to positively change their world via innovative thinking in science and technology. This can be attested to by the number of Ministries, Departments and Agencies present at this event.” The next edition of the competition will open for entries later this year.

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