

## **International Theatre Institute ITI**

### **World Organization for the Performing Arts**

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### **Germaine Acogny 1992**

On this 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of International Dance Day I am happy and proud to have been chosen by the Dance Committee of the International Theatre Institute to bring you the voice of Africa and African Dance. For us, dance is life, or as Leopold Sedar Senghor says in one of his poems: “We are the people of dance whose feet are reinvigorated as they beat the solid ground. These words take me back to the village of Fanghousse situated in Casamance, in the south of Senegal, where I see men and women dancing, their arms outstretched like the wings of birds, their drumming feet drawing energy from the earth, energy to fly towards the sun. And together, they dancing and I watching them dance, we find ourselves in perfect communication with the cosmos.

But it should be known that there is also a highly developed technique at the base of these dances which keep again the contact with the earth and its roots. It is my fervent wish, therefore, that in the coming years, choreographers and dancers throughout the whole world deepen their knowledge of all forms of African Dance. The new or forgotten elements they encounter there, may thus, combined or integrated with their own technique, enable a universal contemporary dance form to emerge. The sophisticated technical environment of the world we live in has also invaded the world of dance. By its specific character, African Dance reminds us that as well as being technical and beautiful, dance must also be a means of conveying the universality of human feelings and emotions.