



Top of their game... Sara Katebalirwe (Uganda), Christine Roux (Cartier), Anne Githuku-Shongwe (South Africa), Wendy Luhabe (jury president) and Ann Kihengu (Tanzania).

Female entrepreneurs get a helping hand

NATASHIA BEARAM

AT SANDTON'S plush Auberge Michel, women taking the foreground in business were celebrated.

Understanding the need to foster and develop women in business, Cartier in conjunction with the Women's Forum launched the Cartier Women's Initiative Award (CWIA) five years ago.

CWIA is an international business plan competition that recognises and rewards female entrepreneurs with start-up businesses that are creative, financially sustainable and have social impact.

For the second time since the competitions inception, a South African has made it to the finals.

Wendy Luhabe, jury president of CWIA Africa and social entrepreneur, introduced the finalists at the luncheon.

Anne Githuku-Shongwe, founder of Afroes, was chosen for her interactive digital media products rooted in African culture.

Finalists were chosen from five continents, each with three representatives.

The other African finalists were Sara Katebalirwe from Uganda and Ann Kihengu from Tanzania.

Githuku-Shongwe said, "I was inspired by my son and daughter to develop a product that children could interact with and learn from in a cool and fun way."

She incorporated a strong social message through mobile phone

games and said, "I decided to target youth in Africa, through mobile technology."

She left the United Nations Development Programme, where she had worked for 13 years, to pursue her dream.

She admitted it had been a giant leap of faith but was definitely worth it.

Cartier believes that enterprise drives progress and has, through the CWIA, identified female entrepreneurs with outstanding business ideas and supported them during the start up phase of business.

Finalists will compete in France for the 20 000 US dollars prize and coaching in October.

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