

Honorific Speech for Mohsen Makhmalbaf

**on the occasion of the presentation of the Honour Award by the
Film Festival „Women's Worlds“ of TERRE DES FEMMES for
„Committed support in
Defence of Human Rights of Women“**

on the 20th of November 2010 in Tuebingen, Germany

The speech is held by Irene Jung, TERRE DES FEMMES - Film Festival Director

Mohsen Makhmalbaf was born into a poor family in Tehran. He was shot at as a 17 year old resistance fighter against the Shah regime and imprisoned for five years until his release in 1979. He developed himself as a complete autodidact to an author and film maker in prison and the time after. He is considered as the founder of the New Iranian Cinema and has also founded a very unconventional film school for his family and acquaintances. His film KANDAHAR won an award at Cannes and marks the beginning of his vehement support for the people of Afghanistan.

Today he acts internationally for the current opposition movement in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Together with the film maker Satrapi he unwrapped Ahmadinedschads electoral fraud in 2009 in front of the European Parliament. Mohsen has already spent five years in exile, living in Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Paris. He currently lives in Paris with his family.

He is connected to our film festival through the Makhmalbaf Film House, which has again and again provided us with films of the whole family and the family members that have visited us as guests, our support for the Makhmalbaf foundation in Afghanistan, his and Marziyehs participation in our book „Human Rights of Women in the Mirror of Film“, Samira's work shop. From the work shop a DVD for International Film Schools „The Mirror of Samjilra Makhmalbaf – or the magic of capturing and transforming life through film“ was made as a coproduction between the film festival Women's Worlds and the Makhmalbaf Film House.

Dear Mohsen, through your visits and our cooperations, we have learned an enormous amount and exchanged information - not just about film and film work but also about your strong commitment to women in Afghanistan and Iran, countries which have been shattered by war, are marked by devastating poverty and characterised by misogynous patriarchal structures.

You are furthermore an indestructible optimist in your uncompromising endeavours to raise your voice and in that way change reality for the discriminated and those on whom violence has been inflicted, that do not usually get heard - regardless of whether this will put yourself in danger or means painful exile. You live true to the sentence you used in the film Kandahar “It may be true that we cannot bring sun into the absolute darkness: but each one of us can light up his surroundings with a candle.” Just how much your family equals you in this respect, has been shown by your daughters' visits in 2008 and 2009, that have left deep impressions on all of us.

We want to thank you and your family from the heart for the solidarity you have shown us in coming with us all this way and present you this evening the Women's Worlds Honorary Award for the whole Makhmalbaf family.

(Presentation of the Certificate)

We would also like to send the whole family a small reminder, that it is not just good to reach out to help each other to improve reality, but also that beauty may arise from it.

(Presentation of the statue)