



PRESS RELEASE

International Film Festival raises awareness about the global development goals

The European Union and the United Nations are supporting its 9th edition

Brussels, 24 March 2017 – Seventy-five documentaries from all over the world will be screened during the 2017 edition of the Millennium International Documentary Film Festival, which starts today in Brussels.

“One of the key objectives of the Millennium Festival is to mobilise citizens around the Sustainable Development Goals and the major challenges of our time. The documentaries which will be screened this year bring the Goals closer to people, putting a human face on them”, said Zlatina Rousseva, Artistic Director of the Millennium International Documentary Film Festival.

Since its first edition in 2009, the Festival has gained international recognition and has become a major annual cultural event in Brussels. It has played a key role in raising awareness among the public, in particular youth, about the Development Goals, contributing to a better understanding of global challenges and generating debate on how we can together achieve a better world for everyone.

Its 2017 edition promotes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 universal goals adopted by world leaders at the United Nations in September 2015 to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable future by 2030. Documentaries will focus on themes across the five principles of the Agenda 2030 - People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership.

“There is no future without culture. Culture is essential in all societies, contributing to democracy and pluralism”, said Stefano Manservigi, Director-General of International Development and Cooperation of the European Commission, on the opening of the festival. “Cinema and the audiovisual sector evidence the diversity and multiculturalism of our world, sharing experiences and promoting understanding”, he said.

The festival kicks off with a debate on Friday, 24 March, 18:00 at Bozar on the implementation of the SDGs and the role of institutions, citizens and art in achieving the goals. Key speakers in the panel include: Stefano Manservigi, Director-General of International Development and Cooperation, European Commission; Maria Arena, Member of the European Parliament; Ivan Krastev, Director of the Centre for Liberal Strategies and board member of International Crisis Group; Patrick Gomes, Secretary General of the ACP Group of States; and Paul Dujardin, Director of Bozar in Brussels.

“The United Nations has been a strong supporter of the festival since its very first edition. We are happy to share this year’s edition with one of our most important partners - the European Union”, said Barbara Pesce-Monteiro, Director of the UN in Brussels. “Documentaries have the power to tell stories about pressing issues the world is facing in a compelling way. They are about the realities that people live in. We hope the movies and the debates during the festival will inspire and mobilise action for achieving together the Sustainable Development Goals everywhere”.

About 1,000 documentaries have been submitted for the 2017 edition of the Festival. The best documentaries will be awarded during the closing ceremony on 1 April in the following categories: Best Film, Sustainable Development Award, Human Rights Award, along with the Special Award of the Jury, the Audience Award and the La Trois Award.

The 75 documentaries, which entered the final competition, will be screened in various cinemas across the city of Brussels, with some of them being followed by debates with the participation of UN experts on themes related to gender equality and women’s empowerment, children’s rights, poverty and migration, among many others.

The 2017 edition is supported by the European Union and the UN Agencies – the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and the UN Women.

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More about the Millenium Film Festival:

Festival website: <http://www.festivalmillenium.org/>

Programme: http://www.festivalmillenium.org/sites/default/files/webprogrammemillenium2017_0.pdf

Tickets and reservations: <http://www.festivalmillenium.org/en/tickets-and-reservations>