



## PRESS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **STORIES FROM THE FIELD 2006 BUILDS MOMENTUM AND GAINS SUPPORT** **40 Films Will Be Screened at the Second Annual United Nations Documentary Film Festival**

New York, NY, April 3, 2006 – In its first season as a public competition, **Stories from the Field, The Second Annual United Nations Documentary Film Festival**, more than doubled its previous record, receiving 180 film entries from countries on five continents. Nations represented this year include Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Germany, India, Iran, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Africa, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Venezuela, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The Festival, presented by the Media Communications Association - International, New York Chapter (MCA-I NY), in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Public Information and The New School, will take place on **Saturday, April 22, and Sunday, April 23, 2006**, from approximately 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., at Tishman Auditorium, The New School, 66 W. 12 St. (between Fifth & Sixth Aves.), New York, NY 10011. It will feature film screenings, three panel discussions, and award presentations. An opening night reception will be held on Saturday, April 22, in The New School's Vera List Courtyard, and will be by invitation or with press credential only.

Returning to the Festival's Honorary Committee this year are filmmakers **Sydney Pollack** and **Albert Maysles** commissioner **Katherine Oliver** of the Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting, and others who share with the Festival's founders a love of documentary filmmaking and a concern for the developing world. Joining for the first time are actors **Benicio Del Toro** and **Susan Sarandon**, and ABCNews 20/20 correspondent, **Lynn Sherr**. The full list can be viewed at [www.mcainy.org/unfilm](http://www.mcainy.org/unfilm).

#### **SHIPBREAKERS**

Few nations are willing to accept in their ports the dirty and dangerous work of dismantling a ship by hand. For decades, the work of ship breaking has been shunted from one port to another. It is one of the world's most unregulated industries, leaving a swath of debris, disability, and death in its wake. *Agency: ILO (International Labor Organization).*

#### **FROM PEACE TO POLITICS: BURUNDIAN WOMEN TAKE CHARGE**

This short documentary depicts the political engagement of women in Burundi, first as peace activists during the civil war and now as members of Parliament in the post-war period. *Agency: UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women).*

For a film to qualify, it had to reflect one or more of the **United Nations Millennium Development Goals**, the ongoing theme of the Stories Festival:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

### Award Categories

Finalists were selected by a screening committee of United Nations officials, MCA-I representatives, and New School faculty based on the topical relevance, artistic merit, and production values of their work.

Awards will be presented in the following categories:

- Best UN Feature (15 min. & longer)
- Best UN Short (under 15 min.)
- Best UN PSA
- Best Public Film (60 min. & under)
- Audience Choice Award for Best (UN or Public) Film

### Information Online

Festival Web site: [www.mcainy.org/unfilm](http://www.mcainy.org/unfilm)

United Nations: [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

Millennium Development Goals: [www.un.org/millenniumgoals/](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/)

UN Chronicle Online Edition: [www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/](http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/)

Media Communications Association International, New York

Chapter: [www.mcainy.org](http://www.mcainy.org)

The New School: [www.newschool.edu](http://www.newschool.edu)

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### THE LOVERS, THE VICTIMS

In their film about HIV/AIDS in Iran, directors, Bahar and Ehsani turn their cameras on the back alleys, bedrooms, and clinics of Tehran, talking to the city's younger generation, its drug addicts and sex workers, prisoners, doctors, nurses, and clergy for a compassionate but unflinching look at an unfamiliar side of Iran. *Directors: Kamal Bahar, Mohammad Ehsani.*

### INDIA JOURNAL

In March 2005 a group of students from the Archer School for Girls in Los Angeles traveled to Northern India to learn about the problems Indian girls experience in trying to receive an education. The need to educate girls is particularly urgent: Women are responsible for the health and education of their families and are vital to the region's economic growth. Despite the need for girls to have equal access to education, there are many obstacles to their doing so, including heavy household and agricultural workloads, poor electricity, malnutrition, inadequate healthcare, and gender bias. The American girls have a life-changing experience as they learn about the difficulties girls their age face on the other side of the world. *Director: Keiko Tsuno.*

### VISIONING TIBET

This extraordinary film chronicles the passion of ophthalmologist Marc Lieberman, founder of the Tibet Vision Project. His mission: to end preventable blindness in Tibet, China — which has the highest rate of untreated cataract blindness in the world — by 2020. Bringing light where there was once darkness, Lieberman's work has been recognized by the American Academy of Ophthalmology, which named him 2003 Humanitarian of the Year. The film is built around the stories of two Tibetans — Karma (a farmer from a small village in Northern Tibet) and Lhasang (patriarch of a nomadic family from the Tibetan plains) — who make the arduous journey to a remote clinic in the hopes of having their sight restored by Tibetan doctors trained by Lieberman. *Director: Isaac Solotaroff*

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