



PRESS RELEASE

Equity wins SME Bank of the Year at the Global SME Finance Awards gala

Nairobi, 23rd November 2020... For the third consecutive year, Equity has won the 2020 SME Bank of the year - Africa Award at the Global SME Finance Awards virtual Gala. The win, in the Gold category is testament to Equity's long-standing and consistent commitment towards supporting medium and small-scale businesses across the region, as an avenue towards transforming livelihoods, creating wealth and fostering economic prosperity.

Speaking on receiving the award, Equity Group MD and CEO Dr. James Mwangi noted that the accolade reinforced the Group's commitment and purpose of, transforming lives, giving dignity and expanding opportunities for wealth creation.

"Equity, through its products and services, has continued to empower small and medium sized businesses and has transformed them into instruments of driving value across the society. COVID-19 has challenged the normal operations for many SMEs in Kenya and across Africa. As a leading financial institution, we remain committed to training SMEs, availing opportunities for growth and helping them recover because together, we can build a resilient economy and a greater world," said Dr Mwangi.

Matthew Gamser, CEO of the SME Finance Forum said the Awards provide the winners an opportunity to showcase good practices on the global stage and to foster learning amongst their peers.

"We hope the winners of the Global SME Finance Awards will inspire SME financiers all over the world to learn from their good practices," he said.

By the end year of 2019, SME banking portfolio contributed to 62% of Equity's loan book. The lender has managed to cut a niche across the SME financing sector in Kenya and across the region, through among other factors; innovation.

Equity was recognized for its ingenuity in tailor-making solutions through its offering for the diverse SME groups across its portfolio. The bank's digitization and innovation strategy has increased SMEs access to digital credit and disbursement through innovations such as EazzyBiz, EazzyFx, Eazzy Banking App and Equitel. Further, Equity has continued to support SMEs by equipping them with relevant skills through training and mentorship programs.

"We recognize that this award would not have come if it was not for our partners who responded to our call of championing the social-economic prosperity of the people of Africa. I recognize the Mastercard Foundation for teaming up with us to train over 2.2 million young men and women to become entrepreneurs through our financial literacy programme. We have developed a training course for business development where we have trained 97,000 SMEs. Partners like IFC, AfDB, EIB, PROPARCO and DEG have together offered us USD 500Million loan fund to support SMEs during this COVID-19 period," added Dr Mwangi.

The SME business forms the spine of Equity Group's business portfolio. Renowned as "incubator" and "seedbed" of entrepreneurs, the lender has continued to support businesses within value chains and ecosystems and understands their needs and provide the financial support. As at end year 2019, SMEs accounted for 60% of the bank's total loan book and 78% of total deposits with the lender.



"The responsibility of developing communities is larger than what an institution can do on its own and we want to place a rallying call of championing social economic responsibility of the people of Africa and ask like-minded people to join us as we further this cause," noted Dr. Mwangi.

The Global SME Finance Awards, which is managed by World Bank's IFC, recognises outstanding achievements of financial institutions and fintech companies in delivering exceptional products and services to their SME clients. The award targets institutions that have successfully launched innovative products or services for SME clients, achieved remarkable results in providing finance to SMEs or been an innovator in digital financial services.

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About the Global SME Finance Awards

The SME Finance Forum works to expand access to finance for small and medium businesses. The Forum operates a global membership network that brings together financial institutions, technology companies, and development finance institutions to share knowledge, spur innovation, and promote the growth of SMEs.

The Global SME Finance Awards Endorsed by the G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI), provides an opportunity for institutions to showcase and share their good practices and knowledge, and for the wider SME finance community to learn from their examples.

About Equity Group Holdings Plc

Equity Group Holdings Plc is a financial service holding company listed at the Nairobi Securities Exchange, Uganda Securities Exchange, and Rwanda Stock Exchange. The Group has banking subsidiaries in, Rwanda, Uganda, South Sudan, Tanzania, DRC, and a Commercial Representative Office in Ethiopia; with additional non-banking subsidiaries engaged in the provision of investment banking, custodial, insurance agency, philanthropy, consulting, and infrastructure services.

Equity Group has an asset base of USD 9.3 billion. With over 14.2 million customers, the Group is one of the biggest banks by customer base in the region. The Group has a footprint of 300 branches, 51,560 Agents and 31,265 Merchants and 623 ATMs. The Group is the largest bank in market capitalization in East and Central Africa. The Banker Top 1000 World Banks 2020 ranked Equity Bank 754 overall in its global ranking, 62nd in soundness (Capital Assets to Assets ratio), 55th in terms of Profits on Capital and 20th on Return on Assets. In the same year, Moody's gave the Bank a global rating of B2 with a negative outlook same as the sovereign rating of the Kenyan government due to the Bank's strong brand recognition, solid liquidity buffers and resilient funding profile, established domestic franchise and extensive adoption of digital and alternative distribution channels. Equity Group Holdings Plc is regulated by the Central Bank of Kenya.