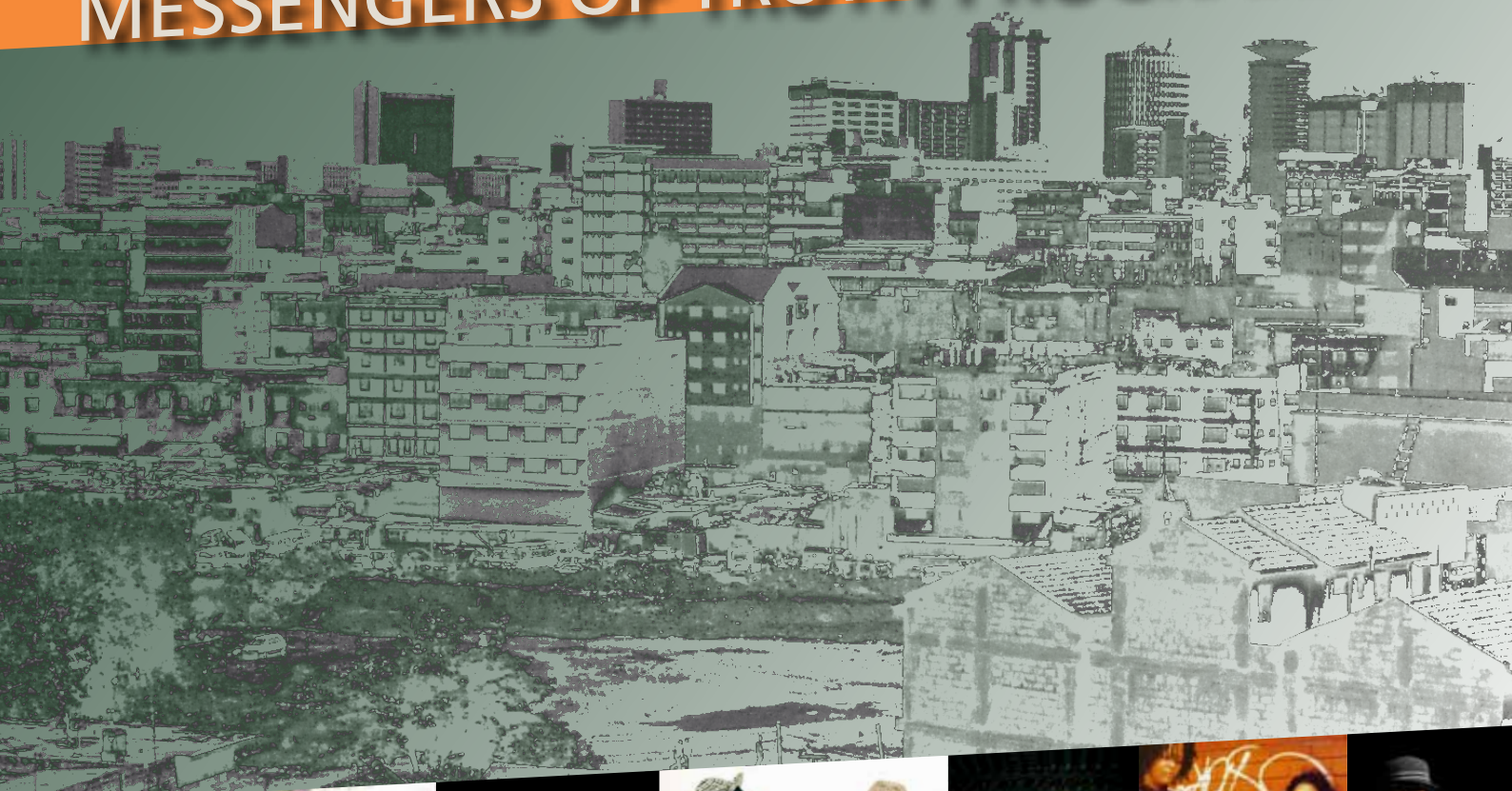


# MESSENGERS OF TRUTH PROGRAMME



Rolf Stahlhofen  
GERMANY



MV Bill  
BRAZIL



Sarah Mitaru  
KENYA



Gidi Gidi Maji Maji  
KENYA



La Etnnia  
COLUMBIA



Godessa  
SOUTH AFRICA



K'naan  
SOMALIA/CANADA



Nuuk Posse  
GREENLAND



DJ Didier Awadi  
SENEGAL



Equicez  
NORWAY



Samsaya  
INDIA / NORWAY



Lam Tungwar  
SUDAN



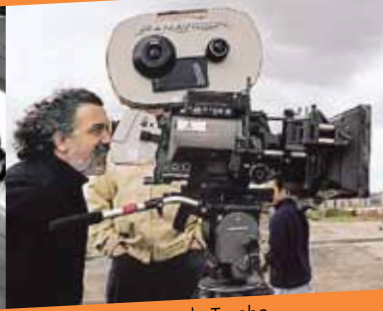
Kelly Love Jones  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



Geronación  
SPAIN



El Haze  
SPAIN



Fernando Trueba  
SPAIN



Bebo Valdés  
CUBA



Curtis Clearsky  
COAST SALISH  
TERRITORY - CANADA



Carlinhos Brown  
BRAZIL



MADCON  
NORWAY

Artists designated as  
Messengers of Truth



## BACKGROUND

**M**ore than 1 billion people live in slums and other sub-standard housing around the world. If present trends continue, this number could rise above 2 billion by 2030. The urbanisation of poverty and social exclusion is one of the most alarming trends of the 21st century. UN-HABITAT's latest research shows that sub-Saharan Africa today has a slum population of 199.5 million representing 61.7 percent of its urban population. This is followed by South Asia with 190.7 million in slums making up 35 percent of urban residents, East Asia with 189.6 million (28.2 percent), Latin America and the Caribbean with 110.7 million (23.5 percent), Southeast Asia with 88.9 million (31 percent), West Asia with 35 million (24.6 percent), North Africa with 11.8 million (13.3 percent), and Oceania with six million who constitute 24.1 percent of the urban population.

The world's leaders committed themselves at the United Nations Millennium Summit to attaining the Millennium Development Goals. These goals include: reducing abject poverty and HIV/AIDS prevalence by half by 2015; improving access by the poor to health and education; and improving the living conditions of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. UN-HABITAT is the lead UN agency for housing and urban development. It plays nonetheless a strategic role advocating for more sustainable urban development.

Urban youth are among the least-empowered groups. Of the 1 billion slum dwellers, approximately 50% are under 24. Without access to adequate education or training, they have no prospects for meaningful employment. They have no say in policies and decisions that affect their livelihoods.

They are victims of a vicious cycle of poverty and social exclusion and are particularly vulnerable to crime, drug abuse, prostitution and HIV/AIDS.

As a response to the marginalization of urban young people, UN-HABITAT launched the Messengers of Truth Programme in 2004 in Barcelona. The Programme aims to highlight how the arts can help address urban youth empowerment and employment; urban peace building and social cohesion; improving urban health; and advocacy for inclusive and decent public infrastructure.



Mr. Ananthakrishnan Subramonia, Senior Advisor, Partners and Youth Branch and Mrs. Anna Tibajuka, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT

## THE PURPOSE

The goal of the Messengers of Truth Programme is to encourage artists' communication of positive messages for urban youth self-empowerment. As well, it aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of artists in helping to meet the challenges of urban unemployment, safety, social cohesion, health, and inclusive and decent urban infrastructure. Program objectives are as follows:



### SELECT AND DESIGNATE ARTISTS AS MESSENGERS OF TRUTH

1

Highlight already socially committed artists focused on urban issues with the aim of inspiring other young artists to do the same.

### LEGITIMIZING YOUTH PARTICIPATION

2

To use artists as ambassadors to provide a platform for youth to be heard and in decisions that affect their livelihoods.

### HIGHLIGHTING THE VALUE OF ARTS FOR SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION

3

To use the convening power of UN-HABITAT to bring together youth, artists, arts industry and urban policy makers to explore how the arts can contribute to sustainable urbanization.

### PROFILING THE UN-HABITAT MANDATE

4

To use artists with a high international profile to focus public, media and decision maker attention on the issues at the heart of the UN-HABITAT mandate.

*Young people aged 15 – 24 are estimated at 1.2 billion globally, with over 80%, living in Africa, Asia and Latin America. ... the cities of tomorrow will be inhabited in majority by youth. ... This is why we cannot afford to ignore the important ability of art, music and dance to harness the creativity, the energy and the spirit of youth.*

— Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT

### SPREADING THE WORD


A major purpose of the Programme is to highlight examples of how art can be used to address issues of urbanization. This includes case studies, policy examples and best practices learning.

## PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

**Y**oung people face some of the biggest challenges of rapid urbanization, and the Messengers of Truth Programme is one way UN-HABITAT tries to reach them: through their own heroes, in their own language, on the issues that burn most passionately in their hearts. Through art it aims to spark deeper engagement with the issues of sustainable urbanization and contribute to the attainment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. This is done through high visibility concert events and media work, through specific policy oriented dialogues, as well as more intimate artist workshops. Specifically directed at local and national government, are advocacy efforts aimed at raising the awareness of effective urban arts policy.

### ARTS WORKSHOP EVENTS

MOT arts workshop events are designed to inspire younger artists to follow the path of the Messengers of Truth in becoming engaged in the development of their communities through youth empowerment.



Timothy Mwaura, poet and  
Messengers of Truth Academy  
spoken word facilitator  
from Kenya



Messenger of Truth Lam  
Tungwar, former child  
soldier from Sudan

## MAIN STAGE CONCERTS

These are high visibility concerts during which Messengers of Truth, and local performers in the host city, perform during key UN-HABITAT events such as the World Urban Forum. MOT Main Stage concerts focus attention on the work of the artists in addressing the challenges of urbanization, as well as the work of UN-HABITAT.



Messenger of Truth  
Samsaya from India  
and Norway

*Our goal for [the MDGs in] 2015 must be a positive, smiling Africa. It mustn't be something sad or depressing, but something that gives hope. We must have hope and must get into the habit of saying to young people proudly 'we are rich'. We must stop saying in our heads that we are poor, with all the cultural riches we have.*

— Messenger of Truth Didier Awadi, Senegal

## YOUTH DIALOGUES

Workshops, summits, roundtables and seminars provide a platform for decision makers to hear the voices of youth on issues of sustainable urbanization.







*When I go to the shantytowns to speak to the kids, I'm one of them, so they are completely honest with me. What struck me most was the hope that they all had. I had barely got back to Rio when I started receiving calls from the mothers of the teenagers to tell me that their children had been killed. My next project was to film all of the funerals. How can I be just another rapper going 'yo yo yo' after that?*

— MV Bill. Brazilian rapper, activist, and inspiration for the Messenger of Truth Programme. His CUFA (Central Única das Favelas) organization has also provided basketball courts, computers and audio-visual equipment to give favela teenagers an alternative to drug dealing.



MV Bill

## SELECTING ARTISTS TO BE MESSENGERS OF TRUTH

### NOMINATION, SCREENING AND SELECTION PROCESS

Youth, artistic, and community based organizations can nominate artists by writing to UN-HABITAT, indicating how the artist meets the evaluation criteria and how they will contribute to the aims and activities of the Programme. Once the nominees are reviewed, UN-HABITAT strikes an international committee to make the final selections.

### CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF ARTISTS

The following are some of the criteria used to evaluate the suitability of artists being considered as Messengers of Truth.

- He or she is one of the best examples of a socially engaged artist in his or her country or region.
- The artist has a widely recognized and documented artistic talent with the ability to command attention of young people, media, or decision makers.
- The artist has a demonstrated ability to project the social message through their music and or artistic works.
- There is documented evidence of past involvement in social awareness projects, most importantly on urban issues.
- The artist utilizes language, symbols and imagery appropriate for the general public of all ages.
- The artist's works and statements demonstrate alignment with UN values.

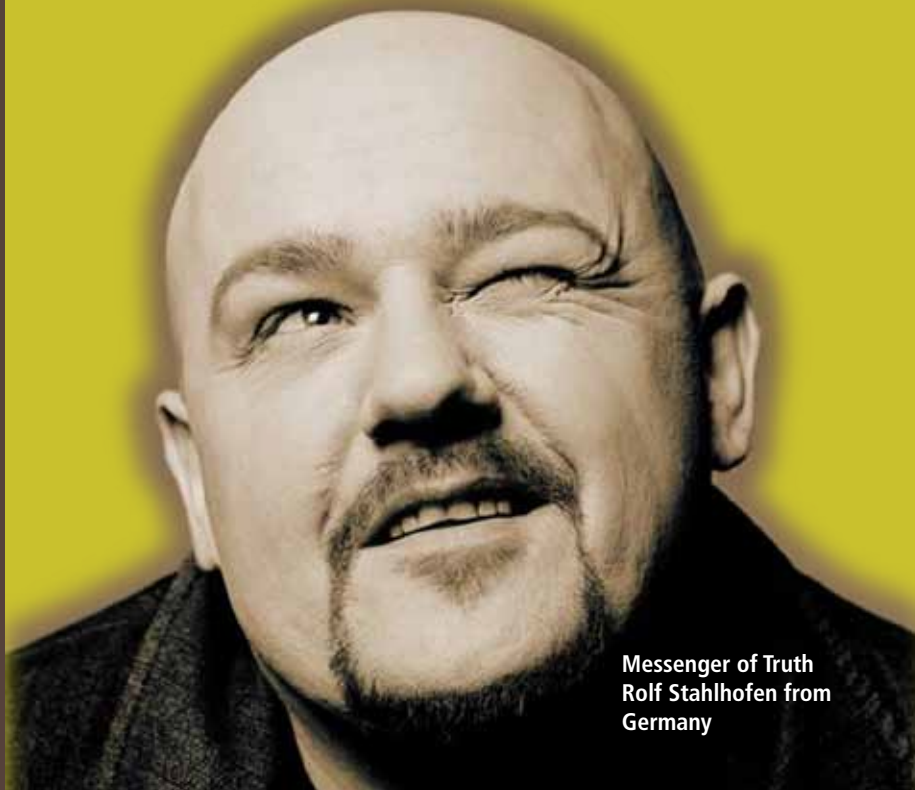


Messenger of Truth Sarah Mitaru from Kenya, being appointed by the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT Dr. Anna Tibaijuka

# THE DUTIES OF MESSENGERS OF TRUTH

## Messengers of Truth are expected to:

- offer their time on a voluntary basis to UN-HABITAT to participate in Messengers of Truth activities during their appointment
- donate, if able, an artistic creation to UN-HABITAT
- familiarize themselves with the work of UN-HABITAT by reading an orientation package with the goal of being able to articulate basic issues at the core of UN-HABITAT's work and mandate
- attend a Messengers of Truth orientation workshop if requested
- assist meeting the Programme's stated goals and objectives by participating in educational, policy, or performance events
- participate in educational sessions and workshops designed to ensure they have a minimum level of knowledge about UN-HABITAT's mandate and activities
- adhere to communication guidelines, which include awareness of general UN protocols, as well as timely responses to communiqués
- appear at major events such as Governing Council, the World Urban Forum and World Urban Youth Assembly, or Habitat Day
- maintain a website, web log, or similar on the social activities they are engaged in, that is linked to the UN-HABITAT website
- provide a photo, biography and artists statement on how they engage with social, urban and/or youth issues



Messenger of Truth  
Rolf Stahlhofen from  
Germany

**“** In Eritrea, women have to walk three or four hours to reach the next water hole. [Though a benefit concert, we] raised enough money to connect five villages to the water system. This gives these people a fair chance to work their way out of undeserved poverty. **”**

— Rolf Stahlhofen



Government  
of Norway

Stiftelsen  
**Horisont**



**A.C.A**  
Riegelsberger  
Art Consulting Agency

## HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

### HOLD AN EVENT WHERE YOU LIVE

Artists, local and national governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector, and media are encouraged to host Messengers of Truth events.

### NOMINATE A MESSENGER OF TRUTH

If you want to nominate an artist to become a Messenger of Truth, email us a letter indicating how the artist meets the selection criteria, and what they plan to add to the Programme. Please visit our website for further details.

### DONATE AN ARTISTIC WORK

If you would like to donate a license for any performance oriented artistic works on Messengers of Truth related themes, please contact us by email to discuss.

### PROFILE YOUR ARTS RELATED CONTRIBUTION TO BETTER CITIES

We always welcome your emailed stories about how artists are encouraging social change in their city. Share your story with text, photos and video, and it may end up highlighted on the official website.

### SPONSOR ARTISTS AND EVENTS

Are you a sponsor with a specific artist or type of event in mind? Please contact us for to arrange an in-person or phone meeting.

### SHARE EXAMPLES OF PRO-ARTS POLICY FOR BETTER CITIES

If you are interested in sharing or finding case studies about how the arts have been used to promote sustainable urbanization, please view our website or contact us to discuss.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact us via email at

[mot@unhabitat.org](mailto:mot@unhabitat.org)

Also check out the Messengers of Truth Programme website for Programme specific information.

[www.unhabitatMOT.org](http://www.unhabitatMOT.org)

For general information on Messengers of Truth and many other UN-HABITAT programmes see:

[www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)

