



## **Citation**

**Award of the World Health Organization  
Health-for-All Gold Medal  
to  
His Excellency Mr Henri Konan Bédié  
President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire**

Henri Konan Bédié was born on 5 May 1934 in Dadiékro, in the *département* of Daoukro, Côte d'Ivoire. After studying in his own country, he went to France, where he obtained a degree in Law and a Doctorate in Economics. There followed a brilliant diplomatic career as Ambassador of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire to the United States and to Canada. He was Minister of Economy and Finance from 1966 until 1977, Special Adviser of the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank Group from 1978 until 1980, when he was elected Deputy, then President, of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire in December of that year. He was re-elected in 1985 and 1990. In December 1993 he succeeded President Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Father of the Ivorian nation.

Before his election as President of the country by universal suffrage in October 1995, he occupied a number of high international posts, particularly in the International Monetary Fund, UNESCO and various international agencies of West Africa. A Grand Officer of the Ivorian National Order, he is also a Commander of the Legion of Honour and holder of many foreign decorations. Inspired by the guiding idea of "health for all, happiness for each", the President has striven since his investiture to establish "a new society with new frontiers of development" for Côte d'Ivoire by the year 2025, when the country will have some 45 million inhabitants. He dreams of a country with a new economic dimension and a considerably higher per capita income, a country of unity and solidarity where there will be less imbalance and inequity, a society where the human being will be placed at the very centre of political and social life: a nation enriched with a new cultural synthesis.

President Henri Konan Bédié hopes that in his country health will be accessible to all, and he gives priority to three areas: cooperation between traditional and modern medicine, rapid establishment of a network of primary health care centres that will give everyone access to treatment, and setting-up of a major programme of disease prevention, based especially on hygiene and nutrition. He devotes particular attention to the central role of women, who must be informed and educated, especially on the subject of maternal health.

In seeking to forge a more homogeneous society, by rapidly and substantially improving the living conditions of the least fortunate, the President works in a spirit of national solidarity. In December 1997, Côte d'Ivoire hosted at Abidjan the Tenth International Conference on Sexually Transmitted Diseases and AIDS in Africa. In his opening address, he voiced his solidarity with the countries of Africa, declaring that "health for all should be the most complete expression of national and international solidarity". On that occasion he mooted

the establishment of an African fund for AIDS control, which would serve as a bank for mutual assistance and intercountry finance to combat the scourge of AIDS on the African continent.

On behalf of the World Health Organization, it is my pleasure and privilege to award to His Excellency Mr Henri Konan Bédié, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the Health-for-All Gold Medal in recognition of his important contribution to achievement in his country of the social objective of health for all.

Hiroshi Nakajima, M.D., Ph.D.  
Director-General  
World Health Organization  
14 May 1998

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