

Strive Masiyiwa

Official biography (October 2024)

Strive Masiyiwa is a telecommunications and technology entrepreneur, investor, and philanthropist. In nearly four decades as an entrepreneur, he has founded and invested in businesses globally, spanning Africa, Europe, India, Latin America, the Middle East, New Zealand, and the USA.

Some of his most prominent start-up companies and investments include Mascom Wireless Botswana, Econet Wireless Zimbabwe, Econet Wireless Nigeria (now Airtel Nigeria), Liquid Intelligent Technologies Group, Econet Wireless New Zealand (now 2degrees Mobile), Trilogy Capital Partners Canada (early investor), Cassava Technologies (including most recently, Cassava AI), Africa Data Centres, Sasai Fintech, and Telrad Group Israel. He continues to invest privately through his investment companies and family office.

Born in Zimbabwe in 1961, he left the country as a child and returned after Independence in 1984, working briefly as a telecoms engineer before setting up his first business in 1986. He emigrated from Zimbabwe in 2000, living with his family in South Africa until 2010. They then moved to the UK from where he runs a global portfolio in more than 40 countries on four continents.

A graduate in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from Cardiff University, Masiyiwa holds honorary doctorates from Yale, Morehouse College, Nelson Mandela University, and his alma mater, Cardiff University. His accolades include the World Food Prize Borlaug Medallion in 2019 for his role as Chair of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (focused on strengthening food systems and supporting Africa's smallholder farmers); election in 2023 as an International Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; and the W. E. B. Du Bois Medal awarded in 2024 by Harvard University's Hutchins Center for African & African American Research.

Through his family foundations, Higherlife Foundation and Delta Philanthropies, led by his wife Tsitsi and eldest daughter Elizabeth Tanya, he has supported over 300,000 scholarships for African youth and continues to invest in catalytic social impact initiatives in Africa, focusing primarily on education, health, women and children, youth mentorship, rural transformation, sustainable livelihoods, disaster relief and preparedness. Committed Christians, he and his wife have six adult children. They are signatories of the Giving Pledge.

Current international boards

- Netflix Inc., Non-Executive Director
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Board of Trustees
- National Geographic Society, Board of Trustees

Current advisory roles

- Bank of America, Global Advisory Council
- Bloomberg New Economy Forum, Global Advisory Board
- Stanford University, Global Advisory Board
- US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Standing Committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial
- Chatham House, Panel of Senior Advisors
- Trilateral Commission, Global member
- Robert and Helen Bernstein Institute for Human Rights, New York University Law School, Board of Advisors

- Ashinaga Kenjin-Tatsujin (Japan), International Advisory Council
- International Finance Facility for Education, High-Level Advisory Group

Leadership in philanthropy (organisations he helped establish) include:

- Global Africa Business Initiative (GABI), co-founder
- Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), co-founded with the late Kofi Annan, with support from The Rockefeller Foundation and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Generation Africa GoGettaz Agripreneur Prize, co-founder
- B-Team, inaugural co-founder and member
- Carbon War Room, co-founded with Sir Richard Branson and others, Founder's Council
- Africans Against Ebola Solidarity Trust, co-founding trustee
- Global Business Coalition for Education, co-founding member

Previous roles (international boards, advisory councils, commissions, juries) include:

- **Unilever PLC**, Non-Executive Director (2016-2024)
- **African Union**
 - Special Advisor to African Presidents, US-Africa Leadership Summit Initiative on Food Security, 2022
 - Special Envoy for Covid Response, 2020-2022
 - Head of Africa Vaccine Acquisition Task Team, 2020-2022
 - Reform Task Force, Member, 2015-2018
 - Special Envoy for the Ebola Pandemic Response, 2014-2015
- **United Nations**
 - Global Commission on Adaptation, Member, 2018-2019
 - International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunities, Secretary General's Advisory Board, 2015-2016
 - Commission on Sustainable Energy for All, Secretary General's Advisory Board, 2013
- United States Council on Foreign Relations, Global advisory board member, 2012-2023
- President's Advisory Council on Investment (South Africa), Advisor, 2020-2023
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Member of Committee on Conscience, 2010-2021
- Asia Society, Board of Trustees, 2015-2020
- Pathways for Prosperity Commission for Technology and Inclusive Growth, Co-Chair with Melinda French Gates and Hon Sri Mulyani Indrawati, 2018-2019
- Africa Business Heroes competition, Finalist jury (inaugural competition for African entrepreneurs founded by Jack Ma, fellow juror), 2019
- Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon Campaign, Cervical cancer awareness ambassador, (Initiative of former President George W Bush and his wife, Laura), 2016-2019
- Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (Chair, now Chair *Emeritus*), 2010-2018
- The Rockefeller Foundation, Board of Trustees, 2003-2018
- Africa Progress Panel (set up by Kofi Annan), Panel member, 2013-2018
- Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Humanitarian Prize, Member of international jury, 2012-2018
- Morehouse College, Board of Trustees, 2012-Jan 2017
- Micronutrient Initiative of Canada, (Now Nutrition International), Chair, 2014-2016
- Grow Africa, Co-chair, 2012-2015
- Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Global e-Health Ambassadors Programme, Special advisor and ambassador, 2011-2015

- SMART Africa, Founding member, 2013
- Southern African Enterprise Development Fund (set up by President Bill Clinton and Ambassador Andrew Young), Advisor, 1994-1998

Recognition, honours, and awards include:

- W. E. B. Du Bois Medal, Hutchins Center of African and African American Research, Harvard University, 2024
- International Honorary Member, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2023
- Entrepreneur of the Year, *Spear's Magazine* UK, 2022
- *New Africa Magazine*, 100 Most Influential Africans, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022
- *Fortune Magazine*, World's 50 Greatest Leaders, 2014, 2017, 2021
- *Bloomberg*, 50 Most Influential People in the World, 2020
- Junior Achievement Worldwide Global Business Hall of Fame, 2020
- Speech laureate, 9th Annual Archbishop Desmond Tutu International Peace Lecture, 2019
- Honorary Fellow, African Academy of Sciences, 2019
- Norman E. Borlaug Food Prize Medallion, 2019
- Points of Light Award (UK Prime Minister's Award for Philanthropy), 2018
- Invited by the White House to introduce President Barack Obama at launch of Feed the Future Agriculture initiative, the US government's multibillion dollar program to support smallholder farmers in Africa (for which Mr Masiyiwa led the campaign), 2016
- *Forbes Magazine*, 10 Most Powerful Men in Africa, 2015
- Freedom Award, International Rescue Committee, 2015
- UN Foundation Global Leadership Award for Africa, Africa Against Ebola Solidarity Trust, 2015
- Invited by President Barack Obama to attend G-8 Summit at Camp David, 2012
- *Forbes Magazine*, 20 Most Powerful Business People in Africa, 2011
- *Times of London*, 25 Leaders of Africa's Renaissance Award, 2011
- Builder of Modern Africa Award, 2010
- *CNN/Time Magazine* Poll, 15 Global Influencers of the Year, 2003
- *Times* Global Influencers, 2002
- Ten Most Outstanding Young Persons in the World, Junior Chamber International, 1999
- Zimbabwean Manager and Entrepreneur of the Year, 1998
- Zimbabwean Businessman of the Year (youngest ever recipient), 1990
- Commencement speaker: Africa Leadership University (2018), New York University Stern Law School (2018), Morehouse College (2016), Hult International Business School (2014)

Honorary doctorates

- Yale University (USA), 2019
- Cardiff University (UK), 2019 (Fellow)
- Nelson Mandela University (SA), 2017
- Morehouse College (USA), 2012