

Deal Makers

AFRICA WOMEN 26

Women of Africa's M&A and Financial Markets Industry



FOREWORD

Marylou Greig
Editor

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Women of Africa's M&A and Financial Markets Industry

Africa is a continent of extraordinary diversity – in its people, cultures, economies, and the markets in which business is conducted. Yet across these differences are stories that resonate: stories of ambition, perseverance and resilience; of women who have entered industries where the path was not always clearly marked for them, and who have gone on to build careers, businesses and reputations of their own.

There is no single African experience. A woman working in Nairobi will encounter a very different professional and cultural environment from one working in Lagos, Accra, Cairo or Johannesburg. Yet across these varied landscapes, there are remarkable similarities in the experiences of women who have built careers in traditionally male-dominated fields like finance, law, investment and entrepreneurship.

The women profiled in this, the fifth edition of our Women's Feature, represent just a small part of the growing contribution women are making to Africa's business and capital markets. They come from different countries and professional backgrounds, and their journeys are uniquely their own. Yet common threads emerge: the challenges they have faced, the opportunities they have seized, the people who have supported them and, perhaps most importantly, their determination to create opportunities for those who follow.

For many years, the conversation around women in business centred on breaking the proverbial glass ceiling. That remains important, but perhaps the conversation has evolved. It is now also about what happens once that ceiling has been broken: who comes through the opening, who holds the door, and how we ensure that the next generation does not have to fight the same battles.

As Kenyan social, environmental and political activist and Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai observed in her 2004 Nobel Prize acceptance speech: "Those of us who have been privileged to receive education, skills and experiences, and even power, must be role models for the next generation of leadership."

The women featured in these pages are not simply succeeding within Africa's dealmaking, investment and entrepreneurial landscape; they are helping to shape it. Through the transactions they lead, the businesses they build, the capital they deploy and the people they mentor, they are contributing to a more diverse, dynamic and inclusive African economy.

Their stories remind us that progress is rarely achieved by individuals alone. It is built collectively, woman by woman, opportunity by opportunity, and generation by generation.

As Africa's economies evolve, so too does the face of those shaping them. Increasingly, that face is female. 

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PROFILE



Deal**Makers**  ANNUAL AWARDS
WEST**AFRICA**

Seyi Bella

Banwo & Ighodalo

JOINT INDIVIDUAL DEALMAKER OF THE YEAR - WEST AFRICA 2025

A Partner with over 20 years of experience, Seyi Bella is a member of the firm's Corporate, Securities and Finance teams. She is the lead partner in various practice areas, including Banking and Finance, Project Finance, Project Development and Infrastructure Financing, Private Equity, M&A and Fintech.

Seyi is known for her ability to take the most commercially driven approach in structuring and negotiating deals for setting innovative market precedents. She recently co- led the team that advised African Export-Import Bank in connection with an up to US\$750 million facility advanced to Heirs Energies. She also co-led the team that advised Africa Finance Corporation in connection with the secured financing of up to \$496,4 million for the purposes of financing Heirs' acquisition of a 50.07% equity stake in Maurel & Prom in Seplat Energy. Notably, Seyi led the team as Nigerian counsel to the IFC and Stanbic IBTC Bank in connection with the c.\$80 million advanced to Greenlight Planet Sun King Nigeria. She also led the team that advised the Standard Bank of South Africa and Stanbic IBTC Bank in connection with an up to €70 million facility granted to Supertech Chemical Industry for the construction of a 100,000-ton methanol and 160,000-ton ammonium bicarbonate chemical processing plant.

Seyi led the team that advised on the DealMakers Deal of the Year 2024, advising Renaissance Africa on its acquisition of the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria. During that year, she advised a syndicate of lenders with a €2 billion syndicated loan facility advanced

to the Bank of Industry – a 'first of its kind' transaction (in terms of size and structure) by any financial institution in Nigeria. Seyi also led the team that advised a syndicate of banks in connection with bridge facilities (\$450 million) to Chappal Investments, in relation to the acquisition of Equinor Nigeria Energy Company.

Beyond her transactional work, Seyi plays a pivotal role in the development and standardisation of the global financing market, with a reputation for capacity development of lawyers with interest, or in active practice across her core practice areas. She is currently the firm's designated representative and contact person in connection with its membership in the Loan Market Association (LMA). She has served as a repeat facilitator and speaker at the annual LMA Documentation Training Series in Nigeria. Seyi sits as a director on the boards of NOLT Finance, Ocean Hospitality, Fate Foundation (an NGO committed to the development of training entrepreneurs in Nigeria), and Grayson's Trust Management Services.

Her legal expertise and leadership qualities have been widely recognised by numerous legal directories, such as IFLR 1000, Legal 500 and Lexology Index.

Seyi holds an LL.B from the University of Lagos, a B.L from the Nigerian Law School, and an LL.M from Harvard Law School. She is a member of the Nigerian and New York Bar Associations. 


BANWO & IGHODALO