

Press Release

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Abdou Diouf appoints Michaëlle Jean *Grand Témoin de la Francophonie* for the London 2012 Olympic Games

Abdou Diouf, Secretary General of La Francophonie, today announced the appointment of the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, UNESCO Special Envoy for Haiti and former Governor General of Canada, as *Grand Témoin de la Francophonie* for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Mindful of her commitment to la Francophonie, the Secretary General has asked her to observe the use of the French language during the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games, which will be held in London in 2012. She will also promote the use of French at the Games by establishing high-level contacts with the British authorities, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the London Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) and representatives from the member states of La Francophonie. *"It seemed only natural to entrust this mission to Ms. Jean, given her commitment to la Francophonie. But more importantly, she fits perfectly with our approach to cultural and linguistic diversity and has an excellent knowledge of the countries of the French-speaking world,"* said Abdou Diouf.

The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean succeeds the former President of the Swiss Confederation, Pascal Couchepin (Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics), French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin (Beijing 2008 Olympics), Ms. Lise Bissonnette (Turin 2006 Olympics) and Mr. Hervé Bourges (Athens 2004 Olympics). Michaëlle Jean is UNESCO Special Envoy for Haiti and was Governor General of Canada from 2005 to 2010. As Governor General of Canada, she also presided over the official ceremonies of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics, alongside Jacques Rogge and John Furlong. Her fundamental task is to ensure proper compliance with Rule 24 of the Olympic Charter, which gives French the status of an official language of the Olympic Games. The mission is a continuation of the actions launched by the Secretary General of La Francophonie to address this issue within a multilateral framework and in close cooperation with the International Olympic Committee.

While visiting London for a working session with the Commonwealth Secretary General on 24 February, Abdou Diouf met with Sebastian Coe, Chair of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), to inform him of the mission of the *Grand Témoin* at the Olympics and to discuss the preparations for the London Games.

The IOF includes 56 Member States and Governments and 19 Observer Countries.
For further information, visit www.francophonie.org

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