

# Laureate Achievements 1. Waris Dirie

## A Human Rights Activist Who Publicized the Issue of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to the World

### Waris Dirie

Waris Dirie was the first person in history to publicize to the world, the violence of FGM and saved millions of lives by taking a leading role in promoting anti-FGM campaign. She raised the issue of FGM as an international human rights agenda and assisted in passing a resolution banning its practice.

#### General Background

- 1965 - Born in Somalia (Exact birthday unknown)
- Model, actress, activist, writer and UN Special Ambassador for the Elimination of FGM (1997-2003)
- 2002 - Founded Desert Flower Foundation

#### Films and Books

- 1987: Played a “Bond girl” in the film *The Living Daylights*.
- 1997: Wrote the book *Desert Flower* (Her name, “Waris,” means “desert flower” in Somali). It has been published in 65 languages & sold more than 13 million copies around the world.
- 2001: Wrote the book *Desert Dawn*.
- 2005: Wrote the book *Desert Children*.
- 2007: Wrote the book *Letter to My Mother*.
- 2009: Co-produced the film *Desert Flower*, based on her book of the same name (Produced by Oscar Nominee Peter Hermann).
- 2010: Wrote the book *Schwarze Frau, Weißes Land*.
- 2013: Wrote the book *Saving Safa: Rescuing a Little Girl from FGM*.
- 2017: Wrote the book *My Africa-The Journey* (For Children)

#### Awards

- 1999: German Africa Award (Federal Republic of Germany)
- 2000: Woman of the Year Award (*Glamour Magazine*)
- 2002: Corine Literature Prize (German Book Trade)
- 2004: Women’s World Award (Mikhail Gorbachev)
- 2005: Bishop Oscar Romero Award (Catholic Church)
- 2007: Legion of Honor (France)
- 2007: Prix des Générations (World Demographic Association)
- 2008: Martin Buber Gold Medal (Euriade Foundation)
- 2010: Gold Medal of the President of the Republic of Italy (Contribution to human rights activism)

- 2013: Woman of the Year for “Campaign work” (Woman of the Year Foundation)
- 2017: Woman of the Year for “Women for Women” (*Gala Magazine*)
- 2018: Woman of the Year (Regional Council of Acosta Valley, Italy)

## **Major Achievements**

### **1. Leading the Campaign to Eradicate FGM by Raising Worldwide Awareness of FGM as a Violence and Human Rights Issue**

Waris Dirie is the first person to draw the world’s attention to FGM as a human rights issue, because of its cruelty. In addition to causing extreme pain, this practice leads to many deaths due to high blood loss or infection. She has been leading anti-FGM campaign to eradicate cruel practice. Through her efforts, people around the world have started to view FGM as violence. The campaign saved millions of girls who were at the risk of the violent practice.

Born into a goat-herding nomad family in Somalia, she underwent female circumcision at the age of 5. In 1997, when her fashion career as a world-class supermodel was at its peak, she revealed her experience with FGM as a representative of all African women who had undergone the procedure and couldn’t tell anyone their story. This brave start led her to become a human rights activist to end the barbaric practice that are thriving in Africa. She was then appointed as a first Special Ambassador to the United Nations for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation in 1997. Since then, she has been putting tireless efforts in anti-FGM Campaign.

As a result of her efforts, 15 African Union member countries ratified the Maputo Protocol, which in Article 5 lists FGM as a harmful practice that must be ended. In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously passed a resolution banning the practice and has set a goal to eliminate FGM by 2030. This innovative milestone saved the lives of millions of girls who were at the risk the violent practice.

Female Genital Mutilation, or female circumcision, is a traditional ritual in which the external female genitalia are cut or removed for non-medical reasons and the operated area is sewn together, leaving a tiny hole. Although this ritual has been practiced for over 3,000 years, it doesn’t have any medical benefits. This barbaric practice is a crime and against humanity, which often causes infertility, problems with urination, high blood loss, infections and in some cases even death.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over 200 million girls and women have been affected by FGM, which is prevalent in more than 30 countries, including parts of Africa and the Middle East. Yearly, about 3.5 million and daily about 9,800 girls and women’s lives are threatened by the brutal practice. Also, due to the increase of the immigration rate, countries in Europe, the USA and Asia are being affected by FGM.

In 2002, Waris Dirie established the Desert Flower Foundation, named for the English translation of her first name, to actively promote the eradication of FGM around the world. Her first book, *Desert Flower*, published in 1997, contains her life and experiences and has been translated into many languages and sold around the world. A major featured film based on her

book, also named *Desert Flower*, was released in 2009. It has been shown in 56 countries around the world, including by international NGOs such as UNHCR and UNICEF, further raising awareness of FGM. These films and books are playing a major role in raising worldwide awareness of FGM and in changing people's perspective toward FGM.

Al Jazeera, the largest broadcasting company in the Arab world, invited Waris Dirie to be interviewed on journalist Riz Khan's program—the first TV program in the Arab world to raise the issue of FGM. In the interview she presented the dangers of FGM and asked everyone to help eradicate the practice. This TV program, which was viewed by 200 million people, brought an opportunity for FGM to be handled publicly as a human rights issue in the Arab world. Waris Dirie states, "Communities need to be educated in the fact that FGM is not prescribed by any religion and it is not part of a culture." There was a time when her bold statements and actions led to her receiving threats. However, she has continued to lead the campaign to eradicate FGM, even at the risk of her life.

Because of her achievements, she received the Oscar Romero Award presented by the Catholic Men's Movement in 2007, and she also received the Legion of Honor award from the French government.

## **2. Healing Hearts and Bodies of Victims of FGM through Reconstructive Surgery**

Waris Dirie provides reconstructive surgery and comprehensive cure for victims of FGM, who are physically and psychologically damaged by the brutal practice. In 2013, the Desert Flower Foundation partnered with the Waldfriede Hospital of Berlin to open the first Desert Flower Center, which provides comprehensive treatments for victims of FGM. Currently, the centers operate in Paris, Berlin, Stockholm and Amsterdam with a medical team of 120 doctors, nurses and staff. The centers provide physiological support, reconstructive surgeries, career training, and educational materials.

FGM usually is done at home without any medical device. When a girl or a woman experiences the procedure, there is a high chance of developing an "obstetric fistula," an abnormal opening between the genital and urinary tracts. Girls and women who are affected by an obstetric fistula can suffer from incontinence of urine or feces, causing various infections, extreme menstrual cramps and obstructed labor, which also can lead to infertility.

When Waris Dirie first opened the Training Center, her goal was to provide educational materials for civil society groups and academic institutions to prepare as many doctors as possible to perform reconstructive surgery. The center have provided education in FGM reconstructive surgery to doctors and obstetricians. So far, medical teams from France, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Italy, Morocco, Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom have participated in the education and have performed the reconstructive surgery on FGM victims in their own countries.

## **3. Providing Fundamental Solutions to the Eradication of FGM through Education and Financial Support**

Many countries changed their laws to ban FGM after the United Nations General Assembly unanimously passed a resolution banning the practice. However, the practice is still being done around the world, even risking victims' lives. Waris Dirie grasped that the practice is still carried out due to the "financial benefit" to families from selling their daughters at high cost, not because of tradition or culture. Therefore, as a fundamental solution to the issue, she is at the forefront of helping victims to stand independently, by providing basic literacy education and career education.

The Desert Flower Foundation runs a sponsorship program called "Save a Little Desert Flower," which protects girls in Sierra Leone and Djibouti from FGM by providing funds for education. Also, Waris Dirie started another program called "Education Initiative" to lower the child illiteracy rate. In 2018, she started to build an elementary school in Sierra Leone to raise children's basic literacy. In addition, she started a pilot project in many corners of Africa, called "Together for African Women," for women's education, career training and guaranteed income. She is also working on a project with fair-trade companies in Ethiopia and Kenya that produce scarves and other fair-trade products to provide employment to thousands.

Waris Dirie states, "My goal is to help the women of Africa. I want to see them get stronger, not weaker, and the practice of FGM simply weakens them physically and emotionally. Since women are the backbone of Africa, and they do most of the work, I like to imagine how much they could accomplish if they weren't butchered as children and left to function maimed for the rest of their lives." Waris Dirie is calling out passionately that eradicating FGM can empower and expand the rights of women and transform Africa.

## **Laureate Achievements 2. Akinwumi Ayodeji Adesina**

### **Spearheading Good Governance by Leading Agricultural Innovation and Economic Growth of Africa**

#### **Akinwumi Ayodeji Adesina**

Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, a globally renowned development economist, has been a leader in agricultural innovation in Africa for over 30 years, bringing significant improvement to Africa's food security, and the establishment of strategic and far reaching agricultural policies to transform agriculture into a business, and to create wealth for millions of poor farmers.

Currently, he serves as the President of the African Development Bank where he directs inclusive growth for Africa's economies. Also, through his transparency and accountability in the delivery of impactful programs, he drives a bold vision of Good Governance of Africa, which boosts Africa's capacity to feed itself and transform its rural economies for generating wealth for millions of rural and poor African farmers.

Awarded the World Food Prize in 2017 for decades of innovative work on global agriculture and support for the poor and marginalized, Dr. Adesina continues to devote his passion and energy to ending global hunger, noting: "I will not rest until we end global hunger". Forbes Africa Magazine of October 2018 dubbed Dr. Adesina as "Mr. Development" for his innovative approaches and inspiring leadership to help lift millions out of poverty. As a true mark of dedication to his cause, Dr. Adesina devoted his entire \$250,000 World Food Prize to the establishment of the World Hunger Fighters' Foundation, with the goal of helping end global hunger.

#### **General Background**

- February 6, 1960 – Born in Ibadan, Nigeria
- Bachelor's Degree in Agricultural Economics (First Class Honors) from University of Ife, Nigeria (Now Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria).
- Master of Science in Agricultural Economics from Purdue University, USA
- Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Purdue University, USA
- Honorary Doctor in Humane Letters from Franklin and Marshall College, USA
- Honorary Doctor of Agriculture from Purdue University, USA
- Honorary Doctor of Agriculture from Michigan State University, USA
- Honorary Doctor of Science, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria
- Honorary Doctorate, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria
- Honorary Doctor of Science, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akugba, Nigeria
- Honorary Doctor of Letters from Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

- Honorary Doctor of Management, Nigerian Defense Academy, Kaduna, Nigeria

### **Professional Background**

- 1988: Senior Agricultural Scientist at the Rockefeller Foundation, New York, USA
- 1990-1995: Principal Economist and Coordinator of the West Africa Rice Economics Task Force at the West Africa Development Association (WARDA).
- 1999-2003: Representative for Southern Africa at the Rockefeller Foundation, New York, USA
- 2003-2008: Associate Director for Food Security at the Rockefeller Foundation, New York, USA
- 2008-2011: Vice President, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, Nairobi, Kenya
- 2008-2010: President of the African Association of Agricultural Economists
- 2011-2015: Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in Nigeria
- 2015-Present: President of the African Development Bank Group

### **Awards**

- 2007: YARA Prize for the African Green Revolution (YARA International), Oslo, Norway
- 2010: Borlaug CAST Communication Award (CAST), USA.
- 2015: Extraordinary Achievement Award (Silverbird Television)
- 2016: First Laureate of the FARA Africa Leadership Prize
- 2017: Gene White Lifetime Achievement Award (Global Nutrition Foundation), Washington DC, USA
- 2017: World Food Prize (World Food Prize Foundation, USA).

### **Recognitions**

- 2010: Appointed by the United Nations Secretary General as one of the 17 global leaders to spearhead the Millennium Development Goals
- 2013: “African Person of the Year” (Forbes Africa)
- 2016-Present: Board Member of the Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa
- 2018: Ranked the 9<sup>th</sup> Most Influential African by the Jeune Afrique Magazine

### **Major Achievements**

#### **1. Bringing Great Improvement to Africa’s Food Security by Leading Africa’s Agricultural Innovation**

Dr. Adesina had a vision that in order for Africa to overcome chronic poverty in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and stand by itself, African countries must transform their agricultural sectors. With this in mind, for 30 years he has spearheaded agricultural innovation and improved food security for millions of people throughout the African continent.

Dr. Adesina proclaims: “Agriculture is a sector that will help diversify economies, create jobs, and eradicate food insecurity in African countries, as well as achieving food security for the world.” Therefore, he has been at the forefront of establishing major agricultural policies to eradicate poverty in Africa.

Dr. Adesina was born into a family of smallholder farmers. Seeing the reality of rural poverty in his childhood, he learned the crucial link between agriculture and livelihoods, and attained a vision of unlocking the potential of Africa to feed itself and contribute to feeding the world.

In 1988 after acquiring his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics at Purdue University, in the United States of America, he returned to Africa and worked for a decade in three of the global agricultural research centers – the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics, the West Africa Rice Development Association, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture spearheading policy work on getting agricultural technologies to farmers.

Dr. Adesina joined the Rockefeller Foundation Agricultural Sciences where he worked for a decade, developing innovative approaches for reaching poor farmers in the remotest areas of Africa with improved agricultural technologies. He helped to design a model called “The Agro-Dealers Network”, which consist of a massive rural network of small village shops that taught modern agricultural techniques and sold seed varieties and fertilizers to farmers. With the method, distances travelled by farmers to find modern farm inputs declined drastically. He passionately cooperated with international and local NGOs to reach millions of farmers, yielding significant increases in food production across the continent.

In 2015, based on his belief that, “The greatest infrastructure to build isn’t a road or a rail or a port, but *grey matter infrastructure*, he established an initiative called “African Leaders for Nutrition” with the help of other world leaders such as Bill Gates; Aliko Dangote, the richest man in Africa; the late Kofi A. Annan; and the former President of Ghana, John Kuffor. Since the establishment of the initiative, Dr. Adesina has been at the forefront of eradicating malnutrition, stunting and poverty in Africa through agriculture.

## **2. Spearheading Good Governance through the Works of Accelerating Africa’s Economic Growth**

Throughout his life, thanks to excellent political leadership and influence, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina has continued to build a bright future for Africa, including as a Vice President for Policy and Partnerships of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and as Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in Nigeria. He is still at the forefront of bringing agricultural innovation to the African continent, as a President of the African Development Bank Group.

He pioneered major transformations in the agricultural field, including expanding food production by introducing high yielding technologies, designing and implementing policies to support farmers’ access to technologies at scale, increasing the availability of credit for millions

of smallholder farmers, attracting private investments for the agricultural sector, rooting out corrupt elements in the fertilizer industry, and assisting in the establishment of major agricultural policies for Africa's green revolution.

Based upon his beliefs, he has made "using agriculture to create wealth" his core value. He has also been in the forefront of spearheading Good Governance for Africa, and ensuring inclusive growth for Africa's economy.

During his term as an Associate Director for Food Security at the Rockefeller Foundation in 2006, he ardently organized the Africa Fertilizer Summit, because he recognized that Africa desperately needed to spark a revolution in agricultural techniques using fertilizer to increase food production of smallholder farmers. The summit was one of the largest high-level meetings in Africa's history to focus on solving Africa's food issues. Dr. Adesina succeeded in raising excitement and political will among the leaders at the summit and called for the adoption of the "Abuja Declaration on Fertilizer for the African Green Revolution," of which all leaders in attendance stated their commitment to "eradicate hunger in Africa by 2030."

After the Summit and since 2006 as a Vice President for Policy and Partnerships at the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (late Kofi Annan served as the Chairman), he developed an innovative financing system which ensured banks' capacity to lend credit to smallholder farmers who had no other ways to get out of the cycle of poverty. With cooperation from banks from other countries, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the system leveraged \$100 million in loans and contributed in bringing agricultural innovation to smallholder farmers. The Bank of Uganda provided loans to farmers growing bananas, using \$500,000 from Rockefeller Foundation's Program-Related Investment portfolio, and Kenya's Equity Bank, which is the largest bank in Kenya, launched a "risk sharing facility" that leveraged \$50 million in financing for tens of thousands of smallholder farmers. In Nigeria, he worked with the Central Bank of Nigeria (and its then Governor, Sanusi Lamido, now Emir Sanusi II of Kano) to establish a \$300 million risk sharing facility to de-risk lending by commercial banks to agriculture, and successfully leveraging \$3 billion in lending commitments. This innovative system expanded to other countries and has greatly contributed to terminating the cycle of poverty of smallholder farmers.

As a result of his achievements, he was appointed as Nigeria's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in 2011. During his term, he boosted food production by an additional 21 million metric tons over four years and attracted \$5.6 billion in private-sector investments. Moreover, he led an agricultural revolution by introducing the "E-Wallet System" which provided agricultural inputs and subsidized electronic vouchers, which allowed farmers to use them in lieu of cash to purchase fertilizer and seed varieties directly from agro-dealers. The E-Wallet System also ended 40 years of corruption in the government-controlled fertilizer distribution system. As farmers used modern seed varieties in rice, maize and wheat production, the number of seed companies increased from 5 to 80 companies within just four years; farmer rice yields doubled to five to six tons of rice per hectare with improved seed varieties, and in the process, transforming the lives of 14.5 million farmers and their families.



Nigeria's E-Wallet System drew attention as a critically innovative platform to end decades of corruption in the fertilizer supply chain and sparked a *Borlaugian* "Take it to the Farmer" revolution. Subsequently, global financial institutions such as the World Bank and other multilateral and bilateral development finance institutions began supporting the scaling up of the program into other African countries and beyond.

Since 2015, as President of the African Development Bank, Dr. Adesina has set a number of strategic goals and spearheaded the growth of Africa with a "High 5 Strategy" which includes: light up and power Africa, feed Africa, industrialize Africa, integrate Africa, and improve the quality of life for the people of Africa. His leadership is moving Africa forward with speed on many fronts. Bank estimates indicate that in 2017, 4.4 million people were able to connect to electricity; 8.5 million people received benefited in the agricultural field, and 14 million people were beneficiaries of infrastructural investments in the transportation sector.

Dr. Adesina has provided remarkable leadership for youth across Africa and he continues to develop the next generation of leaders. His infectious passion has led many of Africa's youth to go into agriculture as a business, shifting their mindsets to modern value-chain driven agriculture, which he believes will unlock the fullness of wealth for African economies.

Passionately driven to end poverty in Africa, he pursues this mission by building strategic alliances and partnerships across the world, between governments, private sector and civil society, with a determination to make Africa a "place of wealth" and not "a museum for poverty". He is mobilizing billions of dollars to make Africa a "land of investment" and not a land that needs "aid".

In addition to efforts to ramp Africa's infrastructure, he is driving a bold agenda for the African Development Bank to help deliver universal access to power in Africa within ten years for 645 million Africans who do not have access to electricity. Buoyed by a deep sense of urgency and the realization that Africa will have a population of 840 million young people by 2015, he is accelerating change and economic growth with a goal and plan to create 25 million jobs within ten years, much of which will come from the agricultural field.

In his words "my life is only worth living to the extent to which it helps to lift millions out of poverty into wealth. For three decades that's been my passion. Development must be done with dignity".