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**UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION FILM FESTIVAL CELEBRATES 15 YEARS OF
GROUNDBREAKING DOCUMENTARIES WITH 70 FILMS FROM
ACROSS THE GLOBE**

*SEVEN WORLD PREMIERES AND TWENTY U.S. PREMIERES TO BE SCREENED
OCTOBER 18-28 WITH "HUMAN DIGNITY" AS THE THEME
OVER 45 FILMMAKERS TO BE IN ATTENDANCE THROUGHOUT THE FESTIVAL*

PALO ALTO, CA (September 16, 2012) **The United Nations Association Film Festival** (UNAFF) is delighted to announce the **15 year anniversary** of its debut. As one of the oldest solely documentary film festivals in the US, established in 1998 to honor the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it has grown and earned the respect of audiences and filmmakers alike for its fearless independence and integrity. In addition to providing early outlets for films, many of which later went on to win major awards and accolades, UNAFF prides itself in creating a community forum for discovery and dialogue about different cultures, issues and solutions.

In pursuing its mission UNAFF has expanded beyond screenings by organizing year-round panel discussions, launched programs that address children, students and seniors, created a traveling festival which keeps the films alive well beyond their initial festival showings, and opened its doors to documentary film students and researchers.

For our anniversary, in addition to the ongoing celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we have chosen the theme "Human Dignity", as we believe that it is at the center of all our efforts and that it succinctly symbolizes the purpose of our festival.

In the eleven days of UNAFF 2012 we will show some more timely stories than ever on topics like renewable energy, cyber crime and Internet freedom, interracial marriage and tolerance, looted art, wars in the name of God, torture programs and medical ethics, battle for water over oil, human trafficking and modern slavery, philanthropy and social change.

From **October 18-28**, the films will be screened in various Bay Area locations: **Palo Alto, Stanford University, East Palo Alto, San Jose and San Francisco**. The Festival opens on **Thursday, October 18** in Palo Alto with two films: **THE WELL: WATER VOICES FROM ETHIOPIA** (Ethiopia/Italy) at 7:15pm and **THE RED BUTTON** (Russia/USA) at 8:30pm. Both films will be screened at the Aquarius Theatre in Palo Alto.

THE WELL: WATER VOICES FROM ETHIOPIA directed by Paolo Barberi, follows the daily life of Borana herders as they gather their livestock around ancient wells. Huge hand-excavated craters, known as “singing wells,” allow them to survive during the long annual droughts, when thousands of people and animals move closer in search for survival.

THE RED BUTTON (U.S. Premiere) directed by Ewa Pieta and Miroslaw Grubek, tells the dramatic story of Stanislaw Petrov, the Russian officer who, in 1983, saved the world from atomic war.

Before the screenings the Opening Night Party will be held at the 3rdDoor in downtown Palo Alto with the special performance by international recording artist, James Henry. The City of Palo Alto, Mayor Yiaway Yeh will deliver opening words with all invited filmmakers and celebrities.

The Festival continues with **seven world** premieres including: **GREEDY LYING BASTARDS** (Nigeria/Peru/Tuvalu/Uganda/USA) directed by Craig Rosebraugh with actress Daryl Hannah as Executive Producer presents a searing indictment of the influence, deceit and corruption that defines the fossil fuel industry. **IRENA SENDLER: IN THE NAME OF THEIR MOTHERS**(Poland/UK/USA) directed by Mary Skinner tell the story of a young Catholic social worker who helped smuggle Jewish orphans out of Nazi imprisoned Warsaw. **STATE OF CONTROL** (China/India/Nepal/Tibet/USA) directed by Christian Johnston and Darren Mann. Using a combination of vérité footage and compelling personal stories, **STATE OF CONTROL** shows a never-before-seen side of the Tibet/China struggle through cybercrime.

Twenty documentaries will have their U.S. premieres in the Festival including: **BUFFALO GIRLS** (Thailand/U.S.) directed by Todd Kellstein. The heartbreaking story of two eight-year-old Thai girls seeking their country’s national Muay Thai championship, a prize that could change their families’ lives forever. **THE CRIMES OF BORIS PASTERNAK** (Russia) directed by Svetlana Rezvushkina reviews how the novel *Doctor Zhivago* was written and published in the west, due to a denial of publication in the former Soviet Union. **DOCTORS OF THE DARK SIDE** (Iraq/U.S.) directed by Martha Davis, is the first feature length documentary about the pivotal role of physicians and psychologists in detainee torture. In a new film that exposes the dreadful abuse of young Afghan girls by drugs traffickers closely allied to the Taliban, **OPIUM BRIDES** (Afghanistan/U.K.) directed by Jamie Doran, journeys deep into the Afghan countryside to reveal the deadly bargain that local farmers are being forced to make in order to save their own lives. **SCARLET ROAD** (Australia) directed by Catherine Scott is the story of an Australian sex worker who has become highly specialized in working with clients with disabilities.

On October 28 the closing night film will be the Martin Scorese produced film **SURVIVING PROGRESS** (Canada/U.S.) directed by Mathieu Roy and Harold Crooks. Ronald Wright, whose best-seller *A Short History of Progress Surviving Progress*, shows how past civilizations were destroyed by “progress traps;” alluring technologies and belief systems that serve immediate needs, but ransom the future. As pressure on the world's resources accelerates and the financial elite bankrupt nations, can our globally entwined civilization escape a final, catastrophic progress trap?

The film will be followed by an awards ceremony and closing night party sponsored by Garden Court Hotel.

UNAFF is committed to not only presenting films but also creating spaces where audience members can engage in ongoing dialogue about the topics at hand. Seven free panel discussions will take place during the course of the Festival. For the full program and details visit www.unaff.org or call 650-724-5544.

The award winning UNAFF (the United Nations Association Film Festival) held annually in October at Stanford, Palo Alto, East Palo Alto and San Francisco, now in its 15th year has grown to be one of the oldest and most respected documentary film festivals in the United States. UNAFF was originally conceived to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "The recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." (Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). It was founded by Stanford educator and film critic Jasmina Bojic with the participation of the Stanford Film Society and the UNA Midpeninsula Chapter.