

24 July 2015

**United Nations General Assembly Informal Plenary Meeting
on the Nelson Mandela International Day and Award Ceremony for
the Inaugural Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize**

In recognition of Nelson Mandela's contributions to democracy, racial justice, reconciliation, and his service to humanity, the United Nations General Assembly declared 18 July (his birthday) as Nelson Mandela International Day.

The United Nations General Assembly marked Nelson Mandela International Day with an informal meeting in the Trusteeship Council Chamber at UN Headquarters starting at 10:00 a.m. on 24 July. The meeting included a ceremony to award the first-ever United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize.

The laureates, Dr. Helena Ndume of Namibia and H.E. Mr. Jorge Fernando Branco Sampaio of Portugal attended to receive the Prize.

Speakers at the General Assembly meeting included the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa; the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda, the UN Secretary-General's Chef de Cabinet, Ms. Susana Malcorra (on behalf of the Secretary-General) chairs of five UN regional groups (Bangladesh, Finland, Paraguay, Romania and South Africa) Reverend Jesse Jackson.

**United Nations General Assembly Informal Plenary Meeting on the Occasion of
the Nelson Mandela International Day and the Award Ceremony for the
Inaugural Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize
Trusteeship Council, United Nations Headquarters, New York**

24 July 2015

Context

On 10 November 2009, the General Assembly (GA) adopted by consensus the inaugural resolution A/RES/64/13 and thereby proclaiming 18 July as the Nelson Mandela International Day to be observed annually, starting in 2010. The resolution was co-sponsored by over 165 member states from all regions of the world and represents the overwhelming support of the international community.

This annual observance provides a befitting occasion to pay tribute to this global icon and acknowledge his values to the service of humanity particularly in the areas of conflict resolution, peace and dialogue, promotion of human rights, reconciliation and gender equality.

On 31 January 2014, the President of the General Assembly appointed the Permanent Representative of South Africa to facilitate consultations with member states on his behalf on the draft resolution to establish the Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize to further honour and pay homage to the extraordinary life and legacy of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

Following this facilitation, the General Assembly on 6 June 2014 adopted resolution 68/275 on the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize, as a tribute to the outstanding achievements and contributions of individuals to the purposes and principles of the United Nations (UN). This resolution mandated the Secretary-General in consultation with the President of the General Assembly (PGA), to establish the criteria and procedures for bestowing the Prize.

Subsequently, the Secretary-General presented the proposed criteria and procedures for bestowing the Prize (statute) for consideration by the General Assembly. In this context, the PGA appointed the Permanent Representative of Algeria to conduct on his behalf, consultations with member states on the proposed statute. On 2 April 2015, the General Assembly adopted 69/269 entitled "Statute of the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize" following conclusion of successful consultations with member states.

In accordance with the afore-mentioned resolution, the General Assembly decided that the selection committee to determine individuals to receive the Prize will be composed of "five representatives of member States of the United

Nations, one to be selected by each of the five regional groups, namely, African States, Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States, and Western European and other States, for a period of five years and a Representative of the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations, to serve as ex officio member of the Committee". Subsequently, the respective Permanent Representatives of Algeria (African States); Saudi Arabia (Asia-Pacific); Mexico (Latin American and Caribbean States); Latvia (Eastern European States); Sweden (Western European and others States) and South Africa (ex-officio member).

The 24 July 2015 event will also be unique opportunity to bestow the inaugural Prize to the two winners.

Objective

Mandela Day is a global call to action for citizens of the world to take up the challenge and follow in the formidable footsteps of Madiba, a man who transformed his life, served his country and freed his people. Its objective is to inspire individuals to take action to help change the world for the better and in so doing, to build a global movement for good.

The annual informal meeting forms part of the global events in observance of the Nelson Mandela International Day. The GA event provides an excellent opportunity for the UN membership, agencies and other stakeholders to celebrate and recognize the long-standing dedication of President Mandela.

Target audience

The informal plenary meeting will include participation of UN member states and observers, relevant NGOs, private sector representatives, civil society and ordinary people. The session will be live-streamed over the Internet by UN Television.

Format

The event will take place from 10:00 an until 12:00 noon at the UN Headquarters, New York (Corner E42 street and 1 Avenue). The President of the GA will preside over both the annual observance and the award ceremony. It is proposed that the PGA open the meeting with few remarks and followed by the Secretary-General's remarks.

Following that, a formal ceremony will be held to bestow the Prizes to the two recipients. The Prizes will be presented by the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution A/RES/69/269. The Chairs of the five regional groups will deliver messages on behalf of their respective regional groups of the UN General Assembly.

About 4 eminent personalities should be invited to share their messages for this day focusing on how Mr. Nelson Mandela inspired them in their own lives as how they view the observance of this day. Others will be invited to attend but not necessarily speak at the meeting. Possible names may include the following:

- H.E. Mr. Ruhukana Rugunda: Prime Minister of Uganda
- High-level representative of the Government of South Africa
- Rev. Jessie Jackson: Anti-apartheid activist and civil rights activists
- Ms. Oprah Winfrey: Talk show host and Philanthropist

It is suggested that each speaker prepare their remarks of 10 minutes. Preferably, panelists should not use digital presentations for their respective interventions. Musical items could be rendered from a choir or group in the NYC vicinity.

With regard to the social responsibility work, it would be recalled that in line with the A/RES/64/13, individuals around the world are encouraged to devote 67 minutes to helping others, by volunteering in a hospital, tutoring a child, providing food for the homeless, or any other community service.

In this context, the Department of Information is organizing a community service project known as the UN-Green Thumb. This event will include participation of UN staff and volunteers in the UN-Green Thumb between 12:30 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. The event will be held behind the UN Secretariat building, near the telecommunications satellite dish, in the newly established United Nations Food Garden. The President of the General Assembly, visiting high-level representatives from the Government of South Africa and the Permanent Mission, 2015 laureates of the Nelson Mandela Prize, as well as representatives from the Mayor's Office of NYC will also be invited to attend.

Draft Programme
General Assembly Award Ceremony for the UN Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela
Prize
And Annual Observance of the Nelson Mandela International Day
24 July 2015, Trusteeship Council
10:00 a.m. -12:30 p.m

10:00 – 10:10 Opening Remarks by the H.E Sam K. Kutesa, President of the
General Assembly

10:10 – 10:40 PGA begins the Award Ceremony

10:40- 10:50 Statement by Ms. Susanna Malcorra, Chef de Cabinet,
Executive Office of the Secretary-General on behalf the United
Nations Secretary-General

10:50- 11:00 Statement by H.E. Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, Prime Minister of the
Republic of Uganda

11:00- 11:10 Statement by Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Sr, Founder and President of
Rainbow PUSH Coalition

11:20- 11:50 Remarks by Chairs of regional groups (5 minutes):

- Senegal: African States
- Bangladesh: Asia-Pacific States
- Romania: Eastern European States
- Paraguay: Latin American and Caribbean States
- Spain: Western European and Other States
- United States of America: Host Country

11:50- 12:00 PGA Adjourns the Meeting

*******END OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLENARY MEETING*******

12:15-12:30 Public Service Activity in the UN Food Garden (behind
UN Secretariat Building, adjacent to
Telecommunications satellite dish) Organized by DPI

24 July 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Nelson Mandela International Day and Award of Inaugural
Prize**

**Right Honourable Dr. Rukahana Rugunda, Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda,
Excellencies,
Ms. Susana Malcorra, Under-Secretary-General and Chef de Cabinet, representing the
Secretary-General,
The Reverend Jesse Jackson,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this annual General Assembly observance of the Nelson Mandela International Day. I wish to extend a special welcome to my Prime Minister, Right Honourable Dr. Rukahana Rugunda, and the Reverend Jesse Jackson, Founder and President of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition.

I also warmly welcome the two Laureates of the first United Nations Nelson Mandela Prize, Dr. Helena Ndume and H.E. Jorge Sampaio as well as other distinguished guests.

Excellencies,

The General Assembly in 2009, proclaimed 18 July as Nelson Mandela International Day, to be observed annually. Since 2010, we have gathered here at the United Nations, and elsewhere around the world, to celebrate the remarkable life and contributions of Nelson Mandela.

Nelson Mandela International Day is a global call to action for all citizens of the world, to take up the challenge and follow in the formidable footsteps of Madiba; a man who transformed his life, served his country and freed his people.

The objective of the Day is to inspire individuals to take action to help change the world for the better in diverse ways; and in so doing, to build a global movement for good.

Though former President Mandela passed on, on December 5, 2013, his legacy and inspiration remains as important today as ever. It is for this reason that we must continue to do our part to honour his legacy through both our words and deeds.

This annual observance also provides a unique opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Mandela as a global icon, and acknowledge his commitment to the service of humanity, particularly in the three pillars of the United Nations – peace and security, development and human rights.

On this Day, we are reminded of the personal sacrifices that Mr. Mandela made in the collective struggle of his people. His unwavering and tireless efforts paved the way for the liberation and democratisation process in South Africa.

This illustrious son of Africa dedicated 67 years of his life to public service in his country. His struggle and commitment inspired people around the globe, far beyond his own country, South Africa.

Today, the late Nelson Mandela remains an international symbol of hope and humility; spanning across generations, races and religions.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,**

In his last address to the General Assembly on 21 September 1998, President Mandela expressed his hope for a better world thus, and I quote:

“As I sit in Qunu, and grow as ancient as its hills, I will continue to entertain the hope that there has emerged a cadre of leaders in my own country and region, on my Continent and in the world, which will not allow that any should be denied their freedom as we were; that any should be turned into refugees as we were; that any should be condemned to go hungry as we were; that any should be stripped of their human dignity as we were.” End quote.

As we reflect on Madiba’s legacy, leadership and life, we must also commit to making a difference through individual and collective actions that promote positive change in our communities and our world.

Since assuming office as President of the General Assembly for the 69th session, I have underscored the importance of putting people at the centre of everything we do. Together, Member States, Observers and stakeholders are formulating an ambitious post-2015 development agenda, which seeks to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development, to be adopted by world leaders in September.

Last week, we adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which will support the implementation of the new agenda. And in December, a new universally binding agreement on climate change should be concluded in Paris to preserve our planet.

We can all be proud of what we have accomplished so far, and should continue to be inspired by the spirit and legacy of Nelson Mandela, as we address the many challenges facing humanity.

This year's Nelson Mandela Day observance is indeed a special occasion. For the first time here at the United Nations, we are bestowing the inaugural Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize.

The Prize was designed to honour and recognize the outstanding achievements of two distinguished individuals, one female and one male, who have dedicated their lives to the service to humanity, particularly in the promotion of reconciliation, social cohesion and community development.

The efforts of the awardees ought to have made a significant difference to the lives of others as inspired by the life and values of Mr. Nelson Mandela. Such efforts should also be in line with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

This unique Prize will serve as an inspiration to all who work tirelessly to contribute to and improve the well-being of others, and in so doing, promote the values of the United Nations.

It is therefore my great pleasure to welcome Dr. Helena Ndume of Namibia and H.E. Jorge Fernando Branco Sampaio of Portugal as the inaugural Laureates of the first ever United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize. Both laureates have been influential leaders in their communities.

In her work as an ophthalmologist, Dr. Ndume has treated tens of thousands suffering from blindness and eye-related illness. To date, she has helped treat more than 30,000 Namibians with eye surgery and intraocular lens implants to address blindness, cataracts and myopia, at no cost to the patients.

H.E. Jorge Sampaio has shown a longstanding commitment to freedom, human rights, democracy and peace.

He worked throughout the 1960s and 70s to defend political prisoners, and later served as a member of the European Human Rights Commission of the Council of Europe, among many responsibilities he has held. From 1996 to 2006 he served as President of Portugal, during which he focused on several international issues, including HIV-AIDS, drugs and children's rights.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I congratulate both Laureates on their well-deserved selection as the first recipients of the Nelson Mandela Prize. I thank the Members of the Selection Committee, the distinguished Permanent Representatives of Algeria, Latvia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Sweden and South Africa, in ex-officio capacity, for a job well done. I also convey my appreciation to the Department of Public Information for their support throughout the selection process.

The United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize that the Laureates will shortly receive should inspire them, and all of us, to make our contribution, in different ways, in the service of humanity.

Let us continue to be inspired and guided by Nelson Mandela's poignant and powerful message when he said: "We can change the world and make it a better place. It is in your hands to make a difference".

I thank you for your attention.