

OFFICIAL STATEMENT FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONTROVERSY OVER THE CREATION OF THE "UNESCO – OBIANG NGUEMA MBASOGO INTERNATIONAL PRIZE."

The UNESCO Executive Board has approved and will award the forthcoming **UNESCO-Obiang Nguema Mbasogo International Prize for Research in Life Sciences**, a major award sponsored by the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, H.E. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, and fully supported by the government of the country and the international community, especially the African [community]. This award aims to reward projects and activities of individuals, groups, scientific institutions, or any other entity or organization, which has contributed, through research, to improving the quality of human life. The award, which will be worth U.S. \$300,000, will be awarded once a year for an initial period of five years.

This initiative arose, as a personal proposal of the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea during his speech at the General Conference of UNESCO, in October 2007. **However, the idea of allocating part of the riches that our nation currently enjoys in the pursuit of research, science, and the improvement of human life, has curiously become a frightening idea to a number of organizations that, ironically, and hypocritically, represent themselves in public as "defenders of human rights."**

With respect to this absurd, cynical and indescribable campaign, our government wishes to state the following:

- We are tired, bored and frustrated that these organizations, as well as some international media, **take advantage of any cause related to Equatorial Guinea to gain publicity at the expense of the name of our country.**

- We deeply regret that **the name of Equatorial Guinea has been of interest to these entities from the moment the country had oil and wealth.** We realize that this is the price that Equatorial Guinea is obliged to pay. We are saddened that neither these entities, nor the persons who organize and sign these controversies, remembered us when we were a small African state - poor, and thus forgotten.

- The result of these kinds of media campaigns is that the organizations responsible achieve, for several days, a presence in the global media and their name is made more popular thanks to our country. **At this time, however, it is clearer than ever that self-promotion and the pursuit of influence in the media is the real end sought by all these organizations: it is frankly disappointing and hypocritical that institutions that are allegedly defenders of human values think it is bad that the money from our country is used to promote science, research and human values.** However, this also reveals the real contradictions that surround each of them, and what their true goals and interests are.

- As the Government of Equatorial Guinea, we are fully aware that the majority of the entities that put forth these arguments, and individuals that are employed by them, **would not even**

**know where to find our country on a map.** Many fewer know of its history, nor its customs or evolution ... They deliberately use outdated figures about our economy and our development to give banal and false ideas that allow them to better support their false allegations.

- From its independence until today, serious, solvent and official international institutions, such as the **United Nations, UNESCO, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Health Organization, the Red Cross, etc.**, have worked in Equatorial Guinea and have always collaborated with our government. The UNESCO Obiang Nguema Mbasogo International Prize **is simply one more of the numerous activities performed with these institutions**, which have been occurring all the time in our country, and have contributed, along with numerous diplomatic delegations and international companies that work here, to the improvement of the country. Any of these entities or media outlets should be aware of this ongoing collaboration between the Government of Equatorial Guinea and these institutions, which has occurred for decades and in hundreds of activities both within and outside our country.

- Regarding some reports which suggests that the French Government supports this controversy, we similarly call upon the media's true professionalism to **make the appropriate distinctions between the statements that are made freely by a French official, and the views of "the French Government."** We recall that the relations between the Equatorial Guinea Government and the French Government are excellent, and that precisely this week the French President Nicolas Sarkozy has again shown for our head of state, Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, friendship and respect with a message specifically sent on the occasion of his 68th Birthday.

- Currently Equatorial Guinea's real problems include the development of education, culture and the professionalization of our population, so that in the future it can respond to the enormous challenges and the spectacular development that is currently going on, which is supported by real figures, data, and statistics from the international institutions that work here. **None of these controversies help solve the real problems of the Equatorial Guinean population.** These organizations, using the name of our country for their own benefit, hinder the great effort of our state for professional development and full integration into the international community and a modern and globalized world.

- Equally disappointing is that after centuries of slavery and colonialism, Western institutions still exist that always seem to find the "bad guy", as it is commonly called, in African governments. **In this case, we have no doubt that the entities that created this controversy are showing their true colonialist, discriminatory, racist and prejudiced identity, by not accepting that an African president can confer an award of this kind**, as it would not have occurred to any of them to discuss the sponsorship of a similar prize if it came from a Western government or president, no matter how many controversies they might be associated with, as happens to all known political figures.

-Finally: In these moments in which Equatorial Guinea is an independent and free country, which has managed to emerge on its own, thanks again to its rich resources, and similarly finds itself in an enviable development phase, as those who authentically know the African continent and international economy are well aware, we encourage the organizing groups of this

controversy, **that instead of dedicating themselves to defend hypocritical and cynical causes, that not only go against our country, but also against the development of science and research**, with the sole purpose of gaining publicity for themselves, **should use their time and energy to work seriously and honestly, in those parts of the world where it is really necessary.**

The Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea requests again that when our country is spoken of, it is done with respect, from an accurate knowledge of the facts, developments, history, and culture of our state, and not from lies, manipulation and self-interest.

Signed

Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea