



Contact: Quohnos Mitchell
Email Quohnos@Glowglobalevents.com
Mobile: +1 3478283292

Contact: Jourden Warren
Email: Jwarren@aaionline.org
Mobile: +1 6466457286

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AFRICA-AMERICA INSTITUTE SET TO HONOR AFRICAN & AFRICAN-DESCENDANT VOICES DURING 36TH ANNUAL AWARDS GALA

(NEW YORK, New York – August 28, 2020) – The Africa-America Institute (AAI) will once again celebrate the many successes of Africa, Africans and African-descendants during its **36th Annual Awards Gala**, taking place virtually on **Tuesday, September 22, 2020**.

Since 1984, the AAI Annual Awards Gala has been the most anticipated African-centered event in New York City. In 2020, AAI is excited to take our Awards Gala digital, for the first time hosting the awards ceremony online and streaming the ceremony to over 23,000 of our alumni, students, partners, and supporters across the globe.

"AAI believes that education is an indispensable means for affirming the humanity of Africans and people of African descent. Over the past six decades, AAI has provided over 23,000 scholarships and fellowships to African Students," AAI President and CEO Kofi Appenteng said of the organization's important work. "Collectively, their voices reveal many of the positive achievements of Africans and African descendants and inspire future generations."

This year's gala theme is *Future Voices*. As we continue to educate and inspire the leaders of tomorrow, we will honor a distinguished group of leaders who are using their influence and creativity to affect real, measurable change today. The honorees are a group of achievers who are laying the foundation for the work that future voices will continue.

This year, AAI is proud to recognize the following leaders and creators, each of whom exemplifies the Institute's mission:

2020 AAI HONOREES

*The National Achievement Award

The People of the Republic of Senegal, to be accepted by H.E. President Macky Sall

*The Presidential Leadership Award

AAI Alumnus, H.E. Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger.

*Distinguished Alumni Award

Claude Borna, Managing Director and Chief Innovation Officer, Sèmè City Development Agency

*International Institution of Excellence Award

The African Export – Import Bank (AFREXIMBANK), to be accepted by Prof. Benedict Oramah

*The AAI African Diaspora Justice & Equity Award:

Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)

*The Africa Illuminated Leadership in Arts & Culture Award

Ms. Issa Rae, Emmy Nominated Actress, Writer & Producer

ABOUT AAI

The Africa-America Institute (AAI) is the flagship U.S. organization connecting Africa to America. Since its founding in 1953, over 23,000 Africans have received scholarships and fellowships from the Africa-America Institute. These Africans are now an esteemed network of alumni, many of whom are leaders and influencers across public, private, and governmental sectors in Africa and globally. Included in this network are current Heads of State, H.E. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia; H.E. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire; H.E. Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger; and H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa. Many of AAI's Alumni have left an indelible imprint, including the late 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Mathaai and the late Barack Obama, Sr.

For more information about AAI's 36th Annual Virtual Awards Gala, visit aaionline.org/gala

#AAIGala2020 #AAIVirtual Gala #AAIAfrica

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