

UPF Buenos Aires, Argentina celebrates Africa Day 2019 at the Palace of Culture

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Buenos Aires, Argentina -- Africa House and UPF-Argentina celebrated for a second year Africa Day (1) on May 28 with a cultural and artistic meeting at Salón Dorado, Palace of Culture of the Ministry of Culture of the City of Buenos Aires Government (Video review [click here](#)).

At the beginning, we listened to a speech by City of Buenos Aires Parliamentarian Carolina Estebarena. This was followed by remarks by Irene Ortiz Teixeira, daughter of an African woman from Cape Verde Islands and president of the Africa House. This entity was founded in 1995 to honor the history and culture of the African continent. It was declared of cultural and social interest by the City of Buenos Aires Legislature in 2014 for its social, cultural, historical, humanitarian, and outreach work.

During the meeting, writer Juan Ignacio Incardona, author of the book *África, barriendo fronteras*, talked about his experience crossing the African continent from Egypt to South Africa (2). We showed a video that explains the work of Dr. Akinwumi Adesina (Nigeria), President of the African Development Bank, and activist Waris Dirie (Somalia), who aims to end female genital mutilation. Both of them are 2019 laureates of the Sunhak Peace Prize (3).

We closed the meeting with the artistic performances of Victoria Lucía Desiati, from the African Association of Rosario; the traditional African music Sewananko, and the Kimba troupe, who danced to the rhythm of the drums and included characters and elements traditional of Río de la Plata's Candombe dance. In addition, Dr. Francisco Benard gave the Africa House a Nelson Mandela portrait: an "apostle of Peace" for South Africans and a worldwide symbol of reconciliation.

The meeting included participants from the diplomatic, political, and cultural fields, from a variety of civil society organizations and from several different religions, among them Mons. Hugo Manuel Salaberry, SJ, President of the Migrations and Tourism Committee of the Argentine Episcopal Conference. At the beginning, Emanuel Sayavedra, emcee and member of the UPF-Argentina Peace Council, read some of the greetings we received (4). At the end, Irene Ortiz Teixeira and Miguel Werner, UPF-Argentina secretary general, gave certificates of appreciation to the artists who took part in the celebration (5).

Africa Day, which commemorates the foundation of the African Union (May 25, 1963), is celebrated to reflect upon the unity of this vast area and the obstacles to its development, in the context of the 2015–2024 International Decade for People of African Descent. It is an opportunity to heal the painful past of one of the most suffering continents of the "Atlantic era" and keep working for the full integration of its people. It is also a day to learn about African culture and support its contributions to the emancipation movement, in particular, to understand the ethical rule of loyalty and community bonds from Ubuntu: "I am because we are."

Quotes:

1) The Africa Day celebration refers to May 25, 1963, when 32 leaders of African states met in Addis

Ababa (Ethiopia) to found the Organization of African Unity, now known as the African Union. Since it is a national holiday in Argentina, we celebrate it after May 25.

2) Juan Ignacio Incardona, recognized Ambassador for Peace by UPF-Argentina in 2018, is a journalist, writer, and traveler who began to travel around the world "to break down (visible and invisible) frontiers among peoples, races, and religions." Through his book *África, barriendo fronteras*, he narrates the history of the eight countries he visited, their people, their daily lives, "their mindset and perspective of the earthly world, and also the afterlife (...) another part of Africa that is never shown on TV or newspapers."



3) Activist Waris Dirie (Somalia) and Dr. Akinwumi Adesina (Nigeria) were selected by the Sunhak Peace Prize Committee among candidates from all around the world. Dirie was recognized for her contribution to "improve the rights of African girls and women by leading the campaign to eradicate the tragic act of female genital mutilation;" and Adesina "for promoting good governance through agricultural innovation." They were awarded during UPF's World Summit 2019 "Peace, Security and Human Development," held in Seoul in February. To see video, [click here](#).

4) Greetings: University of the Merchant Marine (Universidad de la Marina Mercante, UdeMM). / Society of Writers from Buenos Aires - Mar del Plata branch / Group of Argentinian and Latin American Writers / Argentine School of Yoga and Ayurveda / Civil Society "Acercando Naciones" / International Society of Poets, Writers, and Artists (SIPEA) Argentina / Expo Arte y Ser / Hispanic and World Union of Writers Argentina – Autonomous City of Buenos Aires branch / Female Latin American Forum / Poets of AL-MANSURA - Almería (Spain) / Radio program "Pasaporte Cultural" / Alberto Asseff – Mercosur Parliamentarian / Writer María Fernanda Macimiani – Representing SADE Tres de Febrero.

5) Text of the certificate of appreciation: "For their artistic performance during the celebration of Africa Day 2019 at Salón Dorado – Palace of Culture (Buenos Aires). It is an opportunity to reflect upon the unity of this vast area and the obstacles to their development, in the context of the 2015-2024 International Decade for People of African Descent. It is an opportunity to heal the painful past of one of the most suffering continents of the "Atlantic era" and keep working for the full integration of its people. It is also a day to learn about their culture and support their contribution to the emancipation movement. To understand their values, as an ethical rule of loyalty and community bonds from Ubuntu: 'I am because we are.'"

