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African Languages in the Digital Age: ACALAN Commends SUA's Landmark AI Win in Geneva

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The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), the specialized language agency of the African Union, extends its formal congratulations to Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) in Tanzania. The university's *Ethnic Voices Project* has been honored with the prestigious Best Use Case Award at the AI for Good Global Summit 2026 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Announced on 15 July 2026, the award highlights the project's vital contribution to the creation of speech datasets, digital tools, and language resources for underrepresented African languages. The initiative successfully bridges artificial intelligence and cutting-edge research with the active preservation of Africa's linguistic heritage.

ACALAN commends the project team for proving that African-led research can pioneer global technological advancements while directly empowering local language communities. The Academy strongly supports the project's mission to close the digital divide; integrating underrepresented languages into modern speech technologies and AI applications is a fundamental requirement for Africa's inclusive digital transformation.

Acknowledging the global recognition, Principal Investigator Dr. Joseph Telemala framed the award as a historic milestone for the initiative, the university, and Tanzania. Co-Principal Investigator Dr. Onesmo Nyinondi further emphasized the critical need for continuous, targeted investment in African-language technologies.

In celebrating this achievement, ACALAN urges African universities, research institutions, governments, and technology partners to strengthen strategic collaborations in language data development and innovation. The Academy additionally calls on young African researchers and local communities to drive the creation of digital resources that make indigenous languages highly visible and functional in contemporary digital spaces.

The international success of the *Ethnic Voices* project is a clear reminder that African languages are not barriers to technological progress. Rather, they are indispensable drivers for innovation, knowledge production, and inclusive socio-economic development.

ACALAN congratulates Sokoine University of Agriculture, the *Ethnic Voices* team, and all affiliated partners on this monumental achievement, encouraging sustained momentum in advancing African languages across global science and technology sectors.

About ACALAN
The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) is the African Union's language agency. ACALAN works with partners across the continent and beyond to promote African languages so they can be used alongside international languages in all areas of life.

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