

To mark International Literacy Day,

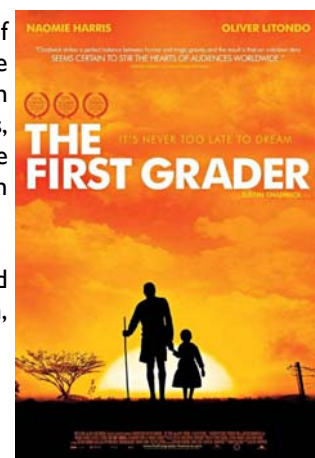
Ciné-ONU and the Goethe-Institut are proud to present

## *The First Grader*

### About the Film:

In a small, remote mountain top primary school in the Kenyan bush, hundreds of children are jostling for a chance for the free education newly promised by the Kenyan government. One new applicant causes astonishment when he knocks on the door of the school. He is Maruge, an old Mau Mau veteran in his eighties, who is desperate to learn to read at this late stage of his life. He fought for the liberation of his country and now feels he must have the chance of an education so long denied - even if it means sitting in a classroom alongside six-year-olds.

Based on a true story, this critically acclaimed film, starring Oliver Litondo and Naomi Harris, has been included in the official selections of the Toronto, London, and Durban international film festivals.



### Our Speakers:



**Jeniffer Njiru** — Embassy of the Republic of Kenya

Jeniffer Njiru is responsible to the Mission for the following ACP subcommittees: Political, Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Affairs; and Establishment and Finance. She is also a member of the ACP Investment & Private Sector subcommittee. In addition to other duties, she is in charge of Africa Union and Horn of Africa/IGAD matters including Horn of Africa Initiative. She is also the key officer responsible for ACP – EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and all matters related thereto.



**Joanna Maycock** — Head of Europe, ActionAid

Joanna Maycock is the Head of Europe for ActionAid, leading the engagement of ActionAid International with its members in Europe to ensure alignment and accountability related to ActionAid's values, mission, and strategy in Europe. Ms Maycock has worked for ActionAid, for more than ten years based out of the Europe Office of ActionAid in Brussels. She has held a range of positions including EU Lobbying and campaigning; and leading work on organisational development and expansion.



**Marie-Paule Roudil** — UNESCO Representative to the EU

Since 1 October 2010, Marie-Paule Roudil has been the Head of the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels and the UNESCO Representative to the European Union. From January 2003 to September 2010, Ms Roudil was Head of the Culture Section in the UNESCO Office in Venice, where she was responsible for developing and implementing a culture strategy for South-East Europe.

## UN Secretary-General's Message on International Literacy Day:

Literacy provides tools for men and women to better understand the world and shape it to meet their aspirations. It is a source of individual dignity and a motor for the healthy development of society. International Literacy Day is an opportunity to celebrate this transformative force and mobilize to make the most of it.



Great strides have been made during the United Nations Literacy Decade that closes this year. Across the world, individuals, communities and countries have reached out to children, youth and adults to enable them to read, write and transform their lives. As a result, some 90 million young men and women and adults have become literate.

We must now go much further. An estimated 775 million young people and adults around the world still cannot read or write; 122 million children of primary and lower secondary school age remain out of school; and millions still graduate with inadequate literacy skills. Women account for two-thirds of the world's illiterate population. The persistence of such numbers hobbles our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to build the inclusive knowledge societies we need for the 21st century.

We must move faster to reach the most marginalized and uphold this basic human right. The global movement for education needs a big push. That is why, later this month, I will be launching a new Education First initiative.

The initiative focuses on three priorities: putting every child in school; improving the quality of learning; and fostering global citizenship. I call on world leaders and all involved with education to join this initiative. The cost of leaving millions of children and young people on the margins of society is far greater than the funds required to reach the international goals for education.

Ask any parent what they want for their children, even in war zones and disaster areas where food, medicine and shelter might be considered the highest priorities, and the answer is the same: education for children. Ask any child what he or she wishes to be when they grow up, and the answer is rooted in education. Education is the gateway to fulfilling those aspirations.

A literate world is a more peaceful world, and a more harmonious and healthy world. On this observance of International Literacy Day, let us pledge to join together to move the literacy agenda forward.

