

MAYOR YVONNE AKI-SAWYERR OBE



Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr OBE was Mayor of Freetown from May 2018 to February 2023 and was re-elected to serve for a second term in June 2023. A finance professional with over 25 years of private sector experience in strategic planning, risk management consulting and project management, Mayor Aki-Sawyerr has adopted an inclusive, data-driven approach to addressing challenges in the city. In her first term, she championed the 4-year “Transform Freetown” plan which detailed 19 concrete targets across 11 sectors; annually published Transform Freetown reports that document progress made against targets can be found at <https://fcc.gov.sl>. Mayor Aki-Sawyerr’s notable achievements include the construction and operation of Freetown’s first ever wastewater treatment plant, the digitalization and expansion of

the city’s property rate system, the planting and tracking of 1.2m trees against #FreetownTheTreeTown’s 1m trees target and securing the recently concluded feasibility study for the introduction of a mass transit cable car system for the city. Mayor Aki-Sawyerr’s second term development agenda “Transform Freetown – Transforming Lives” (<https://fcc.gov.sl/transform-freetown-transforming-lives-freetown-development-agenda-2024-2028/>) is focused on the creation of 120,000 decent jobs for women and youth through climate action, the growth of heritage tourism and the digital economy underpinned by investments in human development.

Mayor Aki-Sawyerr is the Laureate of the German Africa Award 2024, she was listed in the inaugural Forbes Sustainability Leaders 2024 List, she was a Schwab Foundation Outstanding Public Social Innovator for the Year 2023, was featured by Time Magazine in the inaugural Time100 Climate List 2023, the Time100 Next 2021 List and by the BBC in the BBC 100 Women 2020 List. Mayor Aki-Sawyerr is Co-Chair of C40 Cities, a network of almost 100 cities committed to addressing climate change. Mayor Aki-Sawyerr’s TedTalk “How to turn dissatisfaction into action” has had over 2.2million views.

A team player with a demonstrable record of leading institutional change, Mayor Aki-Sawyerr is passionate about the development of Sierra Leone and the transformation of Freetown. She is a Chartered Accountant and holds an MSc in Politics of the World Economy from the London School of Economics and a BSc Hons in Economics from Fourah Bay College. She is married with two children.

Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr OBE - Awards and Recognitions

- Laureate of the German Africa Award 2024 (<https://www.deutsche-afrika-stiftung.de/en/deutscher-afrika-preis/yvonne-aki-sawyerr-sierra-leone/>)
- Forbes Sustainability Leaders Inaugural 2024 (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/elisabethbrier/article/forbes-sustainability-leaders/>)
- Time100 Climate 2023 List (<https://time.com/collection/time100-climate/6333166/yvonne-aki-sawyerr-defenders/>)
- Schwab Foundation Outstanding Public Social Innovator for the Year 2023 (<https://www.schwabfound.org/public-social-intrapreneur/>)

- Dr. Benjamin Barber Global Cities Award 2021 (<https://globalparliamentofmayors.org/14916-2/>)
- Time100 Next 2021 List (<https://time.com/collection/time100-next-2021/>)
- BBC 100 Women 2020 List (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-55042935>)
- Charleston Sister Cities International Woman of the Year Award 2021
- Penn Institute for Urban Research 2020 Urban Leadership Award (<https://pennur.upenn.edu/events/16th-annual-urban-leadership-awards-mayoral-leadership-in-challenging-times>)
- Reputation Poll International - 100 Most Reputable Africans in 2020 (<https://www.reputationpoll.com/2020-list-of-100-most-reputable-africans/>)
- Avance Media - 100 Most Influential African Women 2020 (<https://100women.avancemedia.org>)
- Officer of the Most Excellent Order of British Empire (OBE) – 2016
- Ebola Gold Medal from the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone - 2015

Yvonne Aki-Sawyers OBE - Current and Past International Roles

- Co-Chair, C40 Cities (<https://www.c40.org/leadership/the-c40-co-chairs/>)
- Commissioner, Global Commission on the Economics of Water (<https://watercommission.org/members/>)
- Commissioner, Global Commission for Urban SDG Finance
- Member of the High-Level Group of the Africa-Europe Foundation (<https://www.friendsofeurope.org/initiatives/africa-europe-foundation/>)
- Commissioner, Our Common Air (<https://www.ceew.in/our-common-air>)
- Leadership Board, Mayor’s Migration Council (<https://www.mayorsmigrationcouncil.org>)
- Member of the C40 Cities Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force (<https://www.c40.org/other/covid-task-force>)
- Co-Lead of the Mayor’s Dialogue (<https://www.odi.org/projects/16889-mayors-dialogue-on-growth-and-solidarity-reimagining-human-mobility-in-africa-and-europe>)
- Member of the Advisory Board of the University of Oxford’s Commission for Creating Healthy Cities
- Member of the World Economic Forum Supervisory Board for Net Zero Carbon Cities
- Member, World Economic Forum Global Future Council on Cities (<https://www.weforum.org/communities/gfc-on-cities-of-tomorrow>)
- Pioneer Member, Women4Climate (<https://w4c.org>)
- OECD Champion Mayor (<http://www.oecd-inclusive.com/champion-mayors/mayors/>)
- Member, Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative 2018 (<https://www.cityleadership.harvard.edu>)
- Inaugural Class of Amujae Leaders (<https://www.ejscenter.org/programs/amujae-initiative/>)
- Ted Speaker
- (https://www.ted.com/talks/yvonne_aki_sawyers_how_to_turn_your_dissatisfaction_into_action/up-next)
- (https://www.ted.com/talks/yvonne_aki_sawyers_the_city_planting_a_million_trees_in_two_years/transcript?language=en)
- Norman Foster Foundation Masterclass Series Speaker (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDXKq8V-DQ0>)