

UNCTAD's Women in Business Award 2008

Setting up a successful business is a difficult venture for any entrepreneur - even under the most propitious of circumstances. Women entrepreneurs, however, face an additional burden of having to make their way in what is often considered a man's domain. It is for this reason that UNCTAD's EMPRETEC program, a pioneering UN vehicle for the promotion of entrepreneurship that operates in 27 developing countries, has launched the First Women in Business Award. The Award will be granted to women-owned businesses that have benefited from the business development services of the EMPRETEC programme. The winner and the second- and third-place runners-up will be invited to the Award Ceremony to be held on Monday, 21 April 2008 in Accra, Ghana on the occasion of the Twelfth Ministerial Conference of UNCTAD.

The 10 finalists below are being evaluated by a panel of experts composed of 12 women and 8 men in the field of entrepreneurship and private sector development, and are familiar with developing countries business environment.

Elba Rosa Torrado, Argentina

Business: *Se hace camino al andar*

The firm, whose title roughly translates as "make your own road as you go," provides services to other entrepreneurs through a website and a worldwide radio broadcast via the Internet. It arranges thematic events, organizes business awards, publishes magazines, and provides consulting on entrepreneurship.



Messeret Belihu, Ethiopia

Business: Ras Amba Hotel

Ras Amba is a well-known three-star hotel in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. It provides jobs for 65 people, over half of whom are women. Along with lodging, the hotel has a restaurant, a wedding and meeting hall, a catering service, and an airport shuttle service.



Dédé Léa Edith Medji, Benin

Business: *Mon petit Bénin*

Based in Cotonou, the firm produces fruit juices and chips. Its major product is natural baobab juice, which is bottled and has a long shelf life. Company objectives include promoting local products and health benefits of baobab and other fruit juices, and providing extra income for rural women in Benin.



Augustine E. Hammond, Ghana

Business: Jem Afrik Creations Ltd.

Jem Afrik designs and produces a wide range of afro-ethnic clothing for casual wear, business and evening dresses, among others. It began with a single employee behind a rented sewing machine in 1986, and now has 55 permanent employees, 15 trained and mentored workers who have set up their own businesses and function as subcontractors, and registered sales representatives in the United States, the Caribbean, and southern Africa.



Paola Borges Barcellos Tucunduva, Brazil

Business: ROTOVIC - *Uniforme Lavanderia e Locação Ltda*

ROTOVIC is a laundry business specializing in work uniforms and uniform rental. It is a pioneer in the use of fire-resistant uniforms, operates in an environmentally friendly fashion -- such as by recycling water -- and has 235 employees.



Paully Apea-Kubi, Ghana

Business: Ebenut Ghana Ltd.

This firm, based in the Ghanaian capital of Accra, produces and packages dried fruits, nuts, and vegetables, including coconut, mango, papaya, pineapple, banana, eggplant, tomatoes, peppers, and spicy plantain chips.



Irene Bacchus-Holder, Guyana**Business:** Irene's Creative Handicraft

This business, which is based in the city of Linden and now employs five people, began when Ms. Bacchus-Holder offered gifts made of wood from Guyana's rain forest to several friends. The handicrafts are decorative or functional, are based on original designs, and are made of rare – but not endangered – native wood species.

**Sana Zaal Burgan, Jordan****Business:** Med Grant

Med Grant, based in the Jordanian capital of Amman, promotes medical services in Jordan, especially to international "medical tourism" clients. Its activities are focused on a website called JoHealth.com, through which patients from all over the world can arrange for treatment within the country

**Sapphira Nyabunwa, Uganda****Business:** Safi Cleaning Services Ltd.

This firm, based in the capital of Kampala, provides professional cleaning services, including lawn cleaning, fumigation, garbage collection, dry cleaning, and commercial laundry work. It has 800 employees around the country and a monthly turnover of US\$88,000.

**Emelda Nyasha Nyamupingidza, Zimbabwe****Business:** Nyaya Industries t/a Zesk Products

Nyaya Industries, based in Harare, makes candles and polishing products. Its founder, a trained chemist, started the business after she noticed a dearth in the quality candles and polishes in Zimbabwe in early 1990s of. She employs more than 150 people and exports 56 tons of candles to Malawi each month.

**About EMPRETEC**

EMPRETEC is an integrated capacity-building programme for entrepreneurship development. Under the leadership of UNCTAD and its public and private partners and donors, the EMPRETEC programme provides one-stop-shop for information and business training. By stimulating public-private sector partnerships and developing an institution with a forward looking Advisory Board, EMPRETEC Centres play a major role in connecting entrepreneurs with institutions.

Wherever implemented, the training workshops create lifelong bonds that are essential for future business growth, creating a critical mass of successful, committed entrepreneurs who then become the driving force of the project. EMPRETEC also helps promising entrepreneurs build innovative and internationally competitive small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). It encourages the formation of mutually beneficial business linkages among SMEs and large companies including with transnational corporations (TNCs).

Countries where EMPRETEC is in operation