

The Bureau of the Congress

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Candidates for the North-South Prize 2021

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¹ This document is classified confidential until it has been examined by the Bureau of the Congress.

North-South Prize 2021

The North-South Prize is awarded every year to two personalities, organisations or institutions (preferably one from the North and the other from the South, keeping, when possible, the gender balance). The Prize rewards their commitment to the defence and promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law as well as to the development of intercultural dialogue and the reinforcement of the North-South partnership and solidarity, in conformity with the principles and priorities of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe. As institutional stakeholder of the North-South Centre, the Congress is invited to propose two candidates for the North South Prize 2021.

List of possible nominations (by alphabetical order)

1. Yvonne AKI-SAWYERR, Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone

Yvonne AKI-SAWYERR became the second woman Mayor of Freetown on 7 March 2018, thereby fulfilling her will to “make a change”. In 1999, she co-founded the Sierra Leone War Trust (SLWT), which supports disadvantaged youth in Sierra Leone. She is still a member of the Board of Trustees today. She became involved in the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone as a planning Officer at the National Ebola Response Centre (NERC). For this commitment, she was awarded the Ebola Gold Medal in December 2015 by the President of Sierra Leone, Ernest Bai Koroma, and was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II in 2016. This experience enabled her to react quickly to the Coronavirus crisis. She remained confined 14 days after a trip to the United Kingdom to set an example, then went to the markets to distribute masks and sanitary products to “give the means” of prevention to her citizens, half of whom had no access to running water. The city has also set up special handwashing facilities in public places.

Yvonne AKI-SAWYERR is leading the change towards an inclusive, smart and sustainable city of Freetown. As a member of the Mayors Migration Council, she advocates for global action against climate change and works for the creation of resilient cities that offer opportunities for all, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. Under her mandate, the city of Freetown is committed to tackling global warming by targeting two sectors that emit greenhouse gases: sanitation and transport. In this regard, she launched the project #FreetownTheTreeTown in January 2020 to address the challenges of flooding, soil erosion and water shortages. More than 450 000 seedlings had been planted by October 2020. The project “Freetown Blue peace” was launched in December 2020 with the objective of providing access to clean water to all citizens, especially in the numerous informal neighbourhoods, as a factor of peace, socio-economic and health development. She is also an advocate of women empowerment at local, national and international levels. On 6 April 2021, she was distinguished by the Penn Institute for Urban Research with an Urban Leadership Award.

2. Mohamed BOUDRA, Mayor of Al Hoceima, Morocco

Doctor of Medicine, **Mohamed BOUDRA** became Mayor of Al Hoceima in 2003 and was successively re-elected in 2009 and 2015. He was president of the Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate region from 2009 to 2015 and member of the House of Representatives between 2011 and 2016. He was also co-president of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM). Since 2013, he has been President of the Moroccan Association of

Mayors (AMPCC) and Vice-President of the Moroccan delegation of Partner for Local Democracy to the Congress. During his various mandates, Mohamed BOUDRA has endeavoured to work for stronger Mediterranean co-operation in favour of gender equality, democracy, and solidarity.

During the COVID-19 crisis and in the framework of his mandate as President of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Mohamed BOUDRA conveyed a message of solidarity and support to all local actors underlining the need for dialogue and close co-operation between all local authorities to learn from each other's experience. Furthermore, he highlighted during several international events the instrumental role played by mayors around the world to "adapt to the situation and meet the needs of their citizens in this period of health crisis" and the resilience shown by territories. He also stressed the deep consequences that the pandemic might bring about: "tomorrow, we will no longer talk about migrants but about citizens of cities. Distressed tourists, migrant workers and undocumented migrants are experiencing the pandemic in host communities and are being treated equally in the face of the pandemic".

3. **Zdeněk HŘIB**, Mayor of Prague, Czech Republic

Zdeněk HŘIB is the Mayor of Prague since 2018. Being elected on civil society-led group formed in 2009 "pirate party", HŘIB stands for new practices and policies according to the principles of open and good governance. At political level, he stands in opposition to Czech President Miloš Zeman and Prime Minister Andrej Babiš. In December 2019, he co-signed the "Pact of Free Cities" with the Mayors of capital cities of the Visegrad Group countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), with the objective of promoting the "common values of freedom, human dignity, democracy, equality, rule of law, social justice, tolerance and cultural diversity". The Pact is an example of a city-to-city cooperation, which explicitly refers and relies on the language of international law. When it comes to the city of Prague, this Pact is only one of the several examples of the current mayor's fight against the rise of populism and for human rights.

HŘIB has won praise for restoring Czech Republic's image beyond Czech borders as a champion of human rights and self-determination, thanks to the positions he took against authoritarian regimes and in favour of Taiwan and Tibet, following the legacy of the Czech Republic's first post-communist President, Václav Havel. HŘIB has been honoring the country's vision of itself as liberal, democratic and Atlanticist, characteristics that defined political thought after the fall of communism in 1989.

Besides, HŘIB has embarked his city in a green, clean, smart and sustainable transition with the ultimate goal of cutting CO2 emissions by 45% by 2030 and becoming carbon neutral by 2050. His party, the Pirate Party, has largely supported the SDGs implementation in the country raising awareness among citizens to support the strategic framework of Czech Republic 2030. Mayor HŘIB has also taken part in the UN initiative "Billion Tree Campaign", planting about 200 000 new trees only in 2019.

4. **Fatimetou MINT ABDEL MALICK**, President of the regional council of Nouakchott, Mauritania

Fatimetou MINT ABDEL MALICK is the President of the Regional Council of Nouakchott (with a population of 1.1 million inhabitants) since 2018, being the first woman to hold this

position. She has a significant 17-year long experience as the Mayor of Tevragh-Zeina, one of the nine communes of the Nouakchott Urban Community from 2001 to 2018, making her the first woman in her country to hold this position. During her mandates, she reformed the administration and improved the education, especially for young girls. As an active advocate for the empowerment of women, especially at the local level which she defines as a priority sphere for women to embrace, she participated in the creation of the Network of African Locally Elected Women (REFELA) and was its President from 2012 to 2015. She has faced the Covid-19 pandemic, remaining close to her citizens, organising distribution of masks and disinfection products, together with planning training activities to fight the spread of the virus.

She is also involved in environmental protection, social cohesion and international cooperation. She took part in the first UN-HABITAT General Assembly, held in Nairobi from 25 to 29 May 2019, where she pleaded for the anchoring of decentralisation and cooperation between member cities and all institutions or bodies interested in the issue for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. She also participated at the 2019 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction where she said that local and regional authorities should have a greater role to play in risk management and community organisation.

5. Marvin REES, Mayor of Bristol, United Kingdom

Marvin Rees, has been Mayor of Bristol since 2016, making him the first directly elected Black Mayor in the United Kingdom. Within his city composed of people coming from 180 different countries, he is engaged in promoting an open, multicultural, and inclusive society. The promotion of education to global citizenship for children and young people is among his priority as a means of ensuring equality between all people. Since 2010, Bristol enjoys the status of “City of sanctuary UK” in the United Kingdom which Mayor Rees considers as instrumental both for refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers, but also for anyone (including women and children fleeing domestic violence) seeking shelter. Through his mandate, Marvin Rees has worked on many different issues at the local level, such as: opening shelters across the city for homeless people; launching the “Bus Deal” to get 100% bio-gas buses; setting the UN Sustainable Development Goals as part of Bristol recovery; announcing the Disability Equality Commission and the Commission on Race Equality (CORE). The CORE has been set to look and resolve race ethnicity discrimination in Bristol, where black and minority ethnic communities in the city experience significant inequalities in education, employment, and criminal justice.

Besides, in January 2019, he launched the “One City Plan”, an initiative gathering a wide range of public and private actors to define a comprehensive vision of a fairer, healthier, and more sustainable city by 2050. His work was commended in 2020, when he was named politician of the year in the Business Green Leaders Awards 2020 by the Penn Institute for Urban Research. With Marvin Rees, the city of Bristol participates in many European and international networks such as the Global Parliament of Mayors, Eurocities and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. Mayor Rees is also part of the leadership board of the Mayors Migration Council, where he promotes city-to-city cooperation and a greater governance of migration between cities of the North and of the South. In 2020, he has collaborated in the Mixed Migration Review, focusing on urban migration and on the importance of cities in migration progress.

6. **Giuseppe SALA**, Mayor of Milan, Italy

Giuseppe SALA has been the mayor of Milan from 2016, where he is committed to the development of a more inclusive, sustainable and international city. The actions he conducts follow the objective of improving his citizens' life, for example through the project "Sustainable Milan" in which the municipality is committed to face climate change and to improve the quality of air in the city. Important green initiatives have been launched, such as: the "Low Emissions Zones" which cover almost the entire municipal area through the extension of the metro lines and the renewal of full electric bus fleet by 2030, incentives for the purchase of electric vehicles and energy efficiency of buildings; improvement of car, bike and scooter sharing services. Moreover, the project-concept "The city in 15 minutes" aims to create an urbanistic model where essential services (schools, pharmacies, supermarkets, parks...) are reachable within fifteen minutes walking or biking in the same neighbourhood. This city model has to do with the recovery of public space and the revision of Milan's collective habits to create a more sustainable and healthier city life. During the last one and a half year, the Covid-19 pandemic has strongly hit the city of Milan. Despite the emergency and crisis, Giuseppe SALA has been able to protect and implement the principles of good governance and transparent communication. He created and organised a crowdfunding campaign called "Fondo di Mutuo Soccorso", to help both small and medium enterprises and citizens affected by the economic crisis induced by the safety governance measures.

Giuseppe SALA is also engaged and active at the European and international level and recently expressed his wish to cooperate with the European Green Party. This choice reflects the example of a city acting towards the complete implementation of the UN Sustainable Development goals and also the openness of the city towards the European landscape. Giuseppe SALA is currently part of the C40 taskforce for the elaboration of the post COVID-19 recovery plan, "C40 Mayors agenda for a green and just recovery". Among the measures supported by this taskforce are programmes for the creation of sustainable jobs, greater rights and support for all workers whose contribution proved essential during the COVID-19 crisis, investments in green sectors and investments for safe and reliable collective transport and new protected spaces for pedestrians and cyclists.

7. **Tjaša FICKO**, City Councillor and Deputy Mayor of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Tjaša FICKO has been a City Councillor and a Deputy Mayor of Ljubljana since 2010. Her fields of work are culture, tourism, international relations, corporate communication, economics, and development projects. She is a member of the Commission for Mandate Questions, Elections and Appointments and the Commission for International Relations. She has often remarked the importance of real contact between authorities and citizens, making them part of the decision-making process. Among her responsibilities is the strengthening of international recognisability and the reputation of the city of Ljubljana brand. She promotes the city vision, activities, and achievements at many events at home and abroad and shares good practices in numerous renowned international conferences. She is currently working to make her city, Ljubljana, easier to live for the citizens, developing green public transport and improving pedestrian streets.

Tjasa FICKO has been part of the Executive Committee of the largest network of European cities "Eurocities" and she is currently contributing to the "Sustainable city recovery" from the

COVID-19 pandemic together with mayors and councillors of other European cities. She has been the head of the project “Ljubljana, European Green Capital 2016”, the European Green Capital Award is given to European cities that have a record of achieving high environmental standards, are committed to ambitious goals for future environmental improvement and sustainable development. She is currently collaborating in the sustainability strategy “Vision 2025”. This project has raised environmental awareness amongst the citizens and transformed Ljubljana into a model for other cities to emulate. Due to her commitment through the years, Tjasa FICKO has received the award “Woman of the Decade” during the global conference Women Economic Forum 2016, in New Delhi. This global forum aims to create connections and communities of inspiring women around the world, enabling women’s networking and connections, and empowering women’s entrepreneurship and leadership in all walks of life.

Institutions and organisations

8. Network of Locally Elected Women of Africa (REFELA) – in recognition of 10 years of activism for the promotion of women’s rights

The Network of Locally Elected Women of Africa, REFELA (which stands for “Réseau des Femmes Elues Locales d’Afrique”) was created 10 years ago as an integral part of United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) - Africa to represent locally elected women within the global Women’s Commission of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG Women). UCLG is a global network of subnational authorities and their associations that is committed to representing, defending, and amplifying the voices of local and regional governments to leave no-one and no place behind. Actions conducted in this framework include enhancing political participation, creating new tools for synchronized action, renewing partnerships with different actors and ensuring shared ownership across the membership enhances transparency, democratic participation, and accountability. The objective is to ensure that local and regional experience influence the implementation and assessment of the global agendas.

While many African countries have embarked on reforms of decentralisation, UCLG Africa created REFELA to give a voice to locally elected women and provide a space for their active participation in this process. Through the network, REFELA members address issues within the framework of UCLG Africa by exchanging ideas and information and actively participating in debates. These dialogues involve discussions on issues pertaining specifically to locally elected women in Africa, as well as broader issues around local governance as a whole. Members of REFELA form part of the permanent committee of UCLG Africa and use their unique position to raise the profile of the network and campaign for development issues affecting municipalities and cities. The Current President of the Network is Mrs. Macoura DAO COULIBALY, Mayor of Foubolo (Côte d’Ivoire).

REFELA is also active on the field. In 10 years, the REFELA supported the creation of 30 national chapters of the network in Africa and became an international advocate for gender equality and women empowerment in Africa and beyond with powerful campaigns launched as for instance: the 2018 “Campaign of African Cities without Children in Street Situations” (54 members); the 2019 “Campaign of African Cities with Zero Tolerance to Violence Against Women” (22 members) and the 2020 “Campaign of African cities favorable to the economic empowerment of women” (+80 members). REFELA also contributed to empowering women who headed the network.

APPENDIX

Previous editions: Candidates submitted by the Congress and laureates of the North-South Prize

	CANDIDATES SUBMITTED BY THE CONGRESS	LAUREATES
Edition 2020	Mrs Yvonne AKI-SAWYERR , Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone	International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP)
	Mr Carlo SOMMARUGA , Councillor of States for the Canton of Geneva, Switzerland	Network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC)
Edition 2019	Mrs Nabila HAMZA , Vice President of La Marsa City Council, Tunisia	<u>Mrs Nabila HAMZA</u> , Vice President of La Marsa City Council, Tunisia
	Mr Leoluca ORLANDO , Mayor of Palermo, Italy	<u>Mr Leoluca ORLANDO</u> , Mayor of Palermo, Italy
Edition 2018	Mrs Célestine KETCHA COURTES , Mayor of Bangangté, Cameroun	Mrs Jaha DUKUREH , Founder and CEO of the Non-Governmental organisation "Safe Hands for Girls", Gambia
	Mr Damien CARÊME , Mayor of Grande-Synthe, France	<u>Mr Damien CARÊME</u> , Mayor of Grande-Synthe, France
Edition 2017	Ms Abia AL HALAIA , Municipal councilor of Tafila, Jordan	Ms Kristiina KUMPULA , Secretary General of the Finnish Red-Cross, Finland
	Mr Hans BONTE , Mayor of Vilvoorde, Belgium	Dr Abbas GULLET , Secretary General of the Society of the Red- Cross in Kenya, Kenya
Edition 2016	Ms Giuseppina Maria NICOLINI , Mayor of Lampedusa, Italy	<u>Ms Giuseppina Maria NICOLINI</u> , Mayor of Lampedusa, Italy
	Mr Giorgios KAMINIS , Mayor of Athens, Greece	Ms Mbarka BRAHMI , member of the Tunisian Parliament and founder of the "Brahmi Center for solidarity and peace", Tunisia
Edition 2015	Ms Giuseppina Maria NICOLINI , Mayor of Lampedusa, Italy	Ms Lora PAPPÀ , founder of METAdrasi, Greece
	Mr Mustapha ABDI , Mayor of Kobané, Syria	Mr Joaquim Alberto CHISSANO , founding member of the liberation front of the FRELIMO, Mozambique