



**Berlin, International Day of Peace, 21 September 2021 <sup>1</sup>**

## **Part 1**

### **Tribute to Aminata Dramane Traoré Peace and human rights activist from Mali**

The Board of Trustees and the Executive Board of ethecon Foundation Ethics & Economics honour Aminata Dramane Traoré, peace and human rights activist from Mali, with the International ethecon Blue Planet Award 2021, because of her outstanding compliance with fundamental ethical and moral principles in the field of conflict between ethics and economics, thus protecting the Blue Planet and defending it against the danger of becoming a dead, uninhabitable planet. She outstandingly opposes oppression, exploitation, human rights violations, destruction of nature and social misery.

Aminata Dramane Traoré acts in solidarity, honestly, with noble motives and with no concern for personal gain. She unhesitatingly accepts conflicts with rulers, disadvantages for life and limb, or her own existence, for the social and ecological interests of her fellow human beings. She shows what is commonly called social responsibility and empathy.

Aminata Dramane Traoré defends the interests of humanity, in resistance to the interests of the powerful, in a world increasingly oriented towards profit as the sole criterion of all decision-making and development. Many times disadvantaged, marginalized and oppressed. Always threatened and in danger of being legally persecuted, arrested and or even murdered. She is one of those who strengthens humanity in its struggle for peace, justice and the protection of the environment. Aminata Dramane Traoré will be acknowledged and personally honored with the International ethecon Blue Planet Award 2021. On behalf of all those who are working to save the Blue Planet or oppose its decline into a dead, uninhabitable planet. May her award be an incentive for her, and her actions a shining example for all of us!

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The ethecon Foundation carefully chooses September 21 to announce the winners of the two annual international ethecon Awards: September 21 is the International Day of Peace.



## **International ethecon Blue Planet Award 2021**

Justification

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Accordingly, the International ethecon Blue Planet Award 2021 also sees itself as a mobilization for the commitment to peace, justice and environmental protection, or for resistance against warmongering, exploitation and environmental destruction. It is intended to raise public awareness, to name those responsible and to reveal the connections.

The honouring of the peace and human rights activist Aminata Dramane Traoré from Mali with the International ethecon Blue Planet Award 2021 is in line with the objectives of ethecon Foundation Ethics & Economics in consistent complement to the vilification of Markus Krebber (Chairman of the Board), Werner Brandt (Chairman of the Supervisory Board), Larry Fink (BLACKROCK) and Armin Laschet (Minister President NRW) of the coal and nuclear power company RWE AG (Germany) with the International ethecon Dead Planet Award 2021.



## Part 2

### Justification of the award

The Board of Trustees and the Executive Board of ethecon Foundation Ethics & Economics base their decision to honour Aminata Dramane Traoré, peace and human rights activist from Mali, with the International ethecon Blue Planet Award 2021 on news reports, on facts that have been known to the public for years in some cases, on information gathered by journalists around the world, on publicly available documents, on investigations by government agencies and social movement activists in various countries, and last but not least on the materials published by Aminata Dramane Traoré.

From the wealth of facts researched during the nomination process for the presentation of the International ethecon Blue Planet Award 2021 to Aminata Dramane Traoré, some examples may be mentioned:

Aminata Dramane Traoré, as UN Coordinator of the Development Assistance Programme in Africa and as a member of the International Panel for the Restructuring of the United Nations Development Assistance Programme, as well as in numerous other supranational bodies, conscientiously campaigned for a just restructuring of the United Nations, against the neo-colonialism of free trade and debt bondage, and thus for the social and ecological rights of the peoples of the Third World.

As Minister of Culture and Tourism in the Malian government, she also stood unwaveringly against the political dictates of the governments and corporations of the industrialised countries over Africa. She resigned before her freedom of speech was restricted, following her conscience and sense of responsibility rather than convenience and personal interests.

In her books, newspaper articles and public appearances, Aminata Dramane Traoré has repeatedly denounced with analytical acuity and unsparing clarity the masterminds behind neoliberal globalisation and the profit interests behind the major problems facing humanity, from climate change to hunger and flight.

With her work in the International Labour Organization (ILO), in the International Press Service and especially with the organization of several World Social Forums, she became an important voice and keyword giver of the worldwide social movements against neoliberal globalization.

With the Porto Alegre Manifesto, together with other critical intellectuals of this movement, she gave a twelve-point programme formulating the interests of the world's population in a peaceful, sustainable and socially just world.



In 2006, with the organisation of the biggest African Migration Congress to date, Aminata Dramane Traoré sent an important signal for the rights of migrants who are driven out of West Africa and other parts of the world and forced to flee northwards by free trade, gagging contracts, environmental and climate destruction, political destabilisation and military occupations. It denounces the murderous isolationist policies of the European Union and the collaborating African states that institutionalize violence against migrants.

Since the destabilization of her home country in 2011 and its ongoing occupation by the European military, Aminata Dramane Traoré has repeatedly called the interests of European corporations in Mali's mineral resources and the military occupation "opening up the economy with a crowbar". Since then, she has demanded the restoration of sovereignty under the slogan: "Mali must be returned to the Malians", for which she was placed under house arrest and her international freedom to travel was curtailed.

Aminata Dramane Traoré works actively to build an internationalism of the peoples of the South and the North against the dictatorship of the financial markets and the uncontrolled power of the corporations. She has always condemned imperialist aggressions such as the invasion of Iraq or the coups against Venezuela, Bolivia and Cuba. In her work, she constructively outlines alternatives to militarized and neoliberal globalization and the dictates of profit.

## **Conclusion**

The Board of Trustees and Executive Board declare:

Human rights and peace activist Aminata Dramane Traoré (Mali) courageously confronts injustice, state violence and corporate despotism, regardless of her own safety. She resolutely stands up not only for human rights, peace and environmental protection, but also for an expansion of these universal fundamental rights. She acts for the benefit of the human community. She upholds morality and ethics and opposes the demise of the earth as a dead, uninhabitable planet.

In a world increasingly focused on profit as the sole criterion for any decision and development, ethecon sees Aminata Dramane Traoré's actions as an outstanding contribution to saving and preserving our Blue Planet. For this admirable cultivation and development of human ethics, the ethecon Foundation Ethics & Economics honors Aminata Dramane Traoré with the International ethecon Blue Planet Award 2021.



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**The International ethecon Blue Planet Award 2021 to the human rights and environmental activist Aminata Dramane Traoré (Mali) will be presented together with the International ethecon Dead Planet Award 2021 to Markus Krebber (Chairman of the Board), Werner Brandt (Chairman of the Supervisory Board), Larry Fink (major shareholder BLACKROCK) and Armin Laschet (Minister President NRW) of the coal and nuclear power company RWE (Germany) in a public ceremony in Berlin on 20 . November 2021.**



## Part 3

### Background

#### The two international ethecon Awards

Our Blue Planet is in serious danger. This can no longer be denied by politics and science. Wars, social misery and environmental ruin are spreading. The collapse of ecological systems is an imminent danger.

However, the cause is being denied. Responsible for the dangerous development for humans and the environment is the principle of profit, which is inextricably linked to the globally prevailing capitalist economic system. The destruction of fundamental ethical principles by the economy goes hand in hand with that disastrous economic law. The compulsion for the highest profit, inherent in economic law, systematically and inevitably promotes injustice, exploitation and ecological ruin. All the more so, as the profit principle is increasingly becoming the only criterion for the organization of society and environment.

ethecon is committed to anchoring ethical principles in economy and society, to shifting from the system of profit to a system of solidarity. Saving the planet will only be possible by overthrowing the profit principle.

Already in 2004, the year when ethecon was founded, the idea was born of awarding a foundation prize to promote efforts to preserve and save fundamental ethical principles. There have been and still are many prizes that honour achievements in the diverse areas of society, but there are far too few prizes that honour resistance to the abuse and the ruin of ethics and morals, both resulting in environmental destruction, war and exploitation.

The incipient discussion process about this prize, however, quickly showed that it is not enough to honour deeds in the struggle for ethics and morals, but that it is equally important to denounce misdeeds against ethics and morals. The idea of two interconnected ethecon prizes was born: The ethecon Positive Prize Blue Planet Award and the reciprocal ethecon Negative Prize Dead Planet Award. They form a unit, they are two sides of the same coin. Together they reflect the state of ethical principles that shape our world. And at the same time, they conjure up the vision of ethics and morality that makes a world without exploitation and oppression possible.

Thus, the two ethecon awards outlaw exploitation, war and environmental destruction and follow the ideals of peace, environmental protection and justice. They call for resistance, change and commitment in the spirit of these ideals; they stand up for a future worth living for this, our world. While one prize, the International ethecon Blue Planet Award, honours the commitment to the preservation or rescue of the blue



planet and draws attention to the urgent possibilities for action and the chances of change, the other, the International ethecon Dead Planet Award, denounces the violation of our earth, that is the danger of a dead, uninhabitable planet, and stigmatizes indifference and ignorance.

Together, the two International ethecon Awards show: There is hope. The strength lies within us, in each and every one of us.

Basically, only individuals and not institutions are awarded with the two prizes. This is to counteract the increasing and determined anonymity of decisions. Particularly in the case of negative developments, those responsible are only too happy to hide behind the facades of institutions and point to those alleged constraints to which the decisions are supposed to be owed, as it were, on their own. In the positive as well as in the negative, however, it always remains the same: it is always people who make decisions and bear responsibility.

In 2006, the two international ethecon prizes were awarded for the first time. Since then as a rule, the awards have been presented annually. While the elite who determine the global economy meet in each January in Davos, Switzerland, for the Economic Forum, ethecon calls for nominations for the two ethecon awards in an internationally distributed call for nominations. In a thorough selection process, the winners are chosen by the Foundation by August each year and are announced to the public on Peace Day, 21<sup>st</sup> September.

The two prizes are awarded each November in a large public ceremony in Berlin. Only the winners of the positive prizes are invited to attend, while the winners of the negative prizes are informed about their prize in an "open letter" published on the date of the award ceremony. Whereas the winners of the International ethecon Blue Planet Award receive their trophies of honour in person during the ceremony, the winners of the International Dead Planet Award are confronted with their trophies in the months after the award ceremony in the context of public activities.

As many civil society actors from all over the world as possible are being involved in the awarding activities. Not from the ruling circles and institutions, but from the resistant movements for peace, ecology and justice. This is to emphasize and make visible the inseparable connection between the two awards and the social movements and the importance of the awards concerning the commitment to these goals.

The trophies of the positive prizes are always designed by artists\*. While art and culture are also increasingly subject to the dictates of profit, ethecon's artistic design of the ethecon Blue Planet trophies



enables art to take a stand in resistance to exploitation, environmental destruction and war, or in commitment to peace, ecology and justice.

When the two International ethecon Awards were born in 2005, the world-famous Otto Piene spontaneously agreed to create the annual prize trophies for the respective International ethecon Blue Planet Award as unique and valuable glass-wood sculptures.

After Piene last created the prize trophy in 2009 – then 82 years old - Katharina Mayer, the great photographic artist and Becher student (born in 1958), created the trophies from 2010 to 2018 and gave them a new unique character.

In 2019, ethecon chose a completely new way with the design of a mural as part of the trophy of the Blue Planet Award 2019. With the support of the Düsseldorf artist Klaus Klinger and the street art collective "Farbfieber", we brought the winner of the International ethecon Award 2019, her life's work and the International ethecon Honour Award into public space in a special way with a mural design on Toulouse Allee in Düsseldorf. The trophy itself showed an art print of the "Blue Planet" by Otto Piene and a photo of the mural signed by Klaus Klinger.

The respective prize trophy of the International ethecon Dead Planet Award is created completely differently. It is an industrially produced globe made of plastic. It is produced under exploitative and environmentally hostile conditions and subsequently alienated. The alienation of this object is deliberately not carried out by an artist\* who creates the annual positive prize, but by an anonymous young person chosen for this purpose. In this way the defamatory trophy of the International ethecon Dead Planet Award is avoided being a work of art of a certain quality. It is guaranteed that no new value is created in our world, oriented towards usability. Especially for someone who - in the best sense of the word - has not deserved this appreciation. At the same time, as a representative of his generation, the young person stands symbolically for the endangered future of the blue planet or for all those who are threatened by a dead, uninhabitable planet. It is the youth whose future is being destroyed by the ecological, social and military ruin of the world.

It is typical that those denounced by the International ethecon Dead Planet Award tend to disregard the prize trophy awarded to them. To this day, not one of the reviled persons has personally received the abusive award and has faced up to the criticism in public. At best, the prize trophy could be handed over to a representative, such as a member of a press office. In most cases, ethecon witnessed the destroying of the reviling trophy by security staff.





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Only by developing and implementing environmentally sound and humane economic and social models will it be possible to avert impending ecological and social catastrophes. ethecon Foundation Ethics & Economy works with vision and perspective, far beyond the generational transition.