PRESS RELEASE

Human Rights Reel- Film Festival 2019
concludes marking the Human Rights Day

Islamabad, 10 December 2019: The 5th edition of the “Human Rights Reel- Film Festival concludes marking the Human Rights Day (HRD) in Islamabad. The closing ceremony of the festival and commemoration of the HRD was co-organised by the Embassy of Switzerland and United Nations in Pakistan. The theme of this year’s HRD was “Youth Standing Up for Human Rights”.

The objective of the film festival was to amplify the importance and enhance knowledge about the universality and diversified nature of the human rights issues among Pakistani audience especially the Youth through the creative medium of films.

H.E, Thomas Kolly, Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan said in his welcome remarks: “Human rights stand at the core of Swiss values and are based on the democratic principles of non-discrimination, gender equality, peaceful coexistence and mutual respect between different population groups. Advocacy for the universal, interdependent and indivisible character of human rights is need of the hour. As responsible state actors, it is our shared duty to comply with the international obligations and international agreements such as the UN agenda 2030 for sustainable development goals.”

Mr. Ignacio Artaza, Resident Representative a.i., UNDP focused on youth in his opening remarks. He said: ‘With 68% of Pakistanis under the age of 30, Pakistan is one of the youngest countries in the world. They are the driving force of the country and need to be supported in the building of a future where everyone’s rights are respected. This is why youth is one of the main focuses of the UN here, in Pakistan.’

Ms. Rabia Javeri Agha, Secretary, Ministry for Human Rights, who attended the event as the chief guest congratulated the United Nations, Swiss Embassy, European Union Delegation to Pakistan and all partners for successfully advocating and supporting the human rights through the film festival. In her remarks she said that films are unique tools of telling the stories. Young people should derive inspirations from these stories, as well as from the positive developments made by Pakistan about safeguarding the human rights in the country.

The participants attentively watched stunning investigative film, Dick Marty, a Scream for Justice. The Director of the film Fulvio Bernasconi, who was also invited
to participate in the event built the story of the film on a breathless investigation and
the portrait of a quite extraordinary man. The story was based on a case when the
CIA (after 11 Sep 2001) signed a secret agreement with several European States
that allowed them kidnapping and torture of suspected Islamists. The case was
revealed by the Washington Post in 2005 and the Council of Europe mandates
Swiss citizen, Dick Marty to lead the investigation. With minimal means but armed
with formidable tenacity, Marty defied America, Europe and Switzerland.

The screening was followed by an interactive moderated panel discussion among
the Youth and experts on law, justice and human rights. The panellists included:
Fulvio Bernasconi, Director of film, “Dick Marty, a Scream for Justice”; Sibah
Farooq, Senior Partner at S & S Law Associates and Kamran Rajar, Director-
General of the Ministry of Human Rights.

The festival toured through 10 cities in Pakistan including Islamabad, Rawalpindi,
Lahore, Gujrat, Karachi, Quetta, Peshawar, Mardan, Multan and Faisalabad from 1-
10 December 2019.

We pay our profound gratitude to the European Union Delegation to Pakistan, EU
and UN member states and diplomatic missions, as well as the cultural, govt. and
educational institutions for their solid partnership in making the 5th edition of the film
festival a tremendous success.

The films and documentaries screened in the film festival showed multicultural
dimensions of the human rights challenges faced by people from across the globe.
We hope that these films and thematic debate sessions have helped people,
particularly Youth to understand diversity and the universality of the human rights
issues and have guided them ways to take actions in support of the human rights for
themselves and for everyone. (END)

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About the Human Rights Reel – Film Festival 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND GRATITUDES

The 5th edition of the Human Rights Reel- Film Festival brought to the people of
Pakistan by the European Union Delegation to Pakistan, in partnership with the
United Nations, embassies, missions and high commissions of EU and UN Member
States in Pakistan including Argentina, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czech
Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Kingdom of Netherlands, Sweden, Swiss
Confederation, as well educational and cultural institutions across Pakistan including
International Film Festival of Human Rights, Goethe-Institute, OLOMOPOLO Media,
CHAIOLOGUE, the Centaurus Cineplex, PNCA and the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services.

The film festival presented 29 documentaries on diversified human rights issues from around the globe, featuring the themes including justice, women empowerment, migration, gender equality, freedom of press and expression, environment, domestic violence, transgender rights, children rights and labour rights among others.

The films were screened in 10 cities in Pakistan including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Gujrat, Karachi, Quetta, Peshawar, Mardan, Multan and Faisalabad from 1-10 December 2019.

Screenings were followed by debate sessions with film makers, journalists, government and civil society representatives and human rights defenders, providing participants, including universities and schools' students unique opportunities sharing their views about human rights violations around them and reflecting on the solutions.

The universities who hosted screenings of the films include: Preston University, and COMSATS Institute of Information and Technology in Islamabad; Fatima Jinnah Women University in Rawalpindi; UMT School of Law and Policy, University of the Punjab and National College of Arts in Lahore; Centre for Excellence in Journalism Karachi, University of Karachi, Institute of Business Administration Karachi; University of Quetta, Balochistan; University of Peshawar and Institute of Management Sciences Peshawar; Abdul Wali Khan University in Mardan; University of Faisalabad; University of Gujrat and Bahauddin Zakariya University in Multan.

We also acknowledge and appreciate the cooperation for providing the dedicated volunteers' support from the universities in Islamabad/Rawalpindi, including Arid Agriculture University, Bahria University, Comsats Institute of Information Technology, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Foundation University, International Islamic University, IQRA University, Fast University, National Defense University, National University of Modern Languages, Preston University, Quaid-e-Azam University, The Millennium University College, Muslim Youth University and Al Nafees Medical College.

Our special thanks and tribute go to the young volunteers for their energetic support in engaging youth and successfully organizing the screenings during the film festival.

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