

Waris Dirie and Akinwumi Ayodeji Adesina awarded the 2019 Sunhak Peace Prize

Il Sik Hong
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Laureates Waris Dirie and Dr. Akinwumi Ayodeji Adesina received the 2019 Sunhak Peace Prize in Cape Town, South Africa on November 22, 2018 at the Cape Town International Convention Center.

The Sunhak Peace Prize Committee stated, that "both laureates have made a significant contribution to improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable in Africa." The Sunhak Peace Prize Committee recognizes the immense importance of Africa, observes that Africa is undergoing rapid change and development, while also facing challenges. These Laureates have made dramatic contributions to Africa's growth and development.



Waris Dirie is a 58 year-old world-class supermodel and anti-FGM activist recognized throughout the world for her work to eliminate the practice of FGM (Female Genital Mutilation). Dr. Akinwumi Ayodeji Adesina is a 53 year-old president of the African Development Bank Group committed to the eradication of poverty through agricultural innovation, and promoting Good Governance through the works of developing Africa's economy.

Waris Dirie is widely acclaimed for raising awareness throughout the world, about the tragic practice which is still prevalent in some parts of the world, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The Sunhak Peace Prize Committee selected Waris Dirie in recognition of her tireless advocacy for the rights of girls and women, and her call for a worldwide resolution calling for the eradication of FGM, thereby protecting girls who are at the risk of FGM.

Waris Dirie was born into a goat-herding nomad family in Somalia. She was subjected to female circumcision at the age of 5. In 1997, when her fashion career was at its peak, as a world-class supermodel, she shared her experience with the world. She became a voice for the voiceless. Her story shocked and at the same time enlightened people around the world about the tragic reality of FGM.

This brave start led her to become a human rights activist to end the barbaric practice that are thriving in Africa. She was then appointed as a first Special Ambassador to the United Nations for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation in 1997. Since then, she has been putting tireless efforts in anti-FGM Campaigns, upholding the rights of women and girls.

As a result of her efforts, 15 African Union member countries ratified the "Maputo Protocol" in 2003, which lists FGM as a harmful practice that must be ended. In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously passed a resolution banning the practice of FGM, and the UN has set a goal to eliminate FGM by 2030. This innovative milestone saved the lives of millions of girls who were at the risk the violent practice.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over 200 million girls and women have been affected by FGM, which is prevalent in more than 30 countries, including parts of Africa and the Middle East. Moreover, the practice threatens the lives of millions of girls. Also, due to the increase of the immigration rates, countries in Europe, the USA and Asia are affected by FGM practices. This barbaric practice is a crime against humanity, which often causes infertility, problems with urination, high blood loss, infections and in some cases even death.

In 2013, Waris Dirie's Desert Flower Foundation partnered with Waldfriede hospital and started the first Desert Flower Center to provide a comprehensive cure for victims of FGM. In 2014, Desert Flower Center started a Training Center to provide FGM reconstructive surgery education to doctors and obstetricians. In addition, she is at the forefront in helping victims of FGM improve their lives through "basic literacy education" and "career education." Recently, she opened an elementary school in Sierra Leone, and launched companies in Ethiopia and Kenya to provide employment to thousands.



As an agricultural economist, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina has been a leader in agricultural innovation for over 30 years. He has contributed greatly to food security in Africa, aimed at improving the lives of millions currently living in poverty, throughout the African continent. The Sunhak Committee acknowledges Dr. Akinwumi Adesina's achievements in promoting Good Governance through the works of improving Africa's economies and lifting millions of rural and poor farmers out of poverty.

Dr. Adesina has been a leader in agricultural innovation in Africa for over 30 years, bringing significant improvements to Africa's food security.

His leadership is building stepping-stones for Africa's dynamic growth.

Dr. Adesina pioneered major transformations in the agricultural field, including expanding rice production by introducing high yielding technologies, designing and implementing policies to support farmers' access to technologies at scale, increasing the availability of credit for millions of smallholder farmers, attracting private investments for the agricultural sector, rooting out the corrupt elements in the fertilizer industry, and assisting in establishment of major agricultural policies for Africa's green revolution.

The "Africa Fertilizer Summit," which he organized in 2006, was one of the largest high-level meetings in history which focused on solving Africa's food issues. During this Summit, Dr. Adesina was instrumental in developing the "Abuja Declaration on Fertilizer for the African Green Revolution," whereby the participants stated their commitment to the "eradication of hunger in Africa by 2030."

Dr. Adesina worked with various banks and international NGOs in order to create an innovative financing system, providing loans to smallholder farmers, providing a way for them to rise out of poverty. This move leveraged \$100 million in loans and provided opportunities for smallholder farmers to increase their agricultural productivity and their income.

Dr. Adesina currently serves as the President of the African Development Bank Group which plays a central role in Africa's development. As an "economic commander" of Africa, he promotes the "High 5 Strategy" that include: light up and power Africa, feed Africa, industrialize Africa, integrate Africa and improve the quality of life for the people of Africa. As a result of his work, the lives of millions of people throughout Africa have been improved.

Chairman of the Sunhak Peace Prize Committee, Dr. Il Sik Hong, stated that "the Sunhak Peace Prize was established based upon the vision of 'One Family Under God.' The 2019 Sunhak Peace Prize gives special

attention to peace and human development in Africa."

Dr. Hong added "in order for us to build an era of peace and coexistence in the 21st century, we want to encourage continuous development in Africa. Africa is a rising star and its growth will contribute to global progress and development throughout the 21st century."

The Sunhak Peace Prize honors individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the peace and the welfare of future generations. The Sunhak Peace Prize includes a cash prize totaling one million dollars. The 2019 Sunhak Peace Prize Award Ceremony will take place on February, 2019 in Seoul, Korea.

Visit sunhakpeaceprize.org to learn more about past and present laureates.