

**Presentation of the Honorary Award of the German Africa Foundation 2023
to Alex Moussa Sawadogo**

**Wednesday, 21 June 2023
Restaurant Habel am Reichstag, Berlin**

**Welcoming remarks: Dr Christoph Hoffmann MP,
Member of the Board of the German Africa Foundation**

Dear Mr Sawadogo,
dear Mrs Eid,
dear colleagues,
ladies and gentlemen:

I am also glad to welcome His Excellency Toro Justin Ouro - Ambassador of Burkina Faso to Germany since 9 days.

I am pleased that we are honouring Alex Moussa Sawadogo with today's Africa Foundation Honorary Award. A man who has made an outstanding contribution to African cinema and German-African relations.

As director of the Festival panafricain du cinéma et de la télévision de Ouagadougou (FESPACO), you are committed to the promotion of African cinema and the inclusion of the diaspora.

In 2007, you founded the AFRIKAMERA film festival in Berlin to present a realistic picture of Africa.

You set out to put an end to many stereotypes; stereotypes that I also encounter again and again in my discussions as a politician focussing on development cooperation.

They often say that Africa is a problem continent; Africa is poor. Africa is this. Africa is that.

But that is not true.

Africa is 54 countries with very different successes, challenges, societies and cultures.

Just as there is no "one Africa", there is no ONE description for this great continent. And yet this generalisation continues to prevail.

This is also due to the fact that we in Germany know little about our neighbour - present people excepted, of course!

Rarely do films from Africa make it into the cinemas in Germany; rarely is there a successful African series on TV or streaming platforms - like the film Silverton Siege about three anti-apartheid fighters from South Africa (on Netflix).

That is why your work, Mr Sawadogo, is so honourable and deserves this award today!

Because culture and also the media are important intermediaries in the bilateral relations between Germany and the African countries.

A greater understanding of the other culture makes it possible to understand motives and see decisions in a different light.

The consumption of media - film, television, radio and literature - presents a more realistic picture of the everyday reality of life.

Culture and media shape how we think about other countries, customs and traditions.

Culture and media influence the image of Africa in society.

In exactly the same way that, for example, Deutsche Welle, the Goethe Institutes or German films shape the image of Germany.

In the case of African cinema in particular.

Cinema from Africa is often very political; it shows political realities and societies and is therefore often used to highlight political problems.

But it should also - and does - highlight the positive sides. Cinema also shows what is going well in the 54 states on our neighbouring continent.

That is why I believe that today's award is not only a well-deserved honour for you, dear Mr Sawadogo.

It also supports your important work in promoting international understanding through the two festivals FESPACO and AFRIKAMERA!

Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted that you are all here with us to celebrate this award ceremony.

I now hand over to the President of the German Africa Foundation, Dr Uschi Eid.