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For Immediate Release

## Diversity UK honours race equality pioneers

**29th November 2017, London:** Diversity UK yesterday honoured two race equality pioneers, Simon Woolley, Director of OBV and entrepreneur Wilfred Emmanuel-Jones, with Lifetime Achievement Awards. Mr Woolley was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award for this work on race equality and inclusion at Operation Black Vote and Wilfred Emmanuel-Jones was recognised with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his championship of inclusive entrepreneurship, particularly in rural communities. Chairman of Diversity UK, Dilip Joshi MBE said *"In times of uncertainty, we need exceptional people like Simon and Wilfred to show us how to make this country a better, fairer, happier and more equal place. So I am honoured to have two really inspirational equality pioneers working in Britain at a time when we need leaders who have the courage and bravery to pave the way for others"*.

The presentation of the Lifetime Achievement Awards took place on Tuesday 28th November 2017 in London at the annual Diversity UK Paul Stephenson Lecture, which is named in honour of the social worker who, in 1963, led the boycott of the Bristol Omnibus Company for discrimination that eventually paved the way for the Race Relations Act of 1965. The awards were presented by Dilip Joshi MBE, Chair of Diversity UK; Lopa Patel MBE, Founder & CEO of Diversity UK and Anil Bhanot OBE, Chair of the Ethnic Minority Foundation, sponsors of the lecture.

Anil Bhanot OBE said, *"we need the names of people like Simon Woolley and Wilfred Emmanuel-Jones to be in the the history books for people to understand and identify with the struggles of British immigrants. It's always the first movements which are significant when we write laws on a blank canvas. As our recent Integration research report has shown, our political and institutional structures need to be changed to improve access to all"*.

In his acceptance speech, Wilfred said *"most people of colour in the UK are descendants of brave and courageous people. You have to have the entrepreneurial spirit to leave behind everything you know in order to improve your life and the lives of your children. My role is to stay true to that entrepreneurial spirit"*. He acknowledged the Lifetime Achievement award was great motivation for continuing to fight for greater diversity and inclusion in business.

Simon Woolley said, *"as a campaigner and activist you do things because it's the right thing to do and because you care. You work to change the world and hope that others will follow in your footsteps and every now and then someone taps you on the shoulder and 'thank you' for the work that you do. So you can imagine how moved I am to be thanked today with this Lifetime Achievement award"*.

Ends.

Hi-res images are available from this link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/kkp3g4gl8ihwe9v/AABBhLuzbzUtpzBpGFS4ryTqa?dl=0>

*Caption 1: L to R - Dilip Joshi MBE, Chair of Diversity UK, entrepreneur Wilfred Emmanuel-Jones, Co-Founder & Director of OBV Simon Woolley and Lopa Patel MBE, Founder & CEO of Diversity UK*

*Caption 2: Lopa Patel MBE, Founder & CEO of Diversity UK with Simon Woolley, Co-Founder & CEO of OBV who received the Lifetime Achievement Award for dedication to equality and inclusion.*

Notes for Editors:

### **About Diversity UK**

Diversity UK is a think tank to research, advocate and promote ideas for improving diversity and inclusion in Britain. It is an evidence-based initiative that seeks to influence policy, enhance civic engagement and improve the perception of the minority ethnic community in Britain. Diversity UK delivers its objectives by undertaking research, facilitating debates, hosting roundtable meetings and producing white papers.

Founded in 2012, Diversity UK is a registered charity (No: 1155189) in England & Wales run by Mr Dilip Joshi MBE as Chair; Ms Sushila Khoot as Deputy Chair and Mrs Lopa Patel MBE as CEO. Diversity UK is run as a membership organisation with a database of over 1500 senior UK BAME professionals. For further information visit <https://diversityuk.org/>

### **About Dilip Joshi MBE**

Dilip Joshi MBE is the Chair of Diversity UK, an equality and inclusion think tank. He is a seasoned professional with extensive senior level management experience who was awarded the MBE in June 2000 and the prestigious citation of 'Videsh Samman' for contributing to Indo-British understanding by the High Commissioner of India. He holds a Masters degree in Transport and Logistics Management and is a Fellow of Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. Previously Dilip has coordinated the Hindu Council UK (HCUK) relationship with the Greater London Authority and Central Government and lead the HCUK drive in making private and public sector organisations more representative. Dilip is chair of Asian Welfare and Cultural Association, Eastleigh, and a special advisor to the chair of Ethnic Minority Business Group (EMBG). He is an interim Strategic Adviser on Economic Development and International UK-India Trade relationships.

### About the Diversity UK Chairman's Award

The Diversity UK Chairman's Award for Lifetime Achievement is presented by the Chair of Diversity UK, Dilip Joshi MBE, and is bestowed upon those who have contributed significantly to the improvement of equality and inclusion in Britain and those who have had significant impact on championing entrepreneurship and enhancing the economic participation of the UK's BAME communities, particularly in technology industries.

Previous recipients of the Diversity Chairman's Award for Lifetime Achievement are:

- **Mr Dinesh Dhamija**, Founder of ebookers, for technology & entrepreneurship (2015)
- **Dr Paul Stephenson OBE** for dedication to equality and inclusion (2016)
- **Mr Shankar Narayanan**, Head of UK & Ireland at TCS, for technology (2016)
- **Professor Shafi Ahmed** for innovative use of technology in medicine (2017)

### About Lopa Patel MBE

Lopa Patel is a digital entrepreneur with significant experience of creating start-ups and transforming businesses through technology. The founder of two ventures in online media and a data-driven marketing consultancy, she is an evangelist for STEM, innovation and bridging the skills gap in business and publishes the annual Top 100 Asian Stars in UK Tech list, as well as promoting entrepreneurship among young people. She is also the Founder & CEO of equality and inclusion think tank Diversity UK and was recently conferred with an Honorary Doctorate by The Open University for her efforts in promoting diversity in science and technology, and for her broader contribution to British industry, society and culture. An inspirational leader, Lopa has been recognised with many accolades including an MBE for services to the creative industries in 2009 and the Queen's Award for Enterprise Promotion 2015.

### About The Ethnic Minority Foundation

The Ethnic Minority Foundation (EMF) is a national registered charity created in 1999. It is an independent organisation that seeks to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice in society, and address the growing inequalities in the world system. EMF's social justice programme has sought to tackle some of the most difficult issues facing societies today. It has worked to try and protect children from exploitation; safeguard the rights of women and other vulnerable groups; tackle poverty and seek social applications for new technologies. Currently most of its work is focused on social enterprises and providing services and opportunities to local communities. For further information, visit [www.emfoundation.org.uk](http://www.emfoundation.org.uk)

### **About Anil Bhanot OBE**

Anil Bhanot read Actuarial Science at university but then qualified as a chartered accountant and has been running his own practice, based in West London for the last 27 years. He was one of the founding members of Hindu Council UK in 1994 and was first elected as General Secretary in 2003, serving two terms. He was awarded an OBE for his community cohesion work in 2010.

Anil's voluntary work then widened into other ethnic minorities when he was elected as Chair of the Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations (CEMVO) from 2009-2011. Presently he is the Chair of the Ethnic Minority Foundation which works for social justice and he runs it's social enterprise arm the Peepul Centre Leicester bringing Theatre, Arts, Sports, Fitness and Nursery facilities to the local communities.

### **About Simon Woolley**

Simon Woolley is the co-founder and Director of Operation Black Vote, the first comprehensive campaign to focus exclusively on the Black and minority democratic deficit. He is a former Commissioner at the Equality and Human Rights Commission and now sits on a number of boards including Police Now; the Open Society Foundation: Global Drugs Policy project and the Roma initiative Project.

He has sat on 4 successful Government task forces: REACH which looks at why some Black youths are alienated, Harriet Harman's BME gender committee looking at ways to improve political representation for BME women. David Lammy's Review of race in the criminal justice system and Baroness McGregor review of race and employment.

Simon was voted onto the Grass roots Powerlist 2002 which was published by the Big Issue and has also been awarded the Men of Merit Award in 2003 and the Bernie Grant community award in 2005; the Daily Telegraph most influential 'Left' thinkers 2009 and 2010; the Evening Standard's London's 1000 most influential people 2010, and 2011, and the Black Powerlist for 5 years running from 2012-2017.

Simon is a regular contributor to The Guardian's Comment is Free web site and also writes for the Guardian, The Huffington post and the Independent newspapers. He is a regular contributor for the African, Caribbean and Asian press. He regularly appears on national TV and radio programmes. He speaks fluent Spanish and has an understanding of Italian. In 2012 he received a honorary Doctorate for his work on equality and human rights by the University of Westminster

## About Wilfred Emmanuel-Jones

Wilfred Emmanuel-Jones is, in his own words, 'a poor boy, done good'. He was born in Frankfield, Clarendon, Jamaica and then, after his parents came to the UK in the 50s, was raised in inner city Birmingham.

Having proved a difficult school student with unacknowledged dyslexia, he left school without achieving any qualifications. For a number of years Wilfred worked as a chef before pursuing a career in television. Unqualified but ambitious and persistent, he talked his way into working in television, rising to become a producer/director for the BBC. He is credited with bringing many of the top UK celebrity chefs to the small screen including Gordon Ramsay, Antony Worrall-Thompson, Brian Turner and James Martin.

In 1994 he founded a food and drink marketing agency in London which went on to run successful marketing campaigns for Loyd Grossman sauces, Kettle Chips, Plymouth Gin, Cobra Beer and other challenger brands.

Wilfred subsequently fulfilled a lifelong ambition and bought a small farm in Devon in 2000. This inspired him to develop and launch one of the most successful food brands in recent times in the UK – The Black Farmer - with his own range of gluten free sausages, bacon, chicken, burgers, meatballs, cheese and eggs available in supermarkets across the UK.

In 2005 he launched a rural scholarship scheme through which young people from inner city communities were given the opportunity to experience what it is really like to live and work in the rural community. A Channel 4 documentary filming the progress of the youngsters "Young Black Farmers" has been widely aired to much acclaim.

Wilfred is a classic entrepreneur and has the "anything is possible" attitude to everything he approaches. He is a business mentor and regularly gives motivational talks to young entrepreneurs.

He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Marketing by Plymouth University in Devon, UK in 2012.

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