



News Release

October 7, 2018

Media Contact: Stephen Daniels-Brown
360.790.2052
stephendb@alaffia.com

Alaffia Founders Receive Corporate Excellence Award in Washington D.C.

Founders Olowo-n'djo Tchala and Prairie Rose Hyde recognized for women's economic empowerment efforts in West Africa.

Washington D.C – Under Secretary of State David Hale and Assistant Secretary of State Manisha Singh presented Alaffia co-founders Olowo-n'djo Tchala and Prairie Rose Hyde with the 2018 Award for Corporate Excellence in Women's Economic Empowerment at a ceremony in Washington D.C. on Friday, Oct. 5.

Tchala spoke of the influence his mother, Ina Agbanga, had on his view of humanity and in the formation of Alaffia. "She helped me see the suffering of many, and that suffering is the reason we do what we do today."

"It is clear that aid alone cannot bring safety to the world and eradicate suffering," said Tchala. He and Hyde called on businesses across the country to engage with and help African women enterprises participate in the global economy to alleviate poverty. "What is there to being a human being if we can't contribute to another fellow being?"

The award ceremony was attended by State Department officials and U.S. and foreign diplomats including Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Tibor Nagy who oversees the Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Ambassador David Gilmour who serves in the Togo Embassy and Togo's Ambassador to the U.S., Frederic Hegbe.

Earlier in the day, Tchala and Hyde were invited to the White House to meet with Ivanka Trump who is spearheading a global women's economic empowerment initiative that will be announced later this year. Ms. Trump congratulated Alaffia on the State Department award during a 30-minute meeting in the West Wing.

"We had a very productive meeting with Ms. Trump discussing how Alaffia's business model is helping reduce poverty in Africa through sustainable, fair-trade trade enterprises," said Tchala. "We explained how this is empowering women and making education and health care more accessible."

"We appreciated the opportunity to share our beliefs that Africa and our people are a vital part of our global economy. Women in Africa have witnessed enough pain. We must get to the point, which is why we felt it was important to engage with the White House."

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About Alaffia

[Alaffia](#) was founded in 2003 in the Olympia, Washington garage of husband and wife team, Olowo-n'djo Tchala and Prairie Rose Hyde. Alaffia crafts popular beauty and body care products using traditional African methods. Alaffia is “Fair for Life” certified by ECOCERT (IMO) one of the most renowned international inspection and certification agencies for organic and fair trade accountability.

Alaffia employees and contract “gatherers,” who are mostly women, number more than 14,000 in West Africa. They collect shea nuts, coconuts, herbs and grasses, and, at Alaffia fair-trade cooperatives in Togo and Ghana, create shea butter, coconut oil, baskets and essence used in Alaffia beauty and body care products. These raw materials are then shipped to Alaffia’s manufacturing plant in Tumwater where 145 people are employed. The materials are refined, packaged and prepared for distribution throughout the U.S. and 10 countries.

Alaffia’s non-profit empowerment and sustainability initiatives have resulted in 59,775 trees planted, 34,640 school supply recipients, 8,253 bikes distributed, 25,588 eyeglasses donated, 12 schools constructed and more than 4,800 babies safely delivered in West Africa. To learn more, visit Alaffia.com.

The entire award ceremony may be viewed at the U.S. State Dept YouTube channel [here](#).

Photos of the October 5 events may be downloaded [here](#).

Photo Cutlines (Credit: Alaffia)

Photo 1: (l-r) Assistant Secretary of State Manisha Singh, Under Secretary of State David Hale, Alaffia Co-Founder Prairie Rose Hyde; Alaffia Co-Founder Olowo-n'djo Tchala, 2018 Award for Corporate Excellence Awards, U.S. State Department, Washington D.C. Oct. 5, 2018.

Photo 2: 2018 Award for Corporate Excellence in Women’s Economic Empowerment.

Photo 3: The Benjamin Franklin State Room as guests are seated for the 2018 Award for Corporate Excellence Awards, U.S. State Department, Washington D.C. Oct. 5, 2018.

Photo 4: Alaffia Co-Founders Olowo-n'djo Tchala and Prairie Rose Hyde, 2017.

Photo 5: Alaffia co-founder and CEO, Olowo-n'djo Tchala, at an Alaffia women’s cooperative in Togo, West Africa, September, 2018.