

**Strive Masiyiwa, Founder and Chairman –
Econet Group
2015 Brand Africa
Lifetime Achievement Award**

**Speech upon receiving the award on behalf of
Mr Masiyiwa the Brand Africa Lifetime
Achievement Award**

**Delivered by Mrs. Tracy Mpofu, CEO – Econet
Wireless**

Oct 22, 2015

Ambassadors, Chief executives, and
distinguished representatives from
across Africa,

It's a great honour to receive the
Brand Africa Lifetime Achievement
Award.

I speak on behalf of the whole Econet
Group, when I say that we are deeply
humbled by this recognition.

As someone who has been an entrepreneur on the continent for over 30 years, I can share that it really is an extraordinary time to be doing business in Africa.

Yes, there are challenges – all of us in this room know too well that Africa is high maintenance – but the excitement and energy on the continent runs deep.

That vibrancy today is coming from our private sector – and the ideas and innovations driving economic opportunities on the continent.

In the telecommunications sector, which is what I know best, the communications revolution saw individual brands become household names in multiple countries.

It was the first time we had seen that kind of reach across the continent.

Those brands – including ours – emerged with great strength because they reached out to meet people’s needs.

And that has always been my philosophy.

“Great brands meet a need that people have, and inspire them to believe that their world can change”.

It’s helpful to remind ourselves that, as corporate leaders, the brands we are building set a tone and establish a value system in our societies.

Africa is an incredibly young continent today.

More than 65% of our people are below the age of 35.

Our brands have to recognize this and create the kinds of role models that people can look up to and say...“that company was successful, and it became successful with integrity”.

This is a much greater burden for us than say for our colleagues in Europe or America because they have had 200 years of corporate leaders and brands to build upon.

We are building those foundations today and – through our brands - the role models of tomorrow.

In my 30 years as an entrepreneur, one thing that has changed is that people are not just building African

brands, but they are building African brands that are going global.

At Econet we are proud of our African roots, but we are a company with a global perspective. We have operations and investments across Africa, Latin America, Europe and the Asia Pacific.

We are seeing many of our African peers in different sectors doing the same. And we celebrate their successes.

Africa is going global!

I want you to imagine that we are gathered back here ten years from now.

Sitting in this room in 2025, you will see more and more African companies

list on the New York Stock Exchange, on the NASDAQ, on the London Stock Exchange. It will be commonplace by then.

If you think that sounds farfetched, just think back 10 years.

Back to 2005.

If someone told you then that the biggest IPO ever to take place on the New York Stock Exchange would be a Chinese company, you wouldn't believe them.

And if they told you that the company was a Chinese flea market, you would think that they were really crazy!

But it happened.

And now Alibaba is a household name

not only in Beijing, but also in
Manhattan, on Wall St and in Silicon
Valley.

That is going to be the trajectory of
many African brands in the future.

Thank you again for this very special
award. It is a true honour to be
accepting this.

God bless you all.