

Tribute to an African Icon: Late Prof Martin Diran Makinde

compiled by Drs Olalekan Akinbo, Veronica NE Uzokwe and Joseph Chibona

But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself. (Philippians 3:20-21)



The Late Prof. Martin Diran Makinde

To the Makinde family. It's great to see so many people here to honor our good friend, colleague and mentor, Professor Martin Diran Makinde. Even though we are of many different ages and have all kinds of jobs and interests, it is certain that we all have one thing in common: our admiration of a man who never quits until the job is done. That man, of course, is Professor Martin Diran Makinde.

Professor Martin Diran Makinde was a principled man, who believed in his community and he inspired many people.

Throughout his whole life, he stood tall for the righteous cause and never bowed to unscrupulous pressure. He was a great man. a wonderful intellect, a great soul of matchless courage, one of the great men of the earth. He lived to be 70 years old, which today and potentially any day is a tremendous accomplishment. Professor Diran Makinde was associated with many institutions involved in the field of science, technology, biotechnology and innovation in Africa.

Professor Martin Diran Makinde was a Senior Advisor in NEPAD Agency Industrialization, Science, Technology and Innovation Hub and based in Midrand, Head office, South Africa. He was also the immediate past Director, NEPAD Agency Planning and Coordinating Agency, African Biosafety Network of Expertise (ABNE) based in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (January 2010- April 2016) and was formerly the Director of the NEPAD West African Biosciences Network in Dakar, Senegal (March 2007- December 2009). He served on the Board of the AfricaBio, a biotechnology stakeholders Association based in South Africa (1999-2008). In both positions, he directed all activities related to capacity building and biotechnology regulation and had endeavored to promote expertise and capacity in biosafety with the aim of empowering African regulators with science-based information to enable informed decision-making on biotechnology products.

Professor Martin Diran Makinde earned the degrees of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in 1976, a PhD in Veterinary Physiology from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria in 1986 and a Diploma in Neurophysiology from Edinburgh University, Scotland in 1981. Prior to joining NEPAD Agency, he was a Professor of Animal Science at the

University of Venda, South Africa where he also served a five-year term as Dean of the School of Agriculture, Rural Development and Forestry (1997-2001). In addition, he taught at the universities of Ibadan, Nigeria (1977-1991) and Zimbabwe (1989-1995). He had well over 50 publications in peer-reviewed journals locally and internationally, as well as several contributions in the form of books/ chapters in books. He had served in several technical advisory boards on the continent and outside. In Africa, he served as a Senior Policy Advisor in Intergovernmental organization working towards the sustainability and long-term continuity of the regulatory frameworks programme in the AU member states beyond 2019.

Professor Martin Diran Makinde was a great mentor to Drs. [Olalekan Akinbo](#) and [Veronica NE Uzokwe](#), a colleague to [Sarah Lawan](#) and [Bosibori Bett](#) - who had collaborative initiatives on Biosafety in agriculture for Africa, and a great friend to [Dr Hamady Diop](#) and [RIS](#) (Research and Information System for Developing Countries). He was a true proponent of science, technology and innovation (STI) in Africa who greatly supported the work of African Union High Level African Panel on Emerging Technologies and a courageous diligent scholar who promoted biotech for Africa's development, stood up against deep ecology and anti-technology movements. He was also a Champion of NEPAD-ABNE for the continent of Africa.

‘There is nothing that is invincible for a soul as spirited as you... yet you bowed down to death to honor God and his will. Rest in peace.

Some excerpts from His Colleagues, friends, Mentees... (through twitter)

1. “He cherished life and life cherished him; everyone who met him, everyone who knew him will remember his invincible smile and contagious laugh.” [Olalekan Akinbo @akinbooa](#). Burkina Faso.
2. He left a great legacy, footprints of [#innovation](#) & [#impactDelivery](#), a driver of [#Biosafety](#) to situate [#Africa](#) Ag. [#Product](#) on the [#Globe](#). Rest in peace [#baba.@verauzo1](#). Dar es Salaam. Tanzania. [Moses Felix@MosesTemba](#). [Ideas4Africa](#). [@Ideas4A](#). [Oluwatosin Aregbesola, PhD@tosinaregbs](#). Nigeria
3. May your soul rest in peace [#Baba Akinsumbo olayinka@akisumbo](#). Abeokuta, Nigeria
4. “May he rest easy” [Noel Migongo@NoelMigongo](#). Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
5. “Always U put much effort and great Innovation in Agricultural new system and transform to small farmers which the target point is to help small scale farmers Ali Said Juma.” [@AliSaidJuma2](#). Pemba, Zanzibar.
6. “RIP.” [@PeterAssey1](#). [Peter Assey](#), Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
7. “He leaves behind an indelible mark on the African veterinary, biotech, biosafety and ST&I landscapes [@mugabeJohn](#) , [@innogen_inst](#) , [@BoloMaurice](#)” [Julius Mugwagwa](#), [@jtmugwagwa](#)
8. “Sad. [#DiranMakinde](#) was a true proponent of [#science](#) [#technology](#) and [#innovation](#) [#STI](#) in [#Africa](#) who greatly supported the work of [@_AfricanUnion](#) High Level African Panel on Emerging Technologies. And a

- wonderful colleague too. Condolences to his family and friends. #RiP” Sarah Lawan, @SarahLawan
9. “As AUDA-NEPAD staff, we convey our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Prof. Martin Oladiran (Diran) Makinde. May his soul rest in eternal peace.” AUDA-NEPAD, @NEPAD_Agency
 10. “A Stalwart Agriculture Scientist and a great friend of RIS and #IndiaAfricaPartnership Prof. Diran Makinde @NEPAD_Agency” RIS @RIS_NewDelhi
 11. “We had collaborative initiatives on Biosafety in Agriculture for Africa. My heartfelt condolences.” Bosibori Bett, @BosiboriBett
 12. “Learnt today of the passing on of my longtime friend Prof. Diran Makinde, SciAdvisor to @NEPAD_Agency and founder Director @NEPAD_ABNE. MHSRIP. @gatesfoundation @lawrencekentt” Arthur Makara, @MakaraArthur
 13. “RIP Diran. A courageous diligent scholar who promoted biotech for Africa’s development, stood up against deep ecology and anti-technology movements.” John_Ouma-Mugabe, @mugabeJohn
 14. “RIP great science fellow. His great contribution to society is well appreciated.” olimi_expedito, @OOLimi
 15. Sad news to hear! I condole with his family. JMT!nda® @JM_Tinda
 16. “A true gentleman who always had a smile and Kind words for everyone. RIP Prof.” Estherine Fotabong, @EstherineF
 17. “All my condolences to his family and the whole @NEPAD_Agency, @NEPAD_ABNE team for which he has been working so hard.” Marc Heijde, @MarcHeijde
 18. “A dear friend and a Champion @NEPAD_ABNE for the continent is gone. You will be dearly missed @NEPAD_Mayaki @NEPAD_Agency. May you rest in peace.” Dr Hamady Diop, @hamadydiop6

Eulogy in honour of Professor Martin Diran Makinde
August 30, 2019
By AUDA-NEPAD

Mrs. Makinde, the Makinde children and extended family, colleagues and friends, fellow mourners:

Sorrow fills our hearts today, a sorrow that is very deep, and very personal. Our lives will be empty as the painful reality of Diran’s passing sets in. They say good men must die, but death cannot kill their names, and it is in this context that I wish to say a few words in honour of Professor Martin Diran Makinde.

When I received word of Prof. Makinde’s passing, I wrote, “He cherished life and life cherished him; everyone who met him, everyone who knew him will remember his invincible smile and contagious laugh. He has preceded us, we will miss him.”

I would like to speak in celebration of his incredible life.

I have known Professor Makinde since 2009 when I joined the NEPAD Agency; he had preceded me by 2 years, having joined NEPAD in 2007. Prof. was at the time Director of the West Africa Biosciences Network (WABnet) based in Dakar and he was the founding head NEPAD Dakar office. He contributed so much through his expertise in his field, becoming Director of the African Biosafety Network of Expertise (ABNE) in Nov 2009 and serving in that capacity until March 2016 based in Burkina Faso. From March 2016 until the time of his death he served as Senior Advisor on Biosafety to the Head of Industrialization, Science and Technology. He served as President of the Board of AfricaBio in South Africa, and prior to joining the NEPAD Agency, he held several academic positions at universities in Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

Fellow mourners,

Prof. was deeply concerned with using the sciences to improve pragmatically the lives of the peoples of Africa. There is a Yoruba Proverb, “What You Give You Get, Ten Times Over,” and Diran’s life and work exemplified this. He was a strategic thinker, innovative and very creative. As such he contributed so much to the development of NEPAD. He gave generously of his expertise, skills, experience and knowledge to the African Union and the African continent more broadly.

Throughout his career he worked with passion, energy and a lot of integrity. Now as we mourn his death we will truly miss an incredibly vibrant individual, someone who was generally warm and brightened up every room that he entered. When it came to the sciences, Diran was my point-person, more recently preparing my talking points for our seminal dialogue on the Fourth Industrial Revolution with the Vice Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg. Never one to miss an opportunity to speak, Prof. Makinde spoke animatedly at that event about the critical importance of Africa becoming a leader in technological breakthroughs. His more recent enthusiasm revolved around the Africa Kaizen Initiative as a method for African countries in quality and productivity improvement with the technical support of the Japanese government. It is with a sad irony today that this memorial service is being held at the time of the 7th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD).

Mrs. Makinde and (children present) our hearts and prayers are with you in this moment of grief. And as we say goodbye to a wonderful man, we recall the words written in Ecclesiastes 3, verses 1-4, where it is said, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens; a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.”

We will all miss him. Goodbye Diran.

Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, CEO, AUDA-NEPAD

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Obituary for Prof. Diran Makinde

Prof. Makinde joined the NEPAD Secretariat as Director of the West Africa Biosciences Network (WABNet) under the Science and Technology Sector in 2007. His duty station was Dakar, Senegal where he set up the regional office that is still operational until now. Setting up a biosciences network in West Africa was a challenging task that required a mature and diplomatic person like the late Prof. Makinde. Very few of us believed him when he accepted the position because that meant a lot of professional and family sacrifices on his part. He had a very strong professional network in Southern Africa where he served on boards, he had a senior position at the University of Venda, and he had property that he had to let go in Queenswood, and a family that he had to leave behind. We all felt and appreciated the sacrifice that Prof. Makinde had to make in order to move to Dakar.

Prof. Makinde was successful in setting up WABNet: he secured office space from the Government of Senegal and indeed established very vibrant collaboration arrangements with national, regional and international research institutions in West Africa. He proved most of us wrong that he was serious about going to West Africa. I recall that even during the time we interviewed him for the job, his repeated words were ... “I want to get closer to my home country..”.

Based on the success of WABNet, Prof. Makinde worked with us again to start a new programme called the African Biosafety Network of Expertise (ABNE). When we presented the programme to the Ministers of Science and Technology, they resolved that the programme should be coordinated from Burkina Faso because it was the second country to South Africa that had commercialized genetically improved crops in Africa. Again, this brought another challenge as to who could we send to open an office in Burkina Faso. The NEPAD Secretariat management sat down and decided that Prof. Makinde should move to Ouagadougou. So, in 2008, he moved to Burkina Faso! A task that he again accepted without any grudges. The only difference this time was that he decided that his wife would join him in Burkina.

Again from Burkina Faso, Prof. Makinde connected to all the AU Member States where his team provided advise on building systems for regulating genetically modified technologies. The programme was in collaboration with Michigan State University which we have worked with very well due to the friendliness and diplomacy of the late Prof. Makinde.

In 2016, Prof. Makinde was transferred from Burkina Faso to Midrand to serve as Senior Advisor on Biosafety. He relocated to South Africa and set himself up again to another challenge which he took on board with passion and dedication. He served in three portfolios, namely as Senior Advisor of Biosafety, a researcher on the AU High Level Panel on Emerging Technologies and a focal point on Kaizen. In all these positions he demonstrated his professional maturity but even more important was the support he provided in mentoring young staff members in the organization. He was the “go to” person whenever little frictions emerged among staff, he handled such frictions with a lot of wisdom such that it did not take long for people to get to work together again. As an animal physiologist himself by training, most of us will not forget the

dietary advices that the late Prof. Makinde used to provide to the young and old, male and female.

Much as I have talked about professional engagements of the late Prof, Makinde in the organization, there are several personal stories that I could tell about the late and his lovely family. They have supported us in several ways but time would not allow for me to go into such a narrative.

Indeed, I on behalf of the CEO of the AUDA-NEPAD, Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, staff and their families, would like to express sincere condolences to the family of the late Prof. Diran Makinde. Their loss is our loss as well!

May the Soul of the Late Professor Diran Makinde Rest in Eternal Peace.

I would like to wish the family members and staff of the AUDA-NEPAD safe travel next week where the late Prof. Makinde will be laid to rest.

I would also like to thank the Chairperson of the African High Level Panel, Prof. Gassama Dia for making an effort to be with us at this ceremony.

Finally, I would like to thank staff of the AUDA-NEPAD, friends and family for being with us during this time of loss of a senior colleague, the late Prof. Diran Makinde.

Thank you.

by Prof Aggrey Ambali, on behalf of AUDA NEPAD

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Tribute to the late Prof. Diran Makinde

A tribute to the late Prof. Diran Makinde who served as member of the BioInnovate Africa Program Advisory Committee (March 2017 to August 2019).

Tribute:

“Prof. Diran Makinde was our colleague and friend who served with passion for science, technology and innovation as key drivers for economic growth and social development of Africa. We remember him, not only for his scientific proficiency and contribution, but also his deep sense of humour, which was always an energizer.”

From Members of the BioInnovate Africa Program Advisory Committee:

Dr. Peggy Oti-Boateng,

Dr. Ignace Gatare,

Dr. Yifru Tafesse,

Prof. Mans Nillson,

Dr. Sunday Ekesi

Prof. Ruth Oniang'o.

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biosciences

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To the family of Professor Diran Makinde,

On behalf of Lindsay Falvey, Chair ILRI Board of Trustees; Jimmy Smith, Director General ILRI, Eugene Terry, Chair BecA-ILRI Hub Advisory Panel, I take this opportunity to express our deepest regret for Professor Makinde's untimely demise.

It was painful to learn of Professor Makinde's sudden death. Please accept our sincere and heartfelt condolences at this most difficult time for your family.

Our hope is that the outpouring of love you have received since Professor Makinde's parting serves as a reminder to you and your family of how much he was valued by all who knew him.

He was a valuable and highly respected member of our Advisory Panel here at BecA-ILRI Hub and the effects of his loss are already felt by those of us who had the honor, pleasure and privilege of working with him.

"He spoke well who said that graves are the footprints of angels." - *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.*

My sincerest condolences,

Jacob Mignouna

Director, BecA-ILRI Hub

