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## **“KABUL, I LOVE YOU” Film Project Premieres in Afghanistan**

**Directed by 10 Afghan filmmakers, and produced by UNAMA  
17 of May at the French Institute of Afghanistan in Kabul**

**Kabul, May 17, 2012** – The United Nations-supported film project “Kabul, I love you” premiered today at the French Institute in Kabul at an event that included the UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Michael Keating; the Acting Minister of Information and Culture, Timur Shah Ishaqzai; and Engineer Ahmed Latif, Head of Afghan Films.

“Kabul, I Love You” is an initiative of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) fully produced and funded by the Strategic Communication and Spokespersons Unit and directed by ten budding Afghan filmmakers based in Kabul: Farhad Rezayee, Morawej Zada, Nasir Hashimi, Qader Aryaie, Aref Beria, Yasamin Yarmal, Sear Noorzad, Habibullah Sadaat, Ibrahim Sekandary, and Sayed Zia Qasemi.

“The project brings together three main aspects – Kabul and our love of Kabul, the tradition of filmmaking in Afghanistan and the celebration of the UN Declaration of Human Rights,” Mr. Keating said at the premiere.

The project was created to give Afghan filmmakers an opportunity to visually discover their country and tell the stories of their communities while incorporating a thematic aspect of the UN core value of respect for human rights. The main objective was to help Afghan artists to create a social, economical, cultural and ethnical profile of their country through the medium of film.

“Filmmakers were selected to tell a story that illustrates the universality of love, and their love for the city of Kabul, for its people, and for their country within a human rights context. This was an opportunity to rebuild a audiovisual memory of Kabul,” said Shores Kalantari, who spearheaded the project with colleagues Ariadna Alvarado and Iskander Soltani.

The 10 filmmakers were chosen from 200 proposals that included script summaries and portfolios of past work. Each selected film was given four months to create the films.

“The producers and filmmakers had complete freedom in making their films. The only monitoring that took place was to ensure better quality of the films” said Malik Shafi’I, Line Producer for the project.

Shooting a film in Kabul posed unique challenges. Yasmeen Yarmal, the lone female director shot part of her movie at Kabul airport. Even after obtaining permission from authorities filming was nonetheless halted several dozen times by concerned security staff. Later, filming a scene at a hotel, she was confronted by residents who objected to a women working as a filmmaker.

“The main challenge of the project was to bring together 10 completely different directors from different background to bring them together to work for the same goal. If 10 directors from different backgrounds can come together to make a film, it is a hopeful sign that the people of Afghanistan can come together,” said Soltani, “Kabul, I Love You” Programme Manager and Video Editor.

Following its premiere, “Kabul, I Love You” will be shown to larger audiences through national television and by touring remote parts of the country with a mobile cinema. The movie may also be entered into international film festivals.

“Along with other development projects, there is a need for cultural development, for opportunities for young Afghans to help shape the country’s modern cultural identity” said Alvarado. “The arts and culture have a big role to play in straightening and promoting modern Afghan values. “Kabul, I Love You”, is a film project about the symphony of love with the city, a portrait of their struggle and issues they face on their daily lives, but also of their hopes and dreams.”

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