



MISSION PERMANENTE  
DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE  
DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO  
AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES

**Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations  
Drifting Dunes Media Art Production LLC  
The Dikembe Mutombo Memorial Fund  
The Dikembe Family**

**Present**

**A DAY ON *MOUNT MUTOMBO* AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

***Honoring the Legacy of Dikembe Mutombo:  
A Call to Action for Africa's Health, Education, Sports and Quality of Life***

**Friday, January 16, 2026**

**12:00 Noon - 5:00 PM**

**ECOSOC Chambers and UN Delegates Dining Room**

**Why Now?**

To mark the start of his term (2026 – 2027) as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is recognizing its National Hero, Dikembe Mutombo, by celebrating his life and contributions to humankind in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and across the globe.

**Why This High-Level Panel and Film?**

The passing of Dikembe Mutombo on September 30, 2024, marked the loss of a visionary leader whose legacy lives on in communities across Africa and around the world. As a humanitarian, global ambassador, and champion of dignity, Mutombo dedicated his life to advancing health equity, educational access, youth empowerment through sports, and improved quality of life in underserved regions. This panel honors his enduring impact and asks how the global community can sustain and expand on the values he held so dear to his heart.

**Who Is Hosting?**

The Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations, Drifting Dunes Media Art Production LLC, The Dikembe Mutombo Memorial Fund and The Dikembe Mutombo Family are hosting a high-level panel followed by the screening of “*Mount Mutombo*”: an award winning documentary about the life of Dikembe Mutombo produced and directed by Dina Kheino of Drifting Dunes Media Art Production LLC.

**The Film: *Mount Mutombo***

The film, *Mount Mutombo*, chronicles Dikembe Mutombo’s extraordinary journey from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to global prominence - not only as an NBA legend, but as a humanitarian whose work uplifted communities across continents. His decades of service, including his role as a long-time UNICEF board member and as the first Youth Emissary for the United Nations Development Programme, reflect a deep alignment with the values and mission of the United Nations. With global development goals at a critical juncture and disparities continuing to widen, we must leverage the momentum of Mutombo’s legacy to accelerate progress.

### **The High-Level Panel:**

The High-Level panel seeks to inspire collective commitment among nations, institutions, and individuals to champion the causes Dikembe Mutombo elevated throughout his life - building a future that reflects his vision of dignity, equity, and hope for every African child and family.

### **What the Panel Will Address:**

The panel will feature experts in the areas he championed - public health, education policy, sports diplomacy, and community development:

- Effective models of community-based healthcare and access initiatives inspired by Mutombo's work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- The intersection of education and diplomacy in transforming generational opportunity;
- The critical role partnerships play in the success of the Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital;
- Frameworks for enhancing quality of life through inclusive partnerships and long-term investment in African communities.

### **Who are the Panelists?**

1. **Health:** Dr. Diene Keita, *Under-Secretary-General, Executive Director, UNFPA*

- Diene Keita brings over 30 years of leadership in international development, diplomacy, and public health. A former Minister for Cooperation and African Integration for Guinea, she currently serves as Deputy Executive Director for Programs at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Dr. Keita has led major UN initiatives across Africa, the Caribbean, and the U.S., with a focus on women's empowerment, youth development, and reproductive health.

She holds a doctorate in law from Sorbonne University and is a passionate advocate for the rights and futures of adolescent girls.

2. **Partnerships:** Dr. Michael Hicks, *Division Director, St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Cancer Center, Pontiac, Michigan*

- Dr. Michael Hicks is the Division Director of Gynecologic Oncology at St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Hospital in Pontiac, Michigan. He is a Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Visiting Professor and International Mentor for the International Gynecologic Cancer Society Fellowship program in Lusaka, Zambia; and a Founding Member of the Savage Boyce Walton National Gynecologic Oncology Honor Society-National Medical Association.

Several years ago, Dr. Michael Hicks joined Dr. Groesbeck Parham and his team when they were personally invited and accompanied by Dikembe Mutombo to train the cancer surgeons and nurses at the Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Dr. Hicks was a member of the team. Since that time, over 100,000 women have been successfully screened, diagnosed and treated for breast cancer and cervical cancer at the Women's Cancer Center created by the Friends of Africa for the Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital.

Dr. Hicks received his M.D. degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine. After beginning his college studies at the historic Tuskegee Institute, he received his B.A. in Biology and African American History from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

3. **Education:** Mr. George Folkes, *American Filmmaker and Retired Educator*

- Mr. George Folkes is an Independent Producer, Director and Educator. Growing up in the South Bronx, New York, his early childhood leadership experiences shaped his dedication to education and producing. He teaches time management, interpersonal skills and cinema appreciation as a Professional Development Consultant at Atlanta Public Schools.

Mr. Folkes' directorial and production efforts on *The Ginny Battle Story* demonstrate his talent as a filmmaker. The film documents the achievements of Ginny Battle, a trailblazing Black woman who overcame racial obstacles during the turbulent civil rights era to work for then-President John F. Kennedy at the White House.

Mr. Folkes is a graduate of Morehouse College in Film and Mass Communications. While attending Morehouse College, he mentored his fellow student Spike Lee, the Academy Award-winning director, producer, writer and actor. He subsequently attended the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts to further specialize in motion picture producing.

4. **Quality of Life:** Mr. Gary Cohen, *Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, Maternal Newborn Health Innovations*

- Mr. Gary Cohen is a social entrepreneur and intrapreneur who founded and led global impact initiatives and enterprises in the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. Gary presently serves as CEO and cofounder of **Maternal Newborn Health Innovations (MNHI)**, a Public Benefit Corporation (PBC) focused on innovating to improve maternal and newborn health outcomes worldwide.

Mr. Cohen previously served as Executive Vice President, Global Health and President of the Becton Dickson and Company Foundation at Becton, Dickinson and Company. In that capacity, he partnered with The Dikembe Mutombo Foundation to establish crucial centers at the **Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital** in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. The key initiatives included an Immune System Monitoring Lab for HIV/AIDS patients; an Occupational Safety Center to train healthcare workers; Tuberculosis Testing and support through cash, products and expertise.

Mr. Cohen holds B.A. and M.B.A. degrees from Rutgers University and previously served on the University's Board of Trustees. He and the organizations he founded have received awards and honors from numerous organizations.

### **ABOUT DIKEMBE MUTOMBO**

Dikembe Mutombo (1966–2024) was a towering figure - both on and off the basketball court - whose humanitarian legacy continues to uplift communities across Africa. Born in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mutombo arrived in the United States on an academic scholarship to Georgetown University, where he earned degrees in Linguistics and Diplomacy. Though he rose to global fame as an NBA Hall of Famer and one of the greatest defensive players in league history, his life's mission extended far beyond sport.

Mutombo dedicated his post-basketball life to advancing health, education, and quality of life initiatives throughout Africa. He founded the Dikembe Mutombo Foundation, which built the Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital in Kinshasa, providing critical care to underserved populations (over one million).

He championed youth empowerment, funded Olympic dreams for Congolese athletes, and served as the first Youth Emissary for the United Nations Development Program.

His leadership extended to global institutions, including the Centers for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, UNICEF, and Special Olympics International. As the NBA's first Global Ambassador, Mutombo used the power of spirit to foster unity and spotlight urgent social issues.

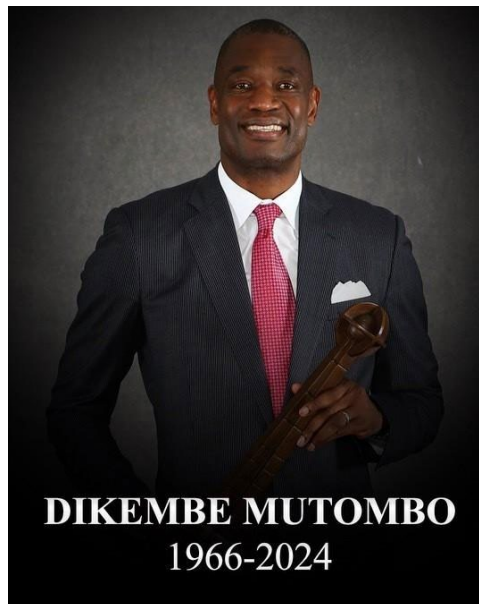
Dikembe Mutombo's legacy is not only measured in accolades, but in lives changed. His enduring vision continues to inspire global action toward equity, dignity, and opportunity for all.

**Date: January 16, 2026**

High-Level Panel and Motion Picture Screening presented by:

- Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations
- George I. Folkes, Project Visionary, Gentle Drop Cinema
- Dorothy M. Davis, Dorothy M. Davis Strategic Global Consulting
- Susan M. Johnson, former Executive Director - The Dikembe Mutombo Foundation
- Dina Khreino, Director, Producer and Filmmaker – “Mount Mutombo”

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There is an African proverb that says, “when you take the elevator to reach the top, don’t forget to send it back down so that someone else can take it the top”

~Dikembe Mutombo