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PRESS RELEASE

Desert Nights: Tales from the Desert International Film Festival launched in Cannes

Bonn - 23 May 2006. The international Film Festival entitled 'Desert Nights – Tales from the Desert' to be held in Rome from 1-7 December 2006, was launched yesterday at a press conference in Cannes. On the platform were artistic director Irene Bignardi, supported by UNCCD representative Massimo Candelori and desertification expert Pietro Laureano.

The one-off film fest seeks to celebrate the fragile beauty and rich cultural heritage of the world's deserts, while raising awareness of the global environmental problem of desertification. It is one of the major events being held during the International year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD).

The Festival will present features, classics and documentaries from across the world, in particular from those countries most affected by desertification, and aims to offer an intriguing glimpse into the world of the drylands communities as well as an opportunity to share their real-life stories.

On show will be a panorama of the best films made within the five regions of the Convention - Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern Mediterranean and Central and Eastern Europe - and selected by a committee of international experts in the field of cinema and communication.

International names such as Italian legend Bernardo Bertolucci, Afghan director Siddiq Barmark ("Osama") and Tunisian filmmaker and critic Ferid Boughedir have been proposed as members of the Honorary Committee.

A major draw for film buffs will be a retrospective session featuring many of the great classics of the genre and a number of unreleased feature films, as well a session of short films and documentaries. Screenings will be open to the public and the media.

The Festival will include a gala soiree attended by international authorities, film directors and other well-known personalities from the world of arts and culture. The organization of the Festival is promoted by the UNCCD with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy and under the patronage of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities of Italy.

Note to journalists: For further information see www.desertnightsfestival.org or contact Joyce Hannah at (+49-228) 815 2857, or send an e-mail to [press\(at\)unccd.int](mailto:press(at)unccd.int)