SA nurturing a culture of ubuntu
Top awards handed to worthy recipients underpin principle of sharing and caring

THE economy, mentioned in President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address, was one of the main issues at the second Ubuntu Awards held in Cape Town at the weekend.

The Ubuntu Awards, hosted by the Department of International Relations and Co-operation, recognise leaders in various sectors for distinguished service and contributions that promote South Africa's national interests and values across the world.

The awards event was attended by more than 500 guests, including Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng, National Assembly Speaker Baleka Mbete, National Council of Provinces chairwoman Thandile Modise, Public Protector Thuli Madonsela, senior government officials, MPs, business leaders, media executives and diplomats.

Taking the stage, Zuma turned his attention to serious matters, including the Lily Mine tragedy in Barberton and the economy which he said was a "main priority" for the government.
STAR ATHLETE ‘HUMBLED’ BY AWARD

CLUTCHING the Ubuntu Sports Diplomacy Award, South African track and field golden boy Wayde van Niekerk said he has his sights on breaking records at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro later this year.

The 22-year-old took gold in the men’s 400m at the IAAF World Championships in Beijing last year, becoming the fourth fastest man ever over the distance.

Success runs in Wayde’s family. His mother, Odessa Swarts, competed against former South African champion Gershaime Pillay on the track, in the early 2000s while his father, Wayne van Niekerk was a track and field athlete, “performing well in the 100m and high jump”.

His stepfather, Steven Swarts, ran the 800m and 1 500m, his brother won the 400m Free State championships. His sister Kayla was awarded Free State colours for distance running and hockey.

Shortly after receiving his award at a ceremony in Cape Town on Saturday night, Van Niekerk said: “I am excited for the 2016 Olympics in Rio. It’s all about staying focused and disciplined.”

“It really just humbles me that my country has been supporting me, encouraging me to accomplish as much as I can as an athlete. “Here I am being awarded for that. It is really humbling, he said.”

Another young South African awarded an Ubuntu award was Catherine Constantineides who received the Youth Diplomacy Award.

An activist and champion of the environment who works extensively in SA and highlighted the plight of refugees in camps in the Western Sahara, she said she was grateful for the acknowledgment by the country she was proud to call home. Staff Reporter

Hugh Masekela was presented with the Ubuntu Arts and Cultural Diplomacy Award by Ambassador Viky Khumalo.

The station’s content represents the work being done by the government and communicates South African foreign policy and promotes BrandSA domestically and abroad.

She said South Africa had an increased role in the activities of the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as well as in the international arena.

The winners of Ubuntu Awards in each of eight categories were:

• Cultural Diplomacy Award:
  • Cultural Diplomacy Award: Rescue SA
  • Black Coffee and Hugh Masekela
  • Youth Diplomacy Award: Catherine Constantineides
  • Sports Diplomacy Award: Wayde Van Niekerk
  • Economic Diplomacy Award (Africa): Standard Bank
  • Economic Diplomacy Award (Global): Discovery Health
  • Social Responsibility Award: Ian Scher of Rescue SA

Minister of International Relations and Co-operation Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, left, with UK High Commissioner Judith Macgregor and Baroness Scotland of Asthal, Patricia Scotland, during a meeting with the diplomatic community based in South Africa at the Caball wine farm, Western Cape.

PICTURE: JACOLINE SCHONHNPIN

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We have been meeting with the business community so that we can move together to put in place measures that can ignite growth and create jobs," he said to applause.

He stressed the need for co-operation with the rest of the world as South Africa advanced its vision of building a non-racial, non-sexist South Africa, and said the country wanted an Africa that was peaceful and prosperous.

International Relations Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane gave the background to the awards - now in their second year.

She said Ubuntu - the principles of which were sharing and caring for one another - was the central concept of social and political organisation in the African global outlook.

"The spirit of Ubuntu is tightly woven into our interaction with fellow Africans and the international community," she said.

She referred to Ubuntu Radio (on DStv Channel 888 or www.ubuntuaudio.com), a 24-hour online radio reaching more than 40 African countries.

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- Economic Diplomacy Award (Global): Discovery Health; Social Responsibility Award: Jan Scher of Rescue SA
- Cultural Diplomacy: Rescue SA
- Black Coffee and Hugh Masekela
- Youth Diplomacy Award: Catherine Constantinides
- Sports Diplomacy Award: Wayne van Niekerk
- Ambassadorial Excellence Award: Bente L.M.Polo.

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