

12 June 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
on the “The Transformative Power of Art” exhibition**

Statement Attributable to the Spokesperson for the President of the General Assembly

“Today, the urgency of placing people at the centre of everything we do is both a challenge and a miracle of human creativity that can be translated into a common language of artistic inspiration as our fragile Mother Earth faces the devastating consequences of climate change, a defining challenge of our time”, stated H.E. Mr. Sam K.utesa, President of the General Assembly, in commissioning the art exhibition entitled “The Transformative Power of Art”, which is now open to all in the Visitor’s concourse at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The exhibition, which takes place under the United Nations “2015: Time for Global Action” campaign, is primarily destined to raise awareness about climate change and our fragile ecosystems. Indeed, the sculptures that are exhibited are made of many natural elements provided by nature’s bounty from all parts of the world. They bear testimony to nature’s resilience in the face of human-made challenges. The sculptures are like totems, silent performers, and reminders of the perils facing Mother Earth and humankind.

The 16 accompanying portraits represent people from all continents who, during their lifetime, contributed to the common good of humanity in one way or another and have transformed the way we think. The portraits are meant to project the power of generosity that touches the human heart and conscience. The men and women who are represented never lost sight of the most vulnerable. They are: Pierre-Claver Akendengué (Gabon), Maya Angelou (USA), Joan Baez (USA), Audrey Hepburn (UK), Vassily Kandinsky (Russia), Umm Kulthum (Egypt), Gong Li (China), Miriam Makeba (South Africa), Edgar Morin (France), Fatemeh Motamed-Arya (Iran), Okot p’Bitek (Uganda), Satyajit Ray (India), Sebastião Salgado (Brazil), Wole Soyinka (Nigeria), Ngugi Wa Thiong’o (Kenya), and Malala Yousafzai (Pakistan).

The objective of the exhibition is to demonstrate that art creates bridges where politics divide. It was designed with the conviction that artistic impulse always carries seeds of redemption.

Fabrizio Ruggiero, Curator

A painter and sculptor, Fabrizio Ruggiero is the curator of the Art Exhibition. He has been fascinated from his early youth in Naples, Italy, by surfaces shaped by nature over time. After his degree in Architecture from the University of Naples, he settled in 1980 in Tuscany to establish Architectura

Picta, an innovative workshop focused on developing the ancient fresco technique, using contemporary technology. In 2001, he collaborated in the Global Pagoda project, the world's largest Buddhist Pagoda, which was being planned in Gorai Creek, near Mumbai, India. In 2008, inspired by Marcel Duchamp, he painted a series of portraits of prominent 20th century artists in fresco style. In 2014, he was commissioned to design and curate the permanent exhibition at the National Museum in Yaoundé, Cameroon, of a unique 60-meter artwork by the Poto-Poto School of Painting in Brazzaville (Ecole de peinture de Poto-Poto), in the Republic of Congo. His artwork can be found in private collections in Europe, Asia and the Americas. His most recent exhibition, *Le Monde des Femmes*, was staged at the *Maison de la Chine* in Paris, France.