

Congress Opening Speakers



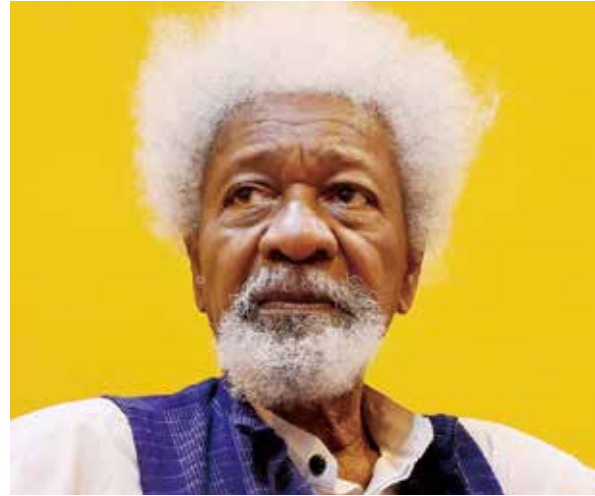
Mohamed Saif AL AFKHAM, UAE

President of ITI Worldwide, President of UAE Centre of ITI



Moderator: Tobias BIANCONE, Switzerland

Director-General of ITI



Wole SOYINKA, Nigeria

ITI President (1985-1987)

Nobel Prize Laureate, World Theatre Ambassador

Wole Soyinka was born on 13 July 1934 at Abeokuta, near Ibadan in western Nigeria. In 1960, after receiving a Rockefeller Bursary, he founded the theatre group, "The 1960 Masks" and in 1964, the "Orisun Theatre Company", in which he was a playwright and actor. During the Nigerian civil war, Soyinka was imprisoned for 22 months between 1967-1969 for writing in favour of a ceasefire.

Upon his release he established his position as a man of culture and letters. In 1986, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature and became the first African to be so honoured. In 1994, he was designated UN Goodwill Ambassador for the promotion of African culture, human rights, freedom of expression, media and communication.



Ernesto OTTONE RAMIREZ, Chile

Assistant Director-General for Culture UNESCO



وزارة الثقافة والشباب
MINISTRY OF CULTURE & YOUTH

Ministry of Culture and Youth Speech



Lemi PONIFASIO, Samoa / New Zealand

Choreographer, International Dance Day Message Author 2016

Lemi Ponifasio is acclaimed internationally for his radical work as a choreographer, stage director, designer, artist, as well as for his collaborations with many marginalised communities.

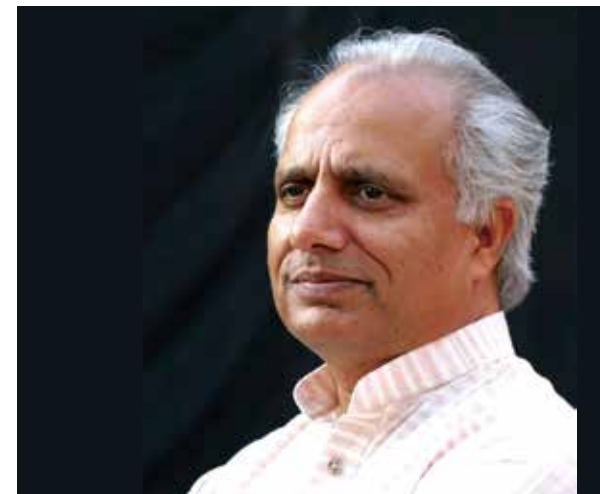
Born in Samoa, Lemi Ponifasio founded MAU in 1995, a platform that brings together traditional and contemporary Pacific and Maori artists, thinkers, and communities from the fields of oration, ceremony, kapahaka, theatre, music, dance, film and visual arts. Lemi's collaborators are people from all walks of life, performing in factories, remote villages, opera houses, schools, marae, castles, galleries, and stadiums. His projects have included fully staged operas, theatre shows, dances, exhibitions, community forums and festivals in more than 40 countries.



Elisa LONCÓN ANTILEO, Chile

Mapuche linguist and Indigenous Rights Activist

Elisa Loncon Antileo is a scholar of the Universidad de Santiago de Chile. Her research work is about native languages, inter cultural and bilingual education and educational epistemic pluralism. Between July 2021 and July 2022 she was a member of the Chilean Constitutional Convention representing the Mapuche people, she also was President of that Convention. She was named one of the most influential women in 2021 by *Time* magazine, and *Financial Times* magazine named her one of the 25 most influential women of 2022. In 2021 she received the International Prize René Cassin for her commitment to Human Rights. In addition to all this, she is both author and co author of several books and articles, including *Violeta Parra en el Wallmapu. Su encunetro con el canto mapuche* (Santiago: Pehupen, 2017. Co-authorship with Paula Miranda and Allison Ramay) and *Morfología y aspectos del mapundungun*. (México: Biblioteca de Signos Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Uniodad Iztapalapa, 2011).



Shahid NADEEM, Pakistan

World Theatre Day Message Author 2021, Head of Ajoka Theatre

Shahid Nadeem, born in 1947 in Kashmir, is Pakistan's leading playwright and head of the renowned Ajoka Theatre. He became a refugee at the age of 1 when his family had to migrate to the newly-created Pakistan after the 1948 conflict with India. He wrote his first play as a university student but became a dedicated playwright when he started contributing plays for Pakistan's dissident theatre group, Ajoka, from political exile in London.

His plays are well-regarded for their bold socially relevant, sometimes taboo, subjects such as religious extremism, violence against women, discrimination against minorities, freedom of expression, climate change, peace and Sufism. He skilfully combines contemporary social and political themes with traditional forms and folk heritage to present an entertaining and intellectually stimulating form of theatre.