



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf accepts Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership**

*Former President talks of pride that, after decades of conflict, power in Liberia now rests with its people, grounded in the rule-of-law and upheld by institutions*

Kigali, 28 April, 2018 — Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the former President of Liberia, last night accepted the 2017 Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership at a special Leadership Ceremony in Kigali, Rwanda.

Speaking to guests from Rwanda and around the world, President Sirleaf said: "I'm honoured to be this year's recipient of the Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership. I receive this distinction on behalf of the many women and men who helped to navigate the profound complexities of the post-conflict country that is Liberia. As the first woman to receive this award, it is my hope that women and girls across Africa will be inspired to break through barriers, and push back on the frontiers of life's possibilities."

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

Presenting the Prize to President Sirleaf, Salim Ahmed Salim, Chair of the independent Prize Committee, said: "Madame Sirleaf embodies the type of role model the Prize is intended to honour. It recognises not good leaders – of which Africa has many – but truly exceptional figures, who, by their nature, are rare. We are looking for leaders who leave their country in a far better state than when they took office, who have strengthened the trust of their fellow citizens in state and leadership, and who have built a strong legacy."

Praising President Sirleaf, H.E. Alassane Ouattara, President of Cote d'Ivoire, said: "Her contribution spans way beyond Liberia. The people of Côte d'Ivoire, for example, will never be indebted enough to her. During the post-election crisis in Cote d'Ivoire, President Sirleaf was a constant voice of moderation, receiving hundreds of thousands of Ivorians in Liberia, and always trying to find lasting and peaceful solutions."

Mo Ibrahim, founder of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, said: "It is wonderful to have a winner this year, and it is also wonderful that the winner is a she. How fitting that President Sirleaf is honoured here in Rwanda, as nobody has done more for women, and the gender issue, than Rwanda."

H.E Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda, said: "Leadership is both a privilege and a duty. It is best measured in terms of concrete results that citizens can feel in their everyday lives as well



as the level of trust that they have in public institutions. During our time in office we must work as hard as we can to do the right things for our people's future."

The Leadership Ceremony is at the heart of the 2018 Ibrahim Governance Weekend, the flagship event of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation which takes place in a different African country each year.

Today, the Ibrahim Forum will bring together experts from across Africa and the world to discuss 'Public Service in Africa' - its relation to good governance and effective leadership, its new challenges and current shortcomings, and the ways and means to strengthen it and make it appealing to the next generation.

Young representatives from all over the continent also discussed the topic in a specially convened Next Generation Forum.

The weekend will conclude with a live concert featuring Sauti Sol, Peter P-Square, Riderman, Knowless, Phionah Mbabazi and Charly & Nina.

—ENDS—

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(WhatsApp messages and calls only)

Follow the Governance Weekend live feed and discussions on Twitter by using #MIFKigali, or following @Mo\_IbrahimFdn

Media can download high-resolution images and video clips from the following link:  
<http://mif.media/igw-2018>

You can follow the Mo Ibrahim Foundation on:

- Website: <http://mo.ibrahim.foundation/>
- Twitter: [@Mo\\_IbrahimFdn](https://twitter.com/Mo_IbrahimFdn)
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MoIbrahimFoundation>
- Instagram: <https://instagram.com/moibrahimfoundation>
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**Notes to Editors:**

***Mo Ibrahim Foundation***



*The Mo Ibrahim Foundation was established in 2006 with a focus on the critical importance of leadership and governance in Africa. By providing tools to support progress in leadership and governance, the Foundation aims to promote meaningful change on the continent.*

*The Foundation, which is a non-grant making organisation, focuses on defining, assessing and enhancing governance and leadership in Africa through four main initiatives:*

*Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG)*

*Ibrahim Forum*

*Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership*

*Ibrahim Fellowships and Scholarships*

### ***Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG)***

*The IIAG is an annual statistical assessment of the quality of governance in every African country. Published since 2007, the IIAG was created to provide a quantifiable tool to measure and monitor governance performance in African countries, to assess their progress over time and to support the development of effective and responsive policy solutions. The IIAG measures governance performance across four main categories; Safety & Rule of Law, Participation & Human Rights, Sustainable Economic Opportunity and Human Development. Each of these contain subcategories which contain various indicators that provide quantifiable measures of the overarching dimensions of governance. In total, the IIAG contains 100 indicators. In order to provide a broad, documented and impartial picture of governance performance, the indicators used to measure governance are collected from 36 independent international and African data sources, utilising expert assessments, official data and citizen perception surveys. The IIAG is the most comprehensive and up-to-date existing dataset on African governance.*

### ***Ibrahim Forum***

*Established in 2010, the Ibrahim Forum is an annual high-level discussion forum tackling issues of critical importance to Africa. The Forum convenes prominent African political and business leaders, representatives from civil society, multilateral and regional institutions as well as Africa's major international partners to identify specific policy challenges and priorities for action. Previous Forums have dealt with: Africa at a Tipping Point (2017), African Urban Dynamics (2015), Africa in the next 50 years (2013), African Youth (2012), African Agriculture (2011) and African Regional Economic Integration (2010).*

### ***Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership***

*The Ibrahim Prize celebrates excellence in African leadership. It is awarded to a former Executive Head of State or Government by an independent Prize Committee. Previous Laureates: Presidents Joaquim Chissano (2007, Mozambique), Festus Mogae (2008, Botswana), Pedro Pires (2011, Cabo Verde and*



*Hifikepune Pohamba (2014, Namibia). The 2007 Honorary Ibrahim Laureate - President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.*

- ***HE Ellen Johnson Sirleaf 2017 Ibrahim Laureate***

*Ellen Johnson Sirleaf served as Head of State of Liberia from 2006 to 2018.*

*Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was awarded the 2017 Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership for her exceptional and transformative leadership, in the face of unprecedented and renewed challenges, to lead Liberia's recovery following many years of devastating civil war.*

***Ibrahim Fellowships and Scholarships***

*The Ibrahim Leadership Fellowships form a selective programme designed to mentor future African leaders. Through this annual fellowship programme, we seek to deepen and broaden our growing network which continues to contribute its skills and learning to a better Africa. The Fellowships offer the opportunity to work in the executive offices of either the AfDB (Abidjan), UNECA (Addis Ababa) or the ITC (Geneva), with an annual stipend of \$100,000. The Ibrahim Scholarships support aspiring African leaders at a number of distinguished academic institutions. The scholarships develop the talent of outstanding young Africans.*