

Speech of Norine MacDonald QC for the 2010 Raymond Georis Prize for Innovative Philanthropy in Europe

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Mr Chairman, members of the panel, ladies and gentlemen:

I am here today on behalf of The Network of European Foundations' Mercator Fund to present the *Raymond Georis Prize for Innovative Philanthropy in Europe*.

The Mercator Fund created the Prize seven years ago to pay tribute to outstanding and high-impact philanthropy, and to underline the important role that the European Foundation community has to play in global and social issues all around the world.

Raymond Georis dedicated his professional life to developing the great potential of the European vision, and the prize aims to pay tribute to his very personal contribution to European philanthropy.

Once again this year, the nominees were shining examples of high-level philanthropic achievement. I would like to thank all those who nominated projects this year.

I would of course also like to thank the members of this year's Selection Committee which was chaired once again by Javier Solana, President of the Madariaga-College of Europe Foundation and former Secretary of the Council European Union/High Representative for the European Common Foreign and Security Policy. This year, the Committee comprised Mr Raymond Georis, Mr Gerry Salole, Chief Executive of the European Foundation Centre and myself in my role as President of the NEF-Mercator Fund.

The job of the jury was, as usual, a difficult task. But from all of the high-level nominees, one individual stood out. The recipient of the prize this year was nominated by Dr Akwasi Aidoo, Executive Director of TrustAfrica. We thank him for his nomination.

This year, the prize recognises an innovative businessman and philanthropist, who is dedicated to supporting great African leadership and stimulating dialogue between the two continents of Europe and Africa on the issue of governance.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am honoured to announce that the recipient of the 2010 Raymond Georis Prize for Innovative Philanthropy in Europe is Dr Mo Ibrahim, Founder of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

In awarding this prize, we acknowledge a man whose career reflects dedication and commitment to using his business skills and personal success to the service of philanthropy.

As head of Celtel International, one of Africa's most successful companies, Dr Ibrahim applied his business acumen to improving the lives of millions through revolutionising mobile telecommunications on the African continent.

Dr Ibrahim's philanthropy has the aim of strengthening governance in Africa at all levels.

The project includes a yearly continent-wide index of governance - the Ibrahim Index - which enables comparison, standard bearing and target-setting for improvements in governance and an annual prize for an African political leader who has made the largest contribution to good governance in his/her country that year. The Ibrahim Prize consists of 500 thousand dollars per year for ten years and 200 thousand dollars for life after that. The laureate/winner is also awarded a discretionary 200 thousand dollars per year for ten years for good causes of their choice.

The strength of Dr Ibrahim's work lies in the bringing together of European and African philanthropy and civil society actors. Dr Ibrahim was born in Sudan and educated in Britain, where he now lives and his foundation is based.

Joining me to present the Prize is Mr Raymond Georis – the man who has been such an inspiration to philanthropy in Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Mr Raymond Georis.

Mr Raymond Georis's Speech:

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Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to be here today for the presentation of the Prize to such a worthy recipient.

In his work to encourage good governance in Africa, Dr Mo Ibrahim matches the best of Europe with the best of Africa. In doing so he is at the cutting edge of a new paradigm for global philanthropy.

Dr Ibrahim has a unique personal and professional ability to straddle boundaries: between businessmen, philanthropists and community leaders, but also between Europe and Africa.

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to European philanthropy, I would now like to present the Prize for Innovative Philanthropy in Europe to Dr Mo Ibrahim.