

NMG dominates East African Business Council Awards

By [Staff reporter](#)

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Business journalists from the Nation Media Group (NMG) scooped three of the four awards in the inaugural East African Business Council Awards held in Nairobi, Kenya on Monday night, 14 March 2011.

George Omondi, a business journalist reporting for the *Business Daily*, a publication of NMG, won the East African Business Council Award (EABC) Chairman's Award and the EAC Secretary General's Award for emerging the overall winner at the awards.

Secretary general of the East Africa Community (EAC) Juma Mwapachu said the awards were organised to honour the media and in particular journalists who excelled in reporting the EAC integration in 2010. "We are here to recognise unique individuals. We are very, very proud of them," he noted.

Other winners at the awards were NMG's Walter Wafula and Dorothy Nakaweesi, both business journalists reporting for the *Daily Monitor* a newspaper of The Monitor Publications in Uganda. The duo were awarded the Umoja Award which honours the best reporters for reporting on business in the EAC. They were awarded for their story "Common market benefits far from reality", which was a joint submission.

Barbara Namisango, a radio reporter from the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) was awarded the Green Award which honours the best journalist in reporting environment issues in the EAC.

Positive media coverage encouraged

The awards attracted the participation of 84 journalists from the region but only nine journalists made it to the finals. Speakers at the awards rallied the media and journalists in the EAC to report positively about the integration of the EAC in order to promote its development by periodically creating awareness about new developments in the economic bloc. The EAC consists of five partner states, including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi operating as a common market.

Raila Odinga, Kenya's prime minister urged the media to give a balanced view of the integration because of their influence in the community. "The media must tell of the fruit of the integration and the hurdles it faces. This is because of the role the media plays in shaping public opinion," he said in a speech read for him by Professor Hellen Sambili at the awards.

Patrick Obath, member of the board of directors EABC, urged the journalists to inform the public about the integration

process but in a professional way.

"The media has a role to inform and inform correctly," he said. Business leaders in the EAC were also rallied to give the right information to the media to enable them to tell the correct story of the integration. He also mooted the idea of the media houses in the EAC, to report one good story about the EAC per week. "Let us build on the good stories and hopefully the media will go along with us," he added.

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