



africa century International african writers centenary celebrations conversations series conference

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MEDIA RELEASE

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TIMBUKTU NATIVE, MALI, AUTHOR & AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER, MR IBRAHIMA AYA, TO DELIVERS THE 11TH INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN WRITERS' DAY LECTURE

Mr Ibrahim Aya, Timbuktu-born Malian author, editor, agronomist, co-founder and director of the literary festival **Rentrée littéraire du Mali**, is set to deliver the **11th International African Writers' Day Lecture**, at the Africa Century International African Writers' Conference on 7th November 2023 in Potcherstroom - North West Province - South Africa.

The conference marks the 32nd anniversary of the OAU- (now-AU) declared International African Writers' Day, and the theme of this year is: **Decolonisation and Decoloniality: African Literary Return to the Source**. Mr Ibrahim Aya lives in Bamako – Mali, where, alongside his literary and editorial activities, exercises his profession as an agronomist. He has notably published a number of book and has also participated in or co-directed several collective works including: **Voix hautes pour Tombouctou, Le Mali entre doutes et espoirs, L'Afrique des laïcités, Le Mali contemporain**. Mr Aya's latest book, **Le pays des éclipses**, was published in 2021.

In 2011, Mr Aya created the **"Bibliothèque des dédicaces"** in Timbuktu to bring together books donated and autographed by their authors with the aim of combating intolerance by sharing knowledge and imagination. He is the co-founder and director of the **"Rentrée littéraire du Mali"**, the literary event of reference in Mali, created in 2008. The event has now made Mali one of the major events for the celebration of literary and intellectual creation in Africa. **The "Rentrée littéraire du Mali"** is held every year in February and the 16th edition will take place from February 20 to 24, 2024 on the theme: **Africa of living together**.

Last year, (2022), the major theme of the 10th Africa Century International African Writers Conference (ACIAWC) was: **Indigenous Knowledge and Decoloniality: The Role of Education, Arts, Culture, Heritage and Recreation in Rebuilding Resilience Post-Trauma and Into The Future**, and it was delivered by **Dr Nokugcina Mhlophe**, actress, storyteller, poet, playwright, director and author.

President Thabo Mbeki delivered the inaugural edition thereof in 2012, followed by Ms Samia Nkrumah, Prof Micere Mugo, Minister Nathi Mthethwa, Profs Mandla Makhanya, Zodwa Motsa and Kwesi Kwaa Prah, Prof Puleng LenkaBula, the Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of South Africa' among the distinguished line of speakers and scholars.

The Africa Century International African Writers' Conference aims to, as the then-OAU's Conference of African Ministers of Education and Culture (meeting in Cotonou, Benin, in 1991) resolved, "...afford the African people a moment of pause within which to reflect on the contribution of African Writers to the development of the Continent".



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This year's Conference will culminate in the **18th Annual South African Literary Awards (SALA)** prize-giving ceremony. Since 2005, these premier literary accolades have honoured over 300 authors in sixteen categories and in eleven official languages.

The Director of the Conference, Mr Morakabe Raks Seakhoa, said, by staying with the underlying theme of **decolonialisation and decoloniality**, this time around is to explore the many sites of African literary existence, praxis and nuances across time and space.

Mr Seakhoa added that, "With the stellar cast made up of such excellent scholars in the persons of the keynote speaker, respondents and discussants, **the 18th Africa Century International African Writers Conference** portends a worthy and timely contribution to AU's Education and Culture Ministers' resolution of affording the African people a moment of pause within which to reflect on the contribution of the African writers to the development of the Continent."

End.

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