

Makerere University

The 71st Graduation Ceremony (May 17th-21st 2021)

Dr. Akinwumi's Honorary Doctorate Award

Often described as “Africa’s Optimist-in-Chief”, African Development Bank President Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina is widely lauded for his visionary leadership and passion for Africa’s transformation. Formerly the Nigerian Agriculture Minister, Dr. Adesina was first elected President of the African Development Bank on 28 May 2015. He was re-elected for a second five-year term on 27 August 2020 with 100% of the votes of the Bank’s shareholders, regionals and non-regionals — the first such in the history of the Bank since 1964.

Dr. Adesina graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Economics (First Class Honors) from the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Nigeria, in 1981. He was the first student to obtain a First Class Honors in Agricultural Economics in the history of the university. Dr. Adesina holds a master’s degree (1985) and a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics (1988) from Purdue University in the United States of America, where he won the Outstanding Ph.D. thesis award for that year. In 1988, Dr. Adesina won the prestigious Rockefeller Foundation Social Science Fellowship, which launched him into his international career.

A prolific writer with over 75 academic publications including having supervised seven Ph.D. students to completion, Dr. Adesina was the brain behind the Regional Collaborative Masters’ Program in Agricultural and Applied Economics, the development of rice value chains in West Africa, the African Fertilizer Summit in Abuja, Nigeria, and the first ever electronic wallet scheme that facilitated delivery of subsidized farm inputs to farmers, among many other initiatives.

Dr. Adesina is widely consulted by, among others, by the World Bank, United Nations, World Food Programme, FAO, UNDP, USAID and other development partners interested in the progress of Africa, particularly in the areas of innovative financing of Africa’s development priorities.

Dr. Adesina has implemented numerous reforms that have led to considerable gains including:

- i. Opening five regional offices across Africa;
- ii. Sustaining the African Development Bank’s Triple A rating;
- iii. Growing the Bank’s loan income by over 40 percent;
- iv. Achieving the Bank’s highest ever allocation of net income to reserves;
- v. Initiating Africa Investment Forum to help drive private investments in Africa;
- vi. Spearheading the Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa.

Dr. Adesina has led major initiatives at the Bank that have seen:

- i. 20 million people connected to new and/or improved electricity through 'Light Up and Power Africa';
- ii. 74 million people gaining access to improved agricultural technologies under the 'Feed Africa';
- iii. 10 million people benefiting from private sector investment projects under 'industrialize Africa';
- iv. 69 million gaining access to better transport services through 'integrate Africa';
- v. 43 million benefiting from improved access to water and sanitation under 'improve the quality of life of the people of Africa';

Dr. Adesina has been recognized with many awards.

- i. In 2019, he received the prestigious Sunhak Peace Prize in Seoul, South Korea receiving an award prize of US\$500,000 that he has donated to the 'The World Hunger Fighters Foundation';
- ii. In 2019, he joined the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition;
- iii. In 2019, he was appointed by the UN Secretary General as one of the global leaders to help tackle global malnutrition;
- iv. In 2018, he received an Honorary Doctorate in Management Science from Nigerian Defense Academy;
- v. In 2017, he received an Honorary Doctoral Degree from The Federal University of Technology in Akure, Nigeria;
- vi. In 2017, he received The Order of the Griffin from Purdue University;
- vii. In 2017, he was ranked among the top 15 of the 100 most influential global leaders of multilateral development organizations;
- viii. In 2017, he received The World Food Prize "generally known as the Nobel Prize for Agriculture" receiving an award of US\$250,000 he donated to establish 'The World Hunger Fighters Foundation';
- ix. In 2017, he received the YARA Prize Laureate, Oslo for African Green Revolution; receiving a cash prize of US\$100,000 donated to set-up scholarships and prizes to promote African agriculture;
- x. In 2015, he was awarded an Honorary Doctoral Degree in Agriculture by Purdue University
- xi. In 2014, he was named the Most outstanding Minister in Nigeria;
- xii. He was also named Most influential African of 2012 and one of the 100 most influential Africans of 2014;
- xiii. In 2013, he was elected by Forbes Africa as the 'Person of the Year' 2013;
- xiv. In 2011, he was awarded Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters by Franklin and Marshal College (USA);
- xv. He won the 2010 Laureate of the Borlaug CAST Prize, USA;

- xvi. In 2010, he was elected Distinguished Africanist Scholar by Cornell University;
- xvii. In 2008, he was awarded the distinguished agricultural alumnus award by Purdue University;
- xviii. In 2005, he was awarded the title of Outstanding Black Agricultural Economist.

On 31 October 2019, Dr. Adesina led the African Development Bank to achieve the highest capital increase since the Bank's establishment in 1964, when shareholders from 80 member countries raised the general capital from US\$93 billion to a historic US\$208 billion. With Dr. Adesina at the helm, the Bank responded boldly to the coronavirus pandemic. On 3 April 2020, the premier development finance institution launched a landmark US\$3 billion COVID-19 Social Bond followed by a COVID-19 Crisis Response Facility of US\$10 billion.

Dr. Adesina was named African of the Year 2019 by one million readers of the African Leadership Magazine. On 14 December 2020, the Academy of Public Health, the flagship body of the West African Institute of Public Health, announced him as one of the winners of its 2020 Distinguished Fellowship Award for his successful efforts in helping Africa to curb the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Under Dr. Adesina's leadership, US magazine Global Finance named the African Development Bank the "Best Multilateral Financial Institution in the world for 2021".

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