



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

19 June 2015

Excellency,

Further to my letter dated 12 June 2015, I have the pleasure to inform you, on behalf of the Members of the Committee entrusted with the responsibility for selecting the laureates of the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize for 2015, that following its deliberations on the nominees, the Committee agreed by consensus on the following two laureates as the inaugural recipients for the Prize:

1. Dr. Helena Ndume (Namibia)
2. Mr. Jorge Fernando Branco Sampaio (Portugal)

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 68/275 and 69/269, the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize is an honorary award presented once every five years as a tribute to the outstanding achievements and contributions of two individuals, one female and one male, in recognition of their dedicated service to humanity, in the promotion of reconciliation and social cohesion, and in community development, guided by the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

The award ceremony will take place during the annual commemoration by the General Assembly of Nelson Mandela International Day scheduled for 24 July 2015 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. I have attached short profiles of the two laureates for your information. A detailed Programme for the event will be availed in due course.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam K. Kutesa', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Sam K. Kutesa

To All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

Dr. Helena Ndume (Namibia)

Dr. Helena Ndume is a Namibian ophthalmologist who has dedicated her life and career to treating blindness and eye-related illnesses, both in Namibia and throughout the developing world.

Born in Namibia, she left the country for exile and lived in Zambia, Gambia and Angola. She studied medicine at the University of Leipzig and qualified as a doctor in 1989. Upon completion of her medical internship at Katutura Hospital and Windhoek Central Hospital, she returned to Germany to specialize in ophthalmology at the University of Saarland.

While attending a conference in the United States in 1995, she visited the booth of the U.S. Surgical Eye Expeditions (SEE). She joined the organization's roster of over 600 volunteer eye surgeons in 1995 and soon started to organize eye camps throughout Namibia. As a result, several international groups like Surgical Eye Expeditions, Seeing Without Borders and individual doctors have travelled to Namibia every year, dedicating their time and expertise helping to restore poor people's eye sight.

To this day, Helena Ndume has ensured that some 30,000 blind Namibians have received eye surgery and are fitted with intra-ocular lens implants free of charge. She currently heads the eye department at the Windhoek Central Hospital and holds several international awards including:

- Red Cross International Humanitarian Service Award (2009);
- Rotary International Humanitarian Award in the fight against blindness (2008);
- Namibia National Science Award (2005);
- Humanitarian award in the prevention of blindness in Santa Barbara, California, USA (2001);
- Lions International Award in recognition of sincere and devoted efforts with Lions Operation Brightsight Project (1999).

Mr. Jorge Fernando Branco Sampaio (Portugal)

Mr. Jorge Sampaio has shown a longstanding commitment to freedom, human rights, democracy and peace throughout his political life. He was born in Lisbon on September 18, 1939. In 1961, he graduated in Law from the University of Lisbon. Whilst at university, he was involved in various academic activities that marked the start of a persistent political action against the dictatorship. He was elected President of the student's union of the Faculty of Law in 1960-61 and Secretary-General of the Federation of Students Associations in 1961/62. In this capacity he became involved in the students crisis in the early 60s, which led to a widespread revolt that shook the regime considerably and lasted until the 25th of April, 1974.

During the years of the revolution he played an important role in promoting dialogue with the moderate wing of the Armed Forces Movement and actively supported the positions of the «Group of Nine», who played a key role in supporting a transition to a democracy in the South European model. In March 1975, he was appointed Deputy Minister for External Co-operation in the IV Provisional Government. From 1979 to 1984 he was a member of the European Human Rights Commission of the Council of Europe, where he played an important role in defending fundamental rights and in contributing to a more dynamic implementation of the principles outlined in the European Convention on Human Rights.

In 1995, Mr. Jorge Sampaio stood for the presidential elections. He was sworn in as President of the Republic of Portugal on March 9, 1996 and was re-elected on January 14, 2001. During his tenure as President of Portugal, he focused on several international issues, including HIV-AIDS, drugs and children's rights and promoted the cause for Timor-Leste's independence. In 2006, he was appointed the first UN Special Envoy to Stop Tuberculosis. In 2007, current UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon designated him as High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations. Mr. Sampaio is now a leading a multi-stakeholders initiative – the Global Platform for Syrian Students – aimed at providing emergency scholarships to Syrian Higher Education students affected by the conflict.

Mr. Sampaio holds several Portuguese and Foreign Honours, including:

- Doctor Honoris Causa, by the University of Aveiro (2008), the University of Coimbra (2010), and the University of Lisbon (2010);
- Charles V European Award 2004, by the Fundación Academia Europea de Yuste;
- XIV North-South Prize Award (2008);
- Premio Diálogo de Culturas 2010, by the Ayuntamiento de la Antigua y Leal Villa de Montánchez;
- Medal of Gratitude, awarded by the European Solidarity Center (2010);
- VI International Prize Sevilla Nodo Entre Culturas, awarded by Fundación Sevilla Nodo (2011).