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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SEE International Doctor Wins U.N. Nelson Mandela Award**

**Santa Barbara, CA – June 23, 2015-** SEE International is thrilled to announce that one of its star eye surgeons, Dr. Helena Ndume, will be awarded the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize in late July. This is the first time the award will be given in the international body's history. According to the UN website:

*The Prize shall be awarded in recognition of their dedicated service to humanity, in the promotion of reconciliation and social cohesion, and in community development, guided by the purposes and principles of the United Nations.*

To date, Dr. Ndume has performed sight-restoring surgeries upon 30,000 men, women, and children, completely free of charge, in her home country of Namibia. "There's no money in this world that can pay the joy of someone who was so blind for so many years and then suddenly they regain their vision," she says.

Dr. Ndume's motivation to serve those less fortunate than her stems from the civil unrest that she witnessed as a child. Forced to flee her homeland at the age of 15, Helena lived in Zambia, Gambia, and Angola, before graduating from the University of Leipzig Medical School in Germany. She joined SEE International's roster of over 650 volunteer eye surgeons in 1995.

Dr. Ndume has dedicated her life and career to treating blindness and low-vision, both in Namibia and throughout the developing world. Many of her patients in the capital city of Windhoek have taken to calling her "Namibia's miracle doctor." In 2004, she was awarded Grand Commander of the Order of Namibia, First Class.

"She is inexhaustible," says Dr. Michael Colvard of SEE. "She is an incredible physician, very capable but also able to motivate people and she's been able to get the government of Namibia to support her and her colleagues." This summer, Dr. Ndume will be collaborating on three programs with SEE International, one in the Democratic Republic of Congo with the Dikembe Mutombo Foundation, and two clinics in Namibia. During those three weeks alone, 700 people are expected to regain their sight their independence.



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“We are very honored to have Dr. Ndume be a part of the international SEE team and are thrilled that the United Nations is recognizing her dedicated humanitarian efforts as a Mandela Prize winner,” says Randal Avolio, President/CEO of SEE. “We offer our deepest congratulations to Helena on this impressive accomplishment.”

### **About SEE International**

SEE International envisions a world where no one is needlessly blind. SEE is a nonprofit, humanitarian organization that provides medical, surgical, and educational services by volunteer ophthalmic surgeons to restore sight and give the gifts of hope, opportunity and independence to disadvantaged blind individuals worldwide. Since 1974, SEE has examined over 3.65 million men, women, and children, and performed more than 440,000 sight-restoring surgeries. [www.seeintl.org](http://www.seeintl.org)

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