

EUTELSAT star awards winner returns from France

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Joseph with Eutelsat Chairman and CEO Michel de Rosen

JOSEPH Mahiya, winner of the 2014 DStv Eutelsat competition, has returned to Zimbabwe from a trip to France and French Guiana, the principal prize in the event.

The purpose of the prize was to afford him a chance to visit Eutelsat's headquarters in France, as well as to witness a satellite launch from a station in French Guiana. Accompanied by his mother, he was thrilled with the experience, which he described as a 'once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a budding young scientist.' Joseph also had the opportunity to meet with the

The DStv Eutelsat competition is run each year across Africa and aims at encouraging young Africans to take an interest in science and technology in general, and satellite technology in particular. Joseph, a student at Hellenic International Academy in Harare at the time of his win, won the essay section of the competition, which also features a poster-design section.

Liz Dziva, publicity and public relations manager of MultiChoice Zimbabwe said "This was an amazing opportunity for Joseph, and we are delighted that this prestigious competition was won by a Zimbabwe, which shows us that effort and participation by we Zimbabweans does pay off. We have often had Zimbabweans in the running for competition prizes, as well as for places in reality and other shows, so we are able to show the rest of Africa how creative and participatory we can be. Entries have already been received for the 2015 DStv Eutelsat competition and announcements of local and continental winners will be made early in the new year.

Joseph thanked Eutelsat, MultiChoice Africa and MultiChoice Zimbabwe for their support and encouragement and said the competition helped him and other young Zimbabweans feel the benefits of embracing new technology for the purposes of the development of Africa

On his return, Joseph compiled this personal report:

"There came the long awaited, countdowns finally up. It was time, minds switched to exploring mode plus a little fun. Paris, the city of lights was to wait for us as we took off from Harare International

Airport on a scorching Saturday afternoon.

“Of course one would expect a drastic change in weather like we did upon arrival at Charles de Gaulle airport early in the morning. Astrid Lé Hétét waiting for us and she also happens to be one of the nicest people I’ve come across, indeed.

“I finally had my rest at Hotel Novotel where I decided to compel myself into a deep sleep, a deep sleep tha never materialized. I remembered I had to see the famous Eiffel tower. Souls shuddered in disbelief as I stepped my feet on Champ de Mars gardens, the magnificent tower protruding from the ground like a fast growing shoot which is rigorously opposing geotropism.

“Soon enough it was time for lunch and we all went to a café right near Cathedralé Notre Dame before proceeding to a city tour with Paris Tourismé. I came across the musee du louvre as well as the most expensive street ‘avenue montaigne’ amongst other things. We ended the day by sharing a dinner with Vannesa O’ Connor and Marie Sophie at Café Eclectic.



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Joseph Mahiya with CEO and Chairman of Arianespace, Stéphane Israël

“The next day we promptly took off from Orly International Airport heading for French Guiana in South America where the rocket was to be launched. Arriving at Félix Eboué airport and taken straight to Hotel Antlantis, another 50 minutes. I will not forget the welcome cocktail at Le Creolia restaurant later than night at Hotel des Roches.

“Since the launch had been postponed indefinitely we spent the next day travelling. We went to the launch facilities at ZLS, CDL3 and BIL. A very much native lunch at Carbet des Maripas which I certainly enjoyed. The Pirougue tour on the kekeu river made me feel nervous as the little boat swayed side to side as if to say I want to capsize. The day ended by a meeting at Jupiter Space centre with Astrid taking lots of pictures.

“The launch date was finally ascertained and anxiety gave way to excitement. But before...even we had to go to the zoo where undoubtedly we came across we famous anacondas and various other animals, the biodiversity in the humid region. We had lunch at Mercure Ariatel which is not very far from Atlantis and a little free time to do shopping. “After departing to Jupiter control centre we waited for the Vega launcher to commence the lift off of LISA pathfinder VV06. This is when also the official speeches were broadcasted live.

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Now the countdown began and we all knew we had made it, maybe not yet. Boom! A bright light appeared and blinded all our eyes as if it were the transfiguration followed by a rumbling sound which swept across like a louder thunder. Then very soon we saw LISA pathfinder take off from the pad and she separated as according to plan and when the signal was confirmed, you could only see tears of joy. From the engineers and the members of ESA. It must have been an emotional moment for them... .”



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