



REF.: SRS/580 /2010

13 September, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

I was very proud to learn on 7 September 2010 that Radio Okapi had been honored with the "Free media Pioneer Award" by the International Press Institute (IPI). On behalf of the Secretary-General, the entire Mission and myself, I would like to congratulate our colleagues from Radio Okapi in Kinshasa, and in the provinces.

The IPI "Free Media Pioneer Award" was created in 1996 to honor the individuals or organizations who, in difficult conditions, are fighting for the development of free and independent media in their countries. As Radio Okapi staff meets, in every respect, these criteria, they perfectly deserve this award.

Radio Okapi was created eight years ago and during that period it managed to establish itself in the media scene of DRC. Thanks to the quality of its programming, but above all thanks to the credibility created by the staff professionalism, it became the daily source of information and the reference for more than 20 million listeners.

This prize awards all that, and also the important role Radio Okapi played and continues to play in the promotion of pluralist information as well as peace-building in DRC. I can personally confirm that, as Radio Okapi and its website have been for many years in DRC and abroad, objective sources of information on the country and the Great Lakes Region.

By winning this prize, Radio Okapi honors the memory of its colleagues who devoted the last moments of their lives to the radio: Jérôme Ngongo, Serge Maheshe and Didace Namujimbo.

Radio Okapi has now to meet two challenges: maintaining the performance level reached and then improving it. I have no doubt that these challenges will be achieved.

I would like, once again, to congratulate Radio Okapi.

Yours sincerely,

Roger A. Meece

Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations