



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

UWinnipeg Bestows Global Citizenship Award on Abdou Diouf, International Peace Builder and Former President of Senegal

WINNIPEG— The University of Winnipeg has awarded its third annual **Global Citizenship Award** to His Excellency **Abdou Diouf**, the former president of Senegal and Secretary-General of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). The award was presented at a luncheon today concurrently with the Ministerial Conference of la Francophonie on Conflict Prevention and Human Security taking place this weekend in St. Boniface.

Known as a promoter of peace and human rights, Diouf was recognized with this prestigious award for his contributions to international peace building and democracy. Under Diouf's leadership, the OIF adopted a new Charter addressing issues of conflict prevention and resolution, advocating the rule of law and human rights, and establishing and building democracy.

Diouf is a pre-eminent statesman and African leader whose presence has been influential throughout his continent. (Please see background material.) Recently, in Haiti, Diouf approached Francophone Heads of States to promote stronger participation of Francophone countries in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Through Diouf's vision, the OIF has contributed to mediation efforts in Côte d'Ivoire, and sent an electoral observation mission and funded programs to reinforce the judiciary system in Haiti.

“Abdou Diouf is a great humanitarian and defender of democracy,” said University of Winnipeg President Lloyd Axworthy. “He is a champion of human rights in Africa, from health to human security. Symbolic of the new African leader, Abdou Diouf believes in the responsibility of each nation to direct its own social and economic advances. We are honoured he has accepted The University of Winnipeg’s Global Citizenship Award.”

"The Secretary General fully deserves this Global Citizenship Award presented to him by The University of Winnipeg in recognition of his exceptional career, his commitment to democracy and human rights, and his leadership at the head of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie," said the Honourable Josée Verner, Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for La Francophonie and Official Languages.

The direction taken by the OIF under the leadership of Abdou Diouf is in close step with the mandate of the University's Global College to advance research, dialogue, and action between the peoples of the world in the promotion of human rights and human security. The Global College, established just over a year ago, was created to build connections with the global community. It has done so through conferences, prominent international guest speakers, opportunities for students to study abroad, and support of student and faculty involvement on the world stage. Last month, UWinnipeg students, alumni and faculty experienced "democracy in action" as members of the Organization of American States (OAS) Electoral Observation Mission in the Peruvian elections; the first time a post-secondary institution was involved in an OAS mission of this kind.

The University of Winnipeg Global Citizenship Award is presented annually to an individual or group embodying the spirit and drive of a passionate, committed member of society that lives out the responsibilities of a global citizen. This award is a symbol of The University of Winnipeg's commitment to its own international responsibilities. Previous recipients include the Mennonite Central Committee (2004) and Dr. Eric Hoskins of War Child Canada (2005).

Located in the heart of downtown, The University of Winnipeg is a compact, diverse, multicultural academic community committed to access and excellence. Home to more than 9,200 full- and part-time students, UWinnipeg has been ranked by our graduates in the Top Ten of all Canadian universities when asked about their "Entire Educational Experience" (Maclean's Graduate Survey, November 2004). The Globe & Mail 2005 Report Card gives The University of Winnipeg an overall 'A' grade in the areas of teaching quality, class sizes, faculty-student interaction, and the availability of faculty outside classroom hours. Find out why. Visit www.uwinnipeg.ca

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BACKGROUND:

Abdou Diouf - Former President of the Republic of Senegal & 1987 Africa Prize Laureate

Diouf was born in 1935 in Louga, Senegal. He went to primary and secondary school in Saint-Louis, Senegal and studied law in Dakar and then in Paris. He received his degree at the École nationale de la France d'Outre-mer (ENFOM) in 1960. As soon as he graduated, he immediately moved to upper-level administrative posts, becoming director of the Cabinet of President Léopold Sédar Senghor in 1963, and Secretary General of the Presidency of the République in 1964. From 1968 to 1970, Diouf was Minister of Planning and Industry. He then became Prime Minister of Senegal on February 26, 1970.

On January 1, 1981, he became President of the Republic of Senegal following the resignation of Senghor. Diouf was reelected President through the 1983, 1988, and 1993 elections. He held the post until 2000.

During his tenure, Diouf worked just as ardently towards making a voice for Senegal by way of a number of international summits, and fought for a greater African unity. He also served as a spokesman for Africa in the global arena. As chairman of the Organization of African Unity in 1985-86, he played a pivotal role in forging a continent-wide consensus on the priority program for Africa's recovery. He eloquently represented Africa at the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa (May 1986). At that historic meeting, he personally undertook to achieve the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development.

As President, Diouf demonstrated extraordinary leadership in many regional organizations of West Africa. Within Senegal, Diouf launched an extensive program of policy reforms in all sectors, particularly the agricultural sector. His programs included the New Agricultural Policy, The New Industrial Policy, and the fight against desertification through afforestation campaigns.

Diouf's commitment to the general well-being of the people of Senegal was especially notable in the area of health care. Working with UNICEF, Diouf achieved the historic feat of making Senegal the first African country to reach the 1990 goal of the World Health Organization's target for Universal Child Immunization (75 percent coverage). Prior to his personal intervention in September 1986, immunization coverage was less than 20 percent. The successful Senegalese initiative was replicated in other African states.

Diouf was also active in international organizations, both during and after his presidency. He was chairman of the Organization of African Unity twice, from 1985 to 1986 and

from 1992 until 1993. Since 2003, he has been the Secretary-General of Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). Created in 1970, the OIF now has 49 state and government members, four associate states and 10 observer states. Canada is La Francophonie's second largest donor, after France. It provided some \$50 million in 2004-05 through the Canadian International Development Agency, Foreign Affairs Canada, and the Department of Canadian Heritage.