



12 November 2011

President Pires accepts 2011 Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership at ceremony in Tunis

Tunis, 12 November 2011 - Pedro Verona Rodrigues Pires, the former President of Cape Verde, this evening accepted the 2011 Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership at a gala ceremony in Tunis hosted by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

The Ibrahim Prize recognises and celebrates excellence in African leadership. It is an annual award worth US\$5 million over 10 years and US\$200,000 annually for life thereafter.

Presenting the award, Salim Ahmed Salim, Chair of the Prize Committee, said: "In reaching our decision, we considered President Pires's role in transforming his country into a model of democracy, stability and increased prosperity. His stewardship won Cape Verde international recognition as one of Africa's most stable democracies."

He continued: "President Pires dismissed outright any suggestions that the constitution might be altered so he could run again. This is exactly what would have been expected from a leader whose long career has been dedicated to the service of his people and country and marked by personal humility and integrity."

Accepting the award, President Pires said: "Cape Verde began with close to nothing, but step by step, with the efforts of all Cape Verdeans, we have reached a place where we have deserved the Prize Committee's recognition. I believe that behind the noble and visionary initiative of the Prize lies a clear passion for African causes. It expresses concern about the future, and confidence in the African people and their children to rebuild the future based on their own will."

Concluding his speech, President Pires said: "I would like to express my solidarity with the Tunisian people for the way in which they were able to remove an authoritarian regime. I would like to pay a warm tribute to the sacrifice of the young Mohamed Bouazizi. I wish the new legitimate political institutions that have been established in Tunisia every success."

Referring to the events in North Africa this year, Mo Ibrahim said: "The 'African Spring' really is here to stay - there is no way back. The message to our leaders is loud and clear. Reform, democratise, develop, create jobs - otherwise you better collect your pensions before it is too late."



To mark the extraordinary events in Tunisia earlier this year that inspired the Arab Spring, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation hosted a special concert in Tunis on the eve of the ceremony. 'Africa Celebrates Democracy' showcased the very best artists from Tunisia and across Africa and was attended by over 4,500 Tunisians. All proceeds from the event are being donated to the youth programmes of the Tunisian Red Crescent.

- Ends -

Media enquiries and resources

- **Photographs** of the Prize Ceremony are available on the Foundation's Flickr account www.flickr.com/photos/moibrahimfoundation
- **Other media resources**, including a broadcast ready video package, audio clips and briefing materials on the 2011 Ibrahim Laureate will be available at www.moibrahimfoundation.org/2011prize-media.
- **For all media enquiries**, please contact Risha Chande or Alex Margot-Duclot:
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- **You can also follow the Foundation on:**
 - **Twitter:** [@Mo_IbrahimFdn](https://twitter.com/Mo_IbrahimFdn)
 - **Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/pages/MO-IBRAHIM/19067106477>
 - **YouTube:** <http://www.youtube.com/user/moibrahimfoundation>
 - **Flickr:** <http://www.flickr.com/photos/moibrahimfoundation/>
- **Suggested hashtags** to comment on the events:
 - #MIFTunis and #MIFprize

Notes to editors:

1) **Pedro Pires** served as Head of State of Cape Verde from 2001 to 2011. A full biography of the winner, along with the Prize Committee citation, can be found at www.moibrahimfoundation.org/2011prize-media.

2) The Prize Committee is chaired by **Salim Ahmed Salim**, former Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity and former Prime Minister of Tanzania (and Board member of the Foundation) and comprised of **Martti Ahtisaari**, former President of Finland and Nobel Laureate; **Aïcha Bah Diallo**, former Minister of Education in Guinea and Director of Basic Education at UNESCO; **Mohamed ElBaradei**, Director General Emeritus of the International Atomic Energy Agency and Nobel Laureate; **Graça Machel**, Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, and

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former Minister of Education and Culture in Mozambique; **Festus Mogae**, former President of Botswana and Chairperson of the Coalition for Dialogue on Africa; and **Mary Robinson**, former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (and Board member of the Foundation).

3) Established in 2006, the **Mo Ibrahim Foundation** supports good governance and great leadership in Africa. It was founded and is chaired by Mo Ibrahim. The Foundation works to:

- Provide a framework and tools by which citizens and governments can assess and measure progress in governance
- Recognise excellence in African leadership and provide a practical way in which leaders can build positive legacies on the continent when they have left national office
- Stimulate debate on the quality of governance and major governance issues in Africa
- Develop leadership and governance capacity in Africa

These aims are achieved through the Foundation's four major programme areas: the Ibrahim Index of African Governance; the Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership; the Ibrahim Discussion Forum; and Capacity Building Programmes (including the Ibrahim Scholarships and the Ibrahim Leadership Fellowships).

4) On Friday 11 November 2011 the Mo Ibrahim Foundation hosted an **extraordinary public concert in Tunis**. Performers included underground Tunisian artists long recognised for their social engagement, alongside continental superstars. More information on the concert is available at www.moibrahimfoundation.org