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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 9, 2024

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African Studies Association Announces ASA Samora & Graça Machel Presidential Fellows Fund

PISCATAWAY, New Jersey – The African Studies Association is pleased to announce the establishment of the **ASA Samora & Graça Machel Presidential Fellows Fund** to support exceptional scholarship and academic exchange opportunities for African studies scholars.

The ASA Samora & Graça Machel Presidential Fellows Fund will support three annual fellowships for African studies scholars on the continent in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Competitively selected scholars will engage in career-development opportunities such as travel to the ASA Annual Meeting, visit U.S. institutions of higher learning, collaborate with academics in African studies fields, and present scholarly research. The ASA will encourage members to nominate scholars based at African institutions and will prioritize emerging scholars in the selection process. Nominations will open in December for the 2025 award cycle.

The ASA Samora & Graça Machel Presidential Fellows Fund was made possible by a generous gift from Allen and Barbara Isaacman. Allen Isaacman is Regents Professor of African History at the University of Minnesota and served as Founding Director of the Macarthur and Mellon Funded Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change. Allen has authored 10 books, many co-authored by Barbara Isaacman, and is well-known for scholarship on Mozambique. Allen served as ASA President (2001-2002) and was awarded the ASA Distinguished Africanist Award in 2014. Barbara Isaacman, an accomplished Attorney and Africanist, graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School. She worked 25 years for the Hennepin County Public Defenders office and in her retirement has represented Ethiopians seeking asylum in the U.S. as a pro-bono immigration lawyer. She has authored *Women the Law and Agrarian Reform in Mozambique*, published by the United Nations Commission on Women, as well as co-authored four books with Allen Isaacman.

The Fund is named in honor of Mozambican leaders and activists Samora & Graça Machel. Samora Machel was a military commander and head of the FRELIMO party, who became the first President of independent Mozambique in 1975. He tragically died in office in a presidential plane crash in 1986. Former First Lady Graça Machel is best known for her humanitarian activism and her service as Mozambique Minister of Education and Culture (1975-1989). She later served as First Lady South Africa as wife of former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela.

Please find more complete biographies of the Machels and Isaacmans on the [fellowship page](#).

About the ASA

Established in 1957, the African Studies Association is the flagship membership organization devoted to enhancing the exchange of information about Africa. The ASA is based in the United States and aims to cultivate a better understanding of the continent, by providing access to path-breaking research and facilitating interdisciplinary exchanges with African scholars and institutions. The ASA Annual Meeting fosters global networks by convening people with scholarly and other interests in Africa, and ultimately broadens professional opportunities in the field. The organization publishes two leading journals on Africa, *African Studies Review* and *History in Africa* and promotes an informed understanding of Africa to educational institutions, the public, businesses, media, and other interested communities.

Enhancing the Exchange of Information About Africa Since 1957