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PRESS RELEASE

42nd CIOFF[®] World Congress and Youth Forum Hosts 60 Countries in Paris, November 8 – 17, 2012

The 42nd CIOFF[®] annual World Congress and General Assembly were held in Paris, November 11-17, 2012 at the Centre International de Sejour Maurice Ravel (CISP). Over 200 people from 60 countries took part, with delegates traveling from as far away as New Zealand and Japan. CIOFF[®] Congress was preceded by CIOFF[®] Youth Forum, both of which were graciously hosted by CIOFF[®] France, led by its President Anne-Marie Ciolfi and CIOFF[®] International Secretary General Philippe Beaussant in partnership with La Ligue de l'Enseignement.

The year 2012 marked an important achievement for CIOFF[®], as it has become a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Official Partnership with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) accredited to the Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. As such, both the World Congress and Youth Forum received for the first time High Patronage of UNESCO. UNESCO Director General Mme Irina Bokova addressed the Congress delegates during the Opening Ceremony via a specially recorded video message, in which she acknowledged the contribution of CIOFF[®] to the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Mme Bokova lauded the organization's engagement of, and commitment to the youth, and she emphasised that UNESCO and CIOFF[®] share the same goal: to promote the diversity of cultural expressions and raise the potential for human development.

Among the main items discussed at the CIOFF[®] General Assembly were CIOFF[®] work in partnership with UNESCO, results of CIOFF[®] World Folkloriada 2012 in Anseong, Republic of Korea, as well as adoption of the New CIOFF[®] Structure. Three new countries: Kirgizstan, Quwait and Saudi Arabia were accepted as Corresponding Members of CIOFF[®].

CIOFF Youth Forum

CIOFF[®] Youth presented their new edition of Playing Together Magazine, which was prepared for the Traditional Games day at CIOFF[®] World Folkloriada. The youths present at the Forum elected a new Youth Coordination Committee and determined the new two-year workplan, emphasizing the importance of expanding the CIOFF[®] Youth Movement.

CIOFF® Cultural Conference

The CIOFF® Cultural Conference, an integral part of the World Congress, took place November 15 and was dedicated to safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage with presentations by UNESCO Chief, Intangible Cultural Heritage Section, Cecile Duvelle; Anthropologist Chiara Bortolotto, Université Libre de Bruxelles; Diego Gradis, Lawyer, past president of “Traditions for Tomorrow” and Member of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee; Jean Audouze, President, French National Commission for UNESCO; Mario Garcia Siani, President of CIOFF® Paraguay and Ramiro Mansutti, Chairman of CIOFF® Youth Coordination Committee and acting Chairman of the CIOFF Cultural Commission. Magdalena Tovornik, CIOFF® Representative to UNESCO and Guy Landry, CIOFF® Honorary Member moderated the discussions following the presentations. In her presentation Mme Cecile Duvelle stated that the “recognition of UNESCO means CIOFF® is doing meaningful and important work.” She further supported CIOFF®’s mission, saying that educating communities puts a value on Intangible Cultural Heritage.

CIOFF® Forum

The Open Forum at the Congress was dedicated to Intellectual Property and the Safeguarding of Traditional Cultures : Challenges and Opportunities for Folklore Festivals" which was presented by the WIPO representative, Mme Brigitte Vezina.

During the Congress all the participants attended a Civic Reception at the Paris City Hall, housed in the historic Hotel de Ville de Paris on the river Seine. The Congress culminated in a CIOFF® Presentation Night at the UNESCO Theatre, attended by 1200 people, including Permanent Representatives of different countries to UNESCO. The CIOFF® President, Dr. Udomsak Sakmungvong (Thailand), made a short presentation of CIOFF®, which was followed by a concert from the newly established CIOFF® France Music and Dance Ensemble.

CIOFF® (Conseil International des Organisations de Festivals de Folklore et d’Arts Traditionnels) is a non-governmental organization in Official Partnership with UNESCO, accredited to the act as adviser to the ICH Committee of UNESCO.

Founded in 1970, CIOFF® is now represented in over 90 different countries in which there are more than thirty thousand folklore dance and music groups and folk arts organizations. Today CIOFF® globally coordinates over 300 annual international folklore and folk arts festivals, uniting hundreds of volunteers around the world with its mission to encourage cultural exchanges in order to promote a growing spirit of friendship and peace.

For more information about CIOFF® please visit www.cioff.org
or email: info@cioff.org