

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, former President of Iceland, Katrín Jakobsdóttir, Prime Minister of Iceland, Sigrún Brynja Einarsdóttir, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Culture and Business Affairs, Anne Carson, the 2023 Vigdís Prize's Laureate.

On behalf of the University of Iceland, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this most significant event. The Vigdís Prize is awarded by the Icelandic government, the University of Iceland, and the Vigdís International Centre for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding, in honor of Her Excellency Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, former President of Iceland and current UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Languages.

The Prize was established in 2020, on Vigdís's 90th birthday and the 40th anniversary of her historic election as President of Iceland. Throughout her career, Vigdís has demonstrated visionary leadership in strengthening small language communities and promoting multiculturalism and linguistic diversity.

The University of Iceland has been greatly enriched by Vigdís' vision and her long-time support. In 2001, when the university celebrated its 90th anniversary, the Institute of Foreign Languages was named after her, and on April 20, 2017, the institute moved into a new building, which is named Veröld - House of Vigdís. The building houses teaching, research and events in the field of foreign languages and culture.

This building also houses the Vigdís International Centre for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding. It operates under the auspices of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and is affiliated with the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute of Foreign Languages.

The Vigdís Prize honors Vigdís' exemplary leadership in the field of languages and culture. Simultaneously, it serves as a great reminder of our shared responsibility to safeguard and harvest the cultural heritage that is embedded in all the languages of the world.

The Vigdís Prize is an award conferred for outstanding contributions to world languages and cultures. It is awarded to individuals, organizations, or institutions to spotlight exceptional achievements in the promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity, multilingualism, and translation. Previous awardees are Jonhard Mikkelsen, a Faroese linguist, teacher and publisher, Katti Frederiksen, a Greenlandic linguist and writer, and Jürgen Boos, the President, and CEO of the Frankfurt Book Fair.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Sigrún Brynja Einarsdóttir, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Culture and Business Affairs, who will now introduce the awardee on behalf of Minister Lilja Alfreðsdóttir.