



SECRETS FROM SWAZILAND

The Quarterly Newsheet from Swazi Indigenous Products

SPECIAL EDITION

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Swazi women recognised in Rio

Equator
Initiative

It marked the proudest moment of her life when Sindile Mamba went on stage at the Awards Ceremony in Rio de Janeiro last week to receive the Marie Aminata Khan Award, recognising the achievements of Swazi Indigenous Products (SIP) towards Women's Empowerment.

The journey to Rio started when SIP were selected in March as one of 25 winners out of over 800 nominations from 113 countries for the Equator Prize - a UNDP initiative to recognize and advance local sustainable development solutions for people, nature and resilient communities.

Few people realise that SIP is 100% owned by its rural women suppliers. From the Queen Mother's initial inspiration, rural Swazi women have truly taken up the challenge of owning and running their own company and producing the Swazi Secrets natural skincare range that sits proudly in quality stores across five continents.

They have had much international help along the way to achieving that, most notably from the WK Kellogg Foundation, UNDP Swaziland and Shared Interest in UK.

Last Wednesday night in Rio provided the climax. The presentations to the 25 winners were followed by the unveiling of the winners of 10 themed awards, giving further recognition to the best performing organisations on a number of key award criteria. Those winners were selected by a highly distinguished panel of jurors including Sir Richard Branson, Mohammed Yunus, Richard Strange and Gilberto Gil.



Sindile accepts the 2012 Equator Prize from UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark



Sindile's up again for the Marie Aminata Khan Prize for Women's Empowerment

To heighten the tension further, the very last themed award to be announced was that for Women's Empowerment. It was a stunned and exhilarated Sindile who mounted the platform for the second time, made all the more special for her by sharing the platform with actor and UN Goodwill Ambassador, Edward Norton.

It was fitting too that it was Sindile who was there to receive the award. More than anyone, she knows what this award will mean to the 2,400 rural Swazi women who are the true recipients of the award. She enjoys a great respect and trust from SIP's members - one of the main reasons that we produce what is widely recognised as the finest quality marula oil in the world is because our members take care to produce the highest quality marula kernels.

So how will SIP spend the very welcome prize money - \$20,000 doubled up by matched funding from the WK Kellogg Foundation? The answer is that the women who crack the nuts will decide for themselves. Next month's AGM will make their views known as well as electing the Board of Directors who will take that decision.