

Drivers of Change

Change is Gain for Naidoo

Winner — Individual Award
Jay Naidoo

Tarryn Harbour

Best known in South Africa for his trade union activities, Jay Naidoo has spent the past decade working to overcome poverty and malnutrition on the African continent and around the world.

Naidoo began his journey as a volunteer during the 1970s, rising through the ranks until in 1985 he was elected founding general secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the largest federation of unions in the country.

He was elected to Parliament in 1994 and joined Cabinet as minister in the presidency in charge of the Reconstruction and Development Programme.

He later became communications minister, promoting the development of connectivity in rural areas to offer the poor opportunities for education, communication and work.

After leaving politics, Naidoo moved into business and co-founded the J&J Group as well as the J&J Development Trust. In 2001 he was named chairperson of the Development Bank of Southern Africa, an

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institution that drives social and economic infrastructure development in Southern Africa.

Naidoo is currently, among other things, the chairperson of the board of directors of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (Gain).

Gain uses innovative public-private partnerships to fortify staple food items such as maize and salt, for example, so that they have better nutritional value for poor people.

The organisation assists an estimated 273-million people, half of whom are women and children, in more than 25 countries, including South Africa.

“By supporting Gain in its fight against malnutrition, he is making a significant impact in overcoming poverty and stimulating economic development,” said Marina Monzeglio, who nominated Naidoo for a Drivers for Change award.

“The award will provide him with a unique platform to push for nutrition to become a top political and development priority.”

About 3.5-million children die each year from malnutrition and it is estimated that 2% to 3% of a country’s gross domestic product may be lost because of vitamin deficiencies.

“This is unacceptable as simple and cost-effective solutions exist and can improve the nutritional status of populations,” said Monzeglio.

Naidoo, whom Monzeglio describes as “charismatic” and “inspiring”, has enlisted the support of public figures such as Graça Machel in the fight against malnutrition.

“He inspires others to do things differently because he understands the importance of creating change from the bottom up, by empowering those at the bottom of the pyramid to be grassroots change agents.”



Jay Naidoo has brought an ability to inspire change from the bottom up to development initiatives

The judges said Naidoo had made a significant impact as an individual and there was the potential for him to expand his influence further.

Naidoo has received many awards, including France’s Legion of Honour in 2006, one of its highest decorations. His autobiography, *Fighting for Justice*, was published in July.

Information activist hailed

Finalist — Individual Award
Richard Calland

Jiang Alipo

Fighting for the right of access to information is at the heart of what Richard Calland is about. He believes that the lack of information — or information poverty, as he calls it — is one of the main causes of a lack of development.

“The link between development generally, social economic rights specifically, and access to information is a very important one,” he says. “The right to information is actually a leverage right. It is an instrument for advancing other rights — the right to water, housing and so on.”

“If you don’t know what is going on, then you are in a weak position to argue your case. Access to information is vital to development.”

He does not only advocate the right to access to information, he also teaches it as one of his specialisations at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

Calland’s associations are interconnected, centred on the right of access to information in one way or another. He is currently director of the economic governance programme at the Institute for Democracy in South Africa, which he helped create in 1995. He also serves as part-time executive director of the Open Democracy Advice Centre, a law centre based in Cape Town that specialises in Right to Know, an organisation he founded in 2000.

In recent years he served as an expert consultant to the Carter Center, the foundation led by former United States president Jimmy Carter, advising on various transparency projects in Bolivia, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Peru and Mali.

“I regard myself as a social entrepreneur,” he says, “in the sense that what I try to do is to be innovative in creating new organisations.”

Calland’s most recent creations include the Council for the Advancement of the South African Constitution and the inauguration of the International Transparency School at UCT.

The judges applauded him for his remarkable contribution to developing governance in South Africa and the region and his innovative leadership in initiating many effective public-interest campaigns over the years.

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