



United Nations
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la science et la culture

**Award Ceremony of the
Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize
UNESCO, 2 October 2008**

**Address by Mr Mário Soares
Vice-President of the Jury**

President Abdou Diouf, Sponsor of the Prize,
President Henri Konan Bédié, Patron of the Prize,
Mr Director-General,
President Martti Ahtisaari, Prizewinner,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am here to represent the President of the Jury, Mr Henry Kissinger, who is unable to be with us today on account of the international situation. I am indeed most gratified to be attending this award ceremony for a prize that bears the name of an exceptional man, a great sage of Africa, President Félix Houphouët-Boigny. I wish to thank President Abdou Diouf and President Henri Konan Bédié, Sponsor and Patron of the Prize respectively, for again demonstrating their interest in the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize by being present here today.

I should like to thank and pay tribute to the Director-General, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, for his invaluable support for the Prize, and the Executive Secretary, Mr Alioune Traoré, for his sterling contribution to the Jury's work.

President Ahtisaari,

You are a man of peace and dialogue. For more than 30 years you have worked tirelessly to achieve reconciliation among peoples. From 1977 to 1990 you led the process that resulted in independence for Namibia.

Your very great contribution to the resolution of the fratricidal conflict between the Indonesian Government and the Free Aceh Movement has been acknowledged by the entire international community.

You have eliminated tension in a number of hot spots in other regions of the world. Your talents as a mediator are well known.

It is for all these endeavours in the cause of peace that our Jury has decided unanimously to award you the 2007 Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize.

I now invite the Director-General of UNESCO, the Executive Secretary of the Prize and the Prizewinner Mr Ahtisaari to join me on the rostrum for the prize-giving ceremony.