WORLD CULTURAL COUNCIL
2022 AWARD CEREMONY

Speech by Dr. Rafael Valero
Founder and President Emeritus of the WCC
University of Coimbra – November 30, 2022

Distinguished Rector of the University of Coimbra, Professor Amílcar Falcão, Honorable President of the World Cultural Council, Sir Fraser Stoddart; 2022 laureates; distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to convey my warmest appreciation to President Falcão and to the entire University of Coimbra community for hosting this Award Ceremony.

In 2022, the World Cultural Council celebrates its 40th anniversary. On May 7, 1982, the WCC was established with the mission of recognizing individuals that have made exceptional achievements in science, education and the arts and have contributed to humanity by promoting tolerance, peace and fraternity for the well-being of all.

While 40 years may be a noteworthy milestone for any organization, it pales in comparison to the 730 years that the University of Coimbra has served as an institution of education and learning. I congratulate this remarkable institution.

As mentors, we are motivated by the conviction that education drives the real and long-lasting development of any society. In a world where alternative facts and alternate realities bombard young minds via internet and social media, an educator should never be content simply to produce students who are well-informed. Science needs to be tested and verified. Facts and truth are vital, but correct information must be reinforced. Our goal is to help students to develop knowledge by promoting an appreciation of culture, a foundation in ethics and a commitment to integrity.

My passion is that those who graduate from university should not only be competent professionals, but also exemplary citizens with a deep sense of morality and integrity. Young people who emerge from our institutions with such a foundation can, through time and experience, develop true wisdom. Wisdom enables leaders to view nature as an ally to be guarded, respected, and sustained rather than exploited. Wisdom empowers someone to work towards the good of one's neighbor, regardless of race, culture, creed, ideology, or gender.

As examples and role models for leaders of tomorrow, we have the great privilege of recognizing three remarkable individuals who, through their hard

work, persistence, passion and creativity, have risen to the top of their professions. The dedicated and far-reaching work of the 2022 award-winners, **Victoria Kaspi, Claudia Mitchell** and **Meejin Yoon** inspire all of us. My admiration goes out to them and to many others who have combined a great heart with a brilliant mind.

Thank you for your attention, these are the words of Dr. Rafael Valero, Founder and President Emeritus of the WCC.