



PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rwanda Announces Its First-Ever Submission to the Academy Awards with **BEN'IMANA**

Kigali, 9 October 2026 - The Ministry of Youth and Arts is pleased to announce that *BEN'IMANA*, directed by Rwandan filmmaker Marie-Clémentine Dusabejambo, has been selected by the Rwanda Oscar Selection Committee (ROSC) as the country's first official submission for consideration in the International Feature Film category at the 99th Academy Awards®.

This historic milestone marks a new chapter for Rwanda's film industry and its growing presence on the international cinema stage.

BEN'IMANA premiered in the *Un Certain Regard* section of the 2026 Cannes Film Festival, where it received the prestigious **Caméra d'Or** and the **International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI) Prize**. It is Dusabejambo's first feature film and the first film by a Rwandan director to premiere in the festival's Official Selection.

The Academy is expected to publish the complete list of eligible International Feature Films in November. The selection process will subsequently lead to a shortlist of fifteen films and five final nominees.

Hon. Sandrine Umutoni, Minister of State for Youth and Arts, stated:

“Rwanda's first submission to the Academy Awards is a proud milestone for our film industry and a testament to the talent, creativity and determination of Rwandan filmmakers. *BEN'IMANA* demonstrates the power of cinema to tell meaningful stories rooted in our history and lived experiences, while connecting with audiences around the world.

We congratulate Marie-Clémentine Dusabejambo and the entire team behind this achievement. Beyond this historic moment, our government's ambition is to continue building an environment where more Rwandan filmmakers can develop their craft, bring their stories to the screen, and access international audiences and markets.”



About BEN'IMANA

Set in 2012, eighteen years after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, *BEN'IMANA* follows Vénéranda, a woman who has spent years helping survivors and families of those responsible confront the painful silences of the past. When her own daughter's future becomes entangled with that history, she must confront the limits of her own capacity for forgiveness.

Spanning three generations of women, the film explores memory, inherited silence, reconciliation and the complexities of rebuilding lives in the aftermath of tragedy.

About the Director

Marie-Clémentine Dusabejambo is a self-taught Rwandan filmmaker based in Kigali. She began her filmmaking journey in 2008 as part of a collective of young filmmakers.

Her first short film, *Lyiza*, premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2011 and received the Bronze Tanit at the Carthage Film Festival in 2012. Her subsequent short films, including *A Place for Myself* and *Icyasha*, have screened internationally and received numerous awards.

She has also contributed to international documentary productions, including *Why We Hate* and *Faces We Lost*. *BEN'IMANA* is her debut feature film.

About the Rwanda Oscar Selection Committee

The Rwanda Oscar Selection Committee (ROSC) was established by the Ministry of Youth and Arts to independently select Rwanda's official submission for consideration in the International Feature Film category of the Academy Awards, in accordance with the Academy's regulations.

Media inquiries:

communications@moya.gov.rw | rwandaoscars@moya.gov.rw

END