



**Founder of Ecobank and Asky Airlines Gervais Djondo
receives *AfroChampions* Lifetime Awards
for his pan-African vision and contribution to the development of the continent**

Bamako, January 18th, 2017 - The *AfroChampions Initiative*, an innovative project designed to promote African private sector champions, has been officially launched in Bamako, Mali, at an inaugural dinner sponsored by the Organizing Committee of the Africa-France Summit for Partnership, Peace and Emergence, advisory firm Konfidants and ADS group. Partners of the initiative have honoured on that occasion Founder of Ecobank and Asky Airlines Gervais Koffi Djondo. Mr. Djondo received a special lifetime award for his remarkable contribution to economic exchanges within the continent.

The dinner was organised under the patronage of President of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, represented by Mr. Mohamed Ali Ag Ibrahim, Minister for Industrial Development. The event was attended by representatives from the African private sector and international industry players who were welcomed by Mr. Konimba Sidibe, Minister for Investment Promotion and Private sector in Mali, and Mr. Abdoullah Coulibaly, President of the Organizing Committee of the Africa-France Summit.

As a founding father of corporate pan-Africanism, and a champion of Africa, Mr Djondo's accomplishments remain an inspiring model for entrepreneurs all over the continent. To help pass his legacy on, Mr. Djondo is also the founding patron of the *Djondo Fellowship*, which will mentor the young entrepreneurs and small business to become AfroChampions. "*Successes from elders can make young entrepreneurs even more audacious and creative. We want them to think 'pan-African' from the very beginning of their entrepreneurial journey*", explained Dr Edem Adzogenu, a member of executive committee of the AfroChampions Organization. "*Only this shift in mentalities can drive further economic integration in Africa*", he added.

To accelerate this process, the *AfroChampions Initiative* will deploy a set of strategic projects. These projects include for instance the creation of regional hubs for cooperation, or codifying standards of quality and excellence across the continent. On each of these work streams, the objective in order to move as efficiently as possible, is to bring together public and private decision-makers. "*It is the private sector that creates growth and jobs. It is therefore up to policy-makers to encourage entrepreneurs and enable them to develop their potential*", said Founder and CEO of the ADS group Samba Bathily. "*What we need is a critical mass of African entrepreneurs, able to create African multinationals. The wealth they will create will benefit the entire continent, not just their home countries. This is why we support this project.*"

The *AfroChampions Initiative* and its partners Konfidants and ADS group have set up an ambitious roadmap for 2017, in order to bring onboard both African heads of state and investment promotion agencies. On the side lines of the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa end of January 2017 they will notably introduce the *AfroChampions Hub* project to support intra-Africa investments.

About the AfroChampions Organization

The AfroChampions Initiative is coordinated by the AfroChampions Organization. Headquartered in Accra, Ghana, and working with regional and global partners and governments our mission is to catalyse a homegrown 'African multinational business ecosystem' that supports Africa's transformation through the birth of more African multinationals, the continued expansion of existing ones, and the emergence of Africa's first global giants, using the AfroChampions 2030 Plan.

About Konfidants

Konfidants is a diversified advisory firm operating from Accra, Johannesburg and Geneva. Konfidants which advises multinationals, African local corporates, international organizations and global philanthropies is the primary incubator of the AfroChampions Initiative and broker of its multi-country partnerships in both the private and public sectors.

<http://www.konfidants.com/>

About Djondo Fellowship

Named after Mr. Gervais Djondo, co-founder of and Honorary life president of the Ecobank Group, the Djondo Fellowship is an Africa-focused executive business development program targeted at African companies. The mission is to support indigenous African companies to acquire the needed capacity to successfully launch cross-border operations on the African continent and beyond. By this, it aims to help grow more African multinational companies.

<http://djondofellowship.org/fr/>

About ADS Group

As the name suggests, the objective of the "African Development Solutions" Group is to research, identify and promote solutions that will drive African development. Founded by Samba Bathily in 2004, the ADS Group operates in sectors of vital importance to Africa's economy - project finance; renewables and access to water; media, new technologies and communications; infrastructures, construction, resorts and real estate; vocational training and youth employment; retail industries and franchising; automobile and logistics. To date the ADS Group can proudly put its name to a number of success stories that have made a difference in Africa, such as the creation of Solektra International which launched the *Akon Lighting Africa* initiative. Concurrently, the Group's founder, Samba Bathily, continues to build increasingly ambitious objectives for Africa and Africans.

<http://adsglobalcorp.com/en/supporting-african-development/>

Media inquiries:

Anne-Elvire Kormann-Esmel

Phone and whatsapp: + 33 6 46 41 77 84

aesmel@apcworldwide.com