

22 June 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Announcement of the Winners of the UN Nelson R. Mandela
Prize**

Statement Attributable to the Spokesperson for the President of the General Assembly

H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa, President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly (PGA), has announced that Dr. Helena Ndume, of Namibia, and H.E. Mr. Jorge Sampaio, of Portugal, are the first ever laureates of the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize.

The Prize was established in June 2014 by the General Assembly to recognize the achievements of those who dedicate their lives to the service of humanity by promoting the purposes and principles of the United Nations while honouring and paying homage to Nelson Mandela's extraordinary life and legacy of reconciliation, political transition, and social transformation.

The Selection Committee entrusted with the responsibility for selecting the winners decided on two laureates as the inaugural laureates of the first ever United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize.

Dr. Helena Ndume of Namibia is an ophthalmologist whose life's work has been the treatment of blindness and eye-related illnesses, both in Namibia and throughout the developing world.

H.E. Jorge Fernando Branco Sampaio of Portugal became a leader in the struggle for the restoration of democracy in Portugal, served as Deputy Minister for External Cooperation; as Mayor of Lisbon from 1989 to 1995, and, from 1996 to 2006, as President of the Republic.

On behalf of Member States and on his own behalf, President Kutesa warmly congratulates Dr. Ndume and Mr. Sampaio and thanks the Selection Committee for its hard work and dedication.

Nominations were received from a broad variety of sources including Member States and Observer States of the United Nations, entities and intergovernmental organizations having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, institutions of higher education, as well as independent research centres and institutes, NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and laureates of the Prize.

Chaired by the President of the General Assembly, the United Nations selection Committee for the Prize this year was composed of the Permanent Representatives of Algeria, Latvia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and Sweden, representing the five United Nations geographical regional groups. The Permanent

Representative of South Africa was an ex-officio member of the Committee. The UN Department of Public Information served as the secretariat.

The award ceremony will take place on 24 July 2015, at United Nations Headquarters in New York. It will be part of the annual commemoration by the General Assembly of Nelson Mandela International Day.