

Media Update

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Press Release

Short documentaries by young Afghan and Pakistani filmmakers screened at the human rights film festival

Islamabad, 27 November 2017: The film festival ‘Human Rights through Cinematography’ screened today three documentaries which were jointly produced by young Pakistani and Afghan filmmakers during a documentary makers training program on Human Rights and Peace-building held in July 2017.

The documentaries, Bahaali, Sound of Silence and Transgenders in Pakistan are focused on drug abuse in children, persons with disabilities and transgenders’ rights.

‘Bahaali’ is a journey into the lives of two children who are recovering drug addicts but do not let their history of addiction define them. ‘Sound of Silence’ is a 15-year-old girl’s story who was born deaf. Through her story, the film explores the challenges faced by deaf people in Karachi and how they deal with them. ‘Transgender in Pakistan’ is a radio documentary that voices the concerns and struggle of employment for the transgender community in Pakistan.

Mr Neil Buhne, Resident Coordinator, United Nations Pakistan and Acting Director, United Nations Information Centre, Islamabad appreciated the quality of work produced by young filmmakers and said : “ I am impressed to see the brilliant representation on issues of drug abuse , disability and rights of transgender people through these documentaries”. He thanked all the partners for providing such an excellent training opportunity to produce these very stunning documentaries on touching issues of human lives which are equally relevant not only for Pakistani and Afghan audiences, but also to other parts of the world.

Moderated by Waqas Rafique, Communication Officer, United Nation Food and Agriculture Organisation, screenings were followed by a panel discussion with the filmmakers including Najeeba Noori, from Bamiyan, Afghanistan, Kanzul Fatima Arif, from Rawalpindi, Pakistan and Said Nazir, Radio Journalist from Peshawar, Pakistan. They



shared that film serves as a powerful medium and has greater impacts on society. They stressed that the increasing collaboration among the film makers of different countries could bring people closer to each other and making them understand the common human rights issues around the world.

A first-of-its-kind residential training, led by the award-winning journalists from Serbia, Sonja Ristic and Zoran Ćulafić, was held in partnership with the Embassy of Switzerland in Pakistan, Fondation Hironnelle, the Centre for Excellence in Journalism, International Film Festival, Forum of Human Rights and the United Nations Information Centre, Islamabad in July this year.

The training programme provided a unique opportunity to young Pakistani and Afghan documentary-makers to produce state-of-the-art documentaries and enhancing dialogue and professional relations among each other. Documentary makers from the both countries, who took part in the training programme included: Nameera Ahmad, Kanzul Fatima Arif, Gulzar Nayani, Said Nazir, Tamana Ayazi's, Mohammad Behroozian, Najiba Noori's, and Sadeq Naseri.

These documentaries would also be aired on radio and screened at film festivals across the world.

Background:

The Film Festival: 'Human Rights through Cinematography'

The 3rd edition of the "Human Rights through Cinematography" film festival 2017 is jointly organized by the Embassy of Argentina, Embassy of Austria, High Commission of Australia, Embassy of Belgium, High Commission of Canada, International Film Festival of Human Rights, European Union, Goethe Institute, Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands, Pakistan National Council of the Arts, Embassy of Portugal, Embassy of Spain, Embassy of the Swiss Confederation and the UN Information Centre in Islamabad. Started on 23 November 2017, the film festival will continue through 10 December 2017, marking the Human Rights Day and the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

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