

# Right Livelihood Award 40 years & Medellín Poetry Festival 30 years

## *Inspiring Change through Culture*

As the Right Livelihood Award is approaching its 40th Anniversary and the Medellín International Poetry Festival its 30th, our common global challenges are becoming increasingly acute and tangible when it comes to for example the climate crisis, authoritarian governance, the continuous threat of violent conflict including the use of nuclear weapons and growing inequality between rich and poor. The Right Livelihood Foundation, in cooperation with the Medellín International Poetry Festival (Right Livelihood Laureate 2006), will organise a three-part webinar series inviting Right Livelihood Laureates, others within the Right Livelihood network and poets. We want to provide a safe space for transformative ideas and visions. The focus will be on **Culture as a tool to inspire change**, and how to communicate the urgency of system change to the wider public. How can poets, musicians, activists and policymakers invited to the Poetry Festival best come together with science and Right Livelihood Laureates to trigger an urgent worldwide mobilisation around the pressing need for system change?

## *World Peace and Disarmament, August 18<sup>th</sup>*

For decades, the security-concept has been defined by military strengths. However, in 2020, COVID-19 showed us that confrontations and weapons cannot solve a global threat like the virus. We need a shift in the political and economic priorities towards increased investments in human security issues such as health, poverty and climate change instead of spending trillions of dollars on weapons. Alyn Ware, peace educator and Right Livelihood Laureate 2009, Ulrika Moder, Assistant Secretary-General at the UN, based at UNDP, and Gcina Mhlophe, South African activist and poet, will discuss the topic of world peace and disarmament in a broad sense.

## Participants

### Ole Von Uexküll

Ole is the Executive Director of the Right Livelihood Foundation, where he leads and coordinates the work of the Foundation with a focus on strategy development, representation, financial management and research. Ole has evaluated candidates for the Right Livelihood Award in more than 35 countries around the globe. He has kept his great interest for environmental related issues from his student years and earlier work on renewable energy at the German Parliament. Ole has also previously worked at the United Nations Environment Programme in Paris, and the European Parliament in Brussels. He is a member of the Advisory Board of the European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights in Berlin.

### Fernando Rendón

Fernando is a poet, publisher, editor, journalist and the founder and director of the [Medellín International Poetry Festival](#), [Right Livelihood Laureate 2006](#). The festival has become an extraordinary phenomenon due to the frankness, intensity, enthusiasm and directness of the mainly young audience from all sectors of society, who come together in a true celebration of poetry at the free event. Fernando is also the founder of the poetry magazine Prometeo, among other poetry magazines. Prometeo initiated the establishment of many poetry initiatives in Colombia, which has helped provide an ethical and aesthetic counterweight to the terror of the times of civil war. He has received numerous awards in South Africa, Egypt, Romania, Spain, Cuba and Colombia. Co-founder of the World Poetic Movement, he is its General Coordinator at present. Fernando has explained the people's fascination for poetry by the perilous times the people are enduring, as well as their hopes that they will see the end of them. Pain sensitizes us. Poetry enables us to cope with the crisis and to identify with our city despite the hostilities and the war.

### Ulrika Modéer

Ulrika is passionate about human rights and believes that it is possible to create a sustainable future for both the people and the planet. In her current role as Assistant Secretary General at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Ulrika leads the organisation in nurturing and growing key relationships with Member States, and new and emerging partners, as well as leads UNDP's communications

and advocacy, as it works to realise the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals. Ulrika previously served as Sweden's State Secretary for International Development Cooperation and Climate and has been instrumental in reshaping the country's international development cooperation to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. She combines a strong policy background with parliamentary and civil society experience and has had several assignments in Latin America (Bolivia, Guatemala) and Africa (Mozambique).

### **Alyn Ware**

Alyn describes himself as an educator, organiser and campaigner for peace, non-violence, nuclear abolition, international law, human rights and the environment. Over the years Alyn has worked for the establishment of different peace educational initiatives and reformations. Alongside this, Alyn has maintained a large focus on nuclear disarmament and conflict resolution, and has continuously worked on many international projects. He is the founder and global coordinator of the network Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND). Alyn is engaged in Move the Nuclear Weapons Money, an initiative with focus on campaigning for governments to decrease nuclear weapons and fossil fuel and instead allocate resources to support peace, public health, renewable energy and sustainable development. Besides this Alyn is a novice singer and song-writer, recreational runner and skier, and a vegetarian.

### **Gcina Mhlophe**

Gcina is an author, poet, playwright, director, performer and storyteller, influenced by her grandmothers' tales during early childhood. Her prize-winning songs and storytelling have a focus on empowering cultural expression and heritage. Storytelling is a deeply traditional activity in Africa and Gcina is one of the few female storytellers in a country dominated by men. Gcina is the founder of NOZINCWADI Mother of Books Literacy Campaign, an initiative by which she promotes and supports the importance of reading in rural areas in South Africa. The initiative does not only distribute books but Gcina works to increase the cultural benefits by merging art and education. To increase the awareness of how art together with cultural heritage can make a significant difference in the education system, and to empower young people to form self-awareness and create possibilities.