

Translation by Human Rights Watch of the document posted on the website of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, at <http://guineaecuatorialpress.com/noticia.php?id=604>

Issued by the Presidency (“Jefatura del Estado” or Head of State)

Official Message from the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for UNESCO regarding the controversy caused by the Unesco-Obiang Nguema Mbasogo Prize

Before the upcoming meeting scheduled for the 15th of June at the Paris headquarters of UNESCO, to discuss the controversy caused by some international organizations around the UNESCO-Obiang Nguema Mbasogo prize, the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea would like to send a message to that organization and, in general, to the world.

(First appeared on 13/06/10, currently dated as 14/06/2010)

The controversy surrounding this Prize, generously offered and with the best of intentions by the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea to contribute to the advancement of science and research, **is an indescribable snub not only of our country, but also the entire African continent.**

From Equatorial Guinea **we hope that UNESCO will not respond to nor endorse these organizations**, some of which are complete strangers to our country and Africa, who have “jumped on the bandwagon” of this controversy for the sole purpose of self-promotion at the expense of the scandal.

This unfortunate chapter makes us relive the mistrust that was generated within the African people over centuries of slavery and colonialism. From Equatorial Guinea we sense that, behind the controversy that caused by the generous aid offered by our president for science and research, there hides in reality the intention of certain Western institutions and lobbies to continue relegating an African country to an inferior standing.

In other words, we believe that this controversy hides and shows the racist, arrogant and neocolonial attitude of the lobbies who do not want us Africans to be able to also possess wealth, and even to share it, or to position ourselves in the same level as any other Western government. It is clear that, for all these organizations, the people of Equatorial Guinea are not worthy of sharing their wealth, not even to promote science and research.

For centuries, the “treatment” that the Western world bestowed upon the Africans was as slaves: mere beasts to be exploited. Centuries later, the “treatment” of the West towards Africans was as uncivilized beings from whom they could steal their resources and who they could colonize. Then, Westerners, especially Europeans, arrived on the [African] continent to impart on the African people its rules on how to be “civilized.”

It is sad to see how, in the XXI century, certain lobbies and international institutions continue to

insult us and treat us as *uncivilized beasts* because in a small country, abandoned and forgotten until oil was found, we have not yet been able to evolve at the same pace as Europe, in terms of freedoms and the management of democracy. And all this, despite it being known worldwide that our evolution has been hampered precisely by these centuries of past slavery and colonialism.

It is equally distressing that some Africans, living in the West, where they only enjoy the benefits of a richer world, since many of them live in poverty and discrimination worse than they would have known in their countries of origin, support and lead this type of controversy that humiliates and soils the name of our people and that of Africa as a whole. That is the case, without forgetting the fact that most of those who behave this way have not even been to our country, and just do it “to go with the flow,” and be part of the “robotic mass” into which the West has made them.

Thanks, precisely, to the freedom and social and economic development we are currently experiencing in Equatorial Guinea, we are able to detect, denounce and reject these campaigns of harassment, which under the supposed label of the “protection of human rights,” do not fail to hide new and modern ways to label us as “uncivilized beings” before the international community, in order to maintain the dominance over our people and to humiliate us with the ultimate aim of continuing to exert control over us.

For this serious and scandalous reason, from Equatorial Guinea we again request that UNESCO, the media and all serious and genuinely well-intentioned Western institutions not cooperate with these racist, offensive, arrogant and colonialist lobbyists.

We refer to the statements the President of Equatorial Guinea, H.E. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo himself has made that “*we know that the Government of Equatorial Guinea understands that it is far from perfect and that it still has a great deal of work to do to further improve the lives of its people. The UNESCO prize is a part of that work.*” Indeed, we know that in Equatorial Guinea we still have much to learn to continue the authentic development of this country. **But we are even more aware that we have nothing to learn from these small groups and lobbies from whom we receive only continual contempt, insults and condemnations.**

However, the Government of Equatorial Guinea continues to trust in the continuing work that these international organizations, such as UNDP, UNESCO, UN, IMF, WB [World Bank], etc, that have provided to our country for decades, and we hope that this chapter does not serve to pollute this trust and support.

We also ask UNESCO’s leadership to take into account a basic aspect of common sense, which is the need to avoid mixing political matters in which the Government of Equatorial Guinea, an active participant in the international community, intervenes, debates and is overseen by institutions such as the UN with [matters involving] the development of education, science and research, which should be the concrete priority of the Organization of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and [which is] the ultimate intended goal of this prize.

Signed
Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea