

## 2016 AFRICAN CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING (ACCER) AWARDS CONCEPT NOTE

### 1.0 BACKGROUND

The global climate change crisis has become the most devastating human problem in recent times. Predictions on the scale of future afflictions to lives and property by climate change-induced causes are also highly threatening. Food insecurity, scarcity of water, land denudation often resulting to landslides, destruction of wetland ecosystems and human wildlife conflict amongst others have not only led to overall environmental crisis, but also culminated to starvation and death.

Developing countries bear the brunt of the effects of climate change even as they strive to overcome poverty and advance economic growth (World Development Report, 2010). According to UNDP report, Climate change is estimated to cause over 145 million deaths in Sub-Saharan Africa, as manifested by extreme famine, flooding, drought, erosion, biodiversity loss and conflicts arising from competition for scarce resources in the next 25 years (United Nations Development Programme, 2007). This will certainly deepen vulnerabilities, erode hard-won gains and seriously undermine prospects for development except if we act now and differently (World Development Report, 2010).

Across the continent, strategies, policies and action plans needed to defeat the challenges posed by climate change continue to face unnecessary setbacks at country, regional and global levels. This is partly due to limited understanding of the issues at hand, poor designs of potential solutions, uncoordinated and systemic failures in implementations of plans by poorly equipped institutions charged to address Climate Change issues.

In developing countries, most journalists are generalists, and have little training in science or the environment – particularly specialist areas such as climate change. Hence, many journalists are uncomfortable covering climate change and its related issues. While many journalists and editors may be interested in covering climate change issues, competition for space with other issues like politics combined with unwillingness of the media houses to cover climate change issues makes up a huge obstacle.

Simplification, demystification and communication of climate change have been the concern of many climate practitioners as the subject has not received the necessary attention from the mainstream media.

Even if the climate change debate could be simplified, a large proportion of rural populations in developing countries, especially those in Africa, are not able to read or write, even in their local languages. One measure that could overcome this impediment to mass communication would be to use a vernacular radio service. Studies indicate that radio broadcasts are effective in reaching local communities with targeted messages.

This is the challenge facing environment and overall development sector which are accorded backburner attention as compared to other societal issues such as politics.

Innovative ways to position climate change and other environmental issues at the centre-stage of socio-economic and political debates should be promoted. There is need to incentivize and interest African journalists and media houses to be champions of climate change.

A number of governments in developing countries are engaged in awareness-raising among their populations. Taking action to minimise the damaging effects of climate change is the responsibility of many stakeholders: governments, scientists, media organisations, development partners, and indeed the general public. Given the power of modern-day media, it is essential that media outlets are encouraged and empowered to tell personal stories about the effects of climate change.

The media's support in educating the public about climate change will ensure that those who are most vulnerable to its impacts – notably the rural poor – fully understand the effects on their lives and their futures, which will in turn help to sow the seeds of grass-roots action.

## 2.0 THE 2016 ACCER AWARDS

African Climate Change and Environmental Reporting Awards (ACCER) is an annual process whose main aim is to catalyze increased African media to the attention of climate change and environment. It is initiated in response to creating awareness on climate change and environmental conservation by way of rewarding exemplary Environmental Journalists in Africa. The goal and inherent intention of ACCER is not only to reshape the African narrative as espoused in Climate Change and Environment debates, but also to build a new culture of and consciousness on how we utilize biological resources in our environment and reduce our carbon footprint.

ACCER is purposed at enlivening Climate Change and environmental education by way of rewarding exemplary reporting on Climate Change and Environment in Africa. Effective and sufficient reporting on Climate Change and Environment has the overall effect of guiding the development of Strategies, Policies, Action Plans and measures on Climate Change. It adequately galvanizes the grassroots communities, County Governments, the National, Continental and International levels.

The ACCER Awards are therefore for dedicated journalists who dedicate their time and resources, chasing stories and highlighting critical environmental issues that help to bring out the plight of the poor and the marginalised in the face of a changing climate, highlight national policy interventions in addressing environmental issues, and showcase best practices and lessons learn in combatting climate change

The inaugural ACCER Awards took place during the World Environment Day on 5th June 2013, bringing together 189 guests from Diplomatic Missions, UN Agencies, Civil Society, private sector and the general public. The Award aimed at recognizing African journalists who had excelled in environmental journalism during the period March 2012 to March 2013. The 2014 ACCER Awards took place at Tribes Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya bringing together Journalists from all over Africa, ambassadors, ministers from African Countries, NGOs, media and other stakeholders. These events sought to encourage constructive environmental focus in the African

media, both at policy and policy implementation level and at the level of public awareness and participation in environmental protection and preservation.

After much consultation with relevant stakeholders and in order to strengthen the ACCER Awards and avoid overlapping with the TAAFA Fellowship, PACJA decided to make ACCER Awards a bi-annual event thus giving ample time to journalists on the TAAFA Academy. As such, the 2015 ACCER Awards could not be held.

PACJA and partners have been able to translate the concept into a tangible and concrete outcome that has generated remarkable interest among journalists, media houses and other stakeholders. In building on the success to deliver an Award Scheme that will be the most prestigious environmental incentive in the African continent, we will draw lessons from the 2013 Awards. In the inaugural Awards Gala night, judges observed that they did not find an entry item that warranted the best Award due to what they termed as low quality of entries. Among other observations and recommendations were:

The 2016 ACCER Awards launched will take place on the sidelines of African Ministerial Conference on Environment in Algiers, Algeria. The event will be graced by PACJA members, and invited

ACCER Awards Gala Night proposed to be hosted in Abuja, Nigeria will be a convergence of a broadened ownership, aimed at catalysing mobilization and sensitization towards the 2014 UNEP Assembly. Proposed as one of the side-events of UNEP Assembly, the ACCER Awards Gala Night is set to be held on 23rd June 2014, a day before the opening of the first ever UNEP Assembly bringing together representatives from more than 194 countries.

## 2.1 Specific Objectives

1. To celebrate the excellence of African high quality journalism on environmental and climate change issues.



2. To improve the quality of environmental journalism in Africa
3. To motivate Journalists and media houses in Africa to effectively prioritize and report on Climate Change and environment
4. To illuminate innovative best-practice approaches both in Policy and Practice towards response strategies and programmes.



### **3.0 ENTRY & SELECTION**

#### **3.1 Criteria for identification**

Identification of recipient of the awards will be through a mass public-driven and interactive process and an independent panel of eminent professionals from diverse backgrounds will be assembled to lead the process.

#### **3.2 Entries & Award Categories**

Potential awardees will present direct entries with brief citations demonstrating how their journalism may have practically enhanced access to information delivery in a specified area. An independent panel of judges carefully selected will review the entries and make a decision on the winners and runners-up for each Award category. The judges will have the final word on who is to be awarded for each category outlined below:

- a) Print
- b) Radio
- c) Television
- d) Photojournalism
- e) Online (multi-media)

#### **3.3 Entry Requirements**

##### I. Eligibility

The competition is open to all journalists from Africa and from established media houses: private or public-sector media. Freelance journalists are also eligible.

##### II. Submission Format

- i. Entries must be original pieces written or broadcast in English or French only.
- ii. Articles published outside the indicated timeframe will not be accepted.
- iii. Each candidate will submit only one print (in word) or audio piece (in mp3 format). All entries are to be submitted in the format below





*Print word limit: Maximum 1,200 words. Font: Arial, 12 point; 1.5 line spacing.*

*Audio pieces: Maximum five minutes.*

*TV pieces: Maximum five minutes*

- iv. All applicants must submit a cover page containing the article title and author's name, along with a short biographical note including name and full contact details: email address, telephone number(s), postal address, town, country, and a scanned photocopy of the author's identification card or passport sent as a jpeg.

Note: In case of any queries or difficulties in submitting the entries contact PACJA Secretariat at [info@pacja.org](mailto:info@pacja.org)

### III. Deadline

Submission of articles begins on March 9, 2016. The deadline for receipt of submissions is April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016. All entries are to be submitted by email to [acceraawards@pacja.org](mailto:acceraawards@pacja.org). Entries received after deadline will not be considered.

### **3.4 Conditions:**

- The award shall be given to only journalists (reporters, editors, producers, broadcasters) working in the media including freelance journalists
- The entries will not carry the identity of the author when they are sent to the jury. The Administration Committee shall, however, maintain the identity of the author of each nomination.
- The Judges reserve the right to disqualify any entry if it does not meet the contest criteria and set regulations.
- By entering, participants warrant that their print/audio materials are original and do not infringe on any third party's rights.
- Contest entry constitutes an agreement to allow PACJA to publicize contestants' names, occupations, countries, and to publish entries.

- Contest entry also constitutes an agreement to allow PACJA to use the material in its publications and in promotional activities. Applicants will retain ownership and all other rights to future use of their material.
- If, for any reason, the competition is not completed as planned, PACJA reserves the right at its sole discretion to cancel, terminate, modify or suspend it.
- The decisions made by the panel of judges are final and beyond dispute.
- All participants in this competition implicitly accept the rules presented in this document.

### 3.5 Competition Theme

The 2016 ACCER Awards competition theme will be

*Making the Paris Agreement a reality – tracking climate change implementation since the COP21*

### 3.6 Selection Process

Judges will review entries and decide on the winners in the print/web-based and radio categories.

The pieces should demonstrate that the author(s) understand the issues outlined above.

The main selection criteria for the pieces are:

- i. Originality, structure, and quality of writing/broadcast piece
- ii. Creativity and color (use of relevant interviews and examples to illustrate the issues)
- iii. Variety of voices/quotes used
- iv. Quality of language (engaging writing/radio style, accurate spelling and grammar, etc.)
- v. Respect of the prescribed format



#### 4.0 THE AWARDS

- i. The award will be in the form of a trophy, a citation, and cash
- ii. 5 Overall Category Winners will qualify to join a one year mentorship in The ACCER Awards Fellowship Academy

#### 4.1 Award Administration

PACJA Secretariat will form a **five-member** Panel of judges – of which not more than two-thirds will be of one specific gender. The Panel will compose of judges from north, south, east, west and central Africa regions, who have proven integrity and impeccable media or media-related background. The Panel shall:

- a) Receive, review, and verify the entries
- b) Develop clear parameters against which the various entries will be rated.
- c) Examine and rate the entries/nominations based on the agreed parameters. The rating will be based on extensive consultation among the judges in order to ensure consensus.
- d) Develop and present a report indicating the final decision with regard to the overall winners, winners in each category and runners-up.
- e) Prepare and submit a report to PACJA highlighting lessons learnt areas of improvement for future Awards and possible opportunities to be considered for the Awards among other issues.
- f) Declare the results during the award ceremony
- g) Carry out any other duty that may be agreed upon with PACJA
- h) All the above functions will be carried out by the administration with absolute transparency

#### 4.2 Terms of Reference for the Jury

- i. The jury must understand that the award is a symbol of recognition for excellence in journalism
- ii. The jury will select/decide the winners in different categories based absolutely on merit
- iii. If nominations in a certain category are not worthy of the award, the jury shall withhold the award in that category for the year.
- iv. The identity of the jury members shall be made public



- v. The jury's selection of the winner in each category shall be final and binding
- vi. All Jury members will sign a declaration stating that they have no conflict of interest
- vii. Appropriate remunerations will be made for their services.

#### **4.3 Award Day & Ceremony**

- i. The award day shall be on the eve of the World Environment Day on June 5<sup>th</sup> 2016.
- ii. PACJA shall be responsible for the organizational logistics on the award day
- iii. The proposed venue of the awards is Lagos, Nigeria. PACJA holds the right for change of venue. In case of this happens, the announcement shall be announced through the media by PACJA





