

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Batonga Foundation Appoints Codou Diaw as New Executive Director

Washington, D.C. June 8, 2023 – The Batonga Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering adolescent girls and young women in West Africa, is pleased to announce the appointment of Codou Diaw, Ph.D., as its new Executive Director. With her extensive experience and unwavering commitment to women and girls' education and empowerment, Codou brings a wealth of knowledge and a proven track record of strategic leadership to further advance Batonga's mission.

Codou Diaw has over 25 years of experience in the nonprofit sector, holding senior leadership positions at organizations such as the Mastercard Foundation, the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research, and the Forum of African Women Educationalists. Throughout her career, Codou has demonstrated a deep understanding of the challenges faced by marginalized and off-track female youth in West Africa, and she has worked tirelessly to create meaningful and sustainable change.

Codou's expertise in strategic planning, resource mobilization, grant management, and fostering strategic partnerships will be instrumental in driving the Batonga Foundation's growth and impact. Her visionary leadership and dedication to empowering girls and young women align perfectly with the organization's core values and mission to equip the hardest-to-reach adolescent girls and young women with knowledge and skills to be agents of change in their own lives. Her strategic guidance will further strengthen the Foundation's programs, expand its reach, and deepen its impact in the communities it serves.

"I am honored and humbled to join The Batonga Foundation as its Executive Director," said Codou Diaw. "I have long admired the organization's unwavering commitment to providing opportunities and empowerment programs to the hardest-to-reach young women in Africa. I look forward to working closely with the dedicated team, partners, and stakeholders to build upon the Foundation's successes and create an even greater impact in the lives of those we serve."

"I am very excited to welcome Codou to the Batonga Foundation family in her position as our new Executive Director," said Angelique Kidjo, co-founder of The

Batonga Foundation. “Her vast experience will be a great asset. I am also immensely grateful to Stephanie Lord for her work as Interim Executive Director. She has brought Batonga to the perfect place for Codou to start her new leadership.”

Aleta Williams, Chair of the Board, expresses her deepest gratitude to Stephanie Lord, who served as the Interim Executive Director during the transition period. “During her tenure, Stephanie led the successful launch of operations in new geographies, expanding program reach by 58% and piloting impactful initiatives such as the Men and Boys Engagement program and “Podcasts for Equality.” She revitalized partnerships, fundraising efforts, and internal processes, leaving a strong foundation for Codou to continue empowering young women in West Africa with vision, expertise, and compassion.” Stephanie will continue to strategically advise the foundation in its next phase of growth.

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About The Batonga Foundation:

Founded in 2006 by fearless gender equality advocate and celebrated West African singer-songwriter/Grammy Award-winning artist, Angélique Kidjo, Batonga equips the hardest-to-reach young women with the knowledge and skills they need to gain financial autonomy and lead healthy, independent, safe, and fulfilling lives. Batonga has a strong track record of implementing high-impact programs and is widely recognized for its expertise in the areas of women’s social and economic development, entrepreneurship, and economic inclusion. To learn more, visit www.batongafoundation.org.

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