

## Press Release

Rotterdam, 28 January 2009

### **The 2009 Prince Claus Fund Film Grant of €15,000 Goes to 'Birdie' by filmmaker Byamba Sakhya from Mongolia**

In co-operation with CineMart, the Prince Claus Fund Film Grant is awarded annually to support the initial creative phase of the development of a film production. The Prince Claus Fund Film Grant is presented to a CineMart project by a filmmaker from Africa, Asia, Latin America or the Caribbean. Quality and innovation are the most important selection criteria.

The Prince Claus Fund Film Grant will be presented to **Byamba Sakhya** on 28 January during the CineMart Closing Night Party at Parkzicht in Rotterdam.

#### **Jury Report:**

'Birdie' is the story of a boy called 'Birdie' because he loves everything that flies. Birdie and his family move from the Mongolian countryside to a suburb in the capital Ulan Bator. He grows up in a dysfunctional family with a bitter stepmother and a drunken father. To escape reality the boy takes refuge in his fantasy world. He builds a 'nest' on the roof of a block of flats, where he feels free in his own little world. But he still needs human contact. A young woman lives opposite him, with whom he develops a relationship without her even realising it. This one-sided and imaginary affair forces him to examine his own sense of reality.

The story takes place in a uniquely Mongolian context amidst the tension that exists between the traditional nomadic existence, and migration and urbanisation. In a simple, universal narrative, Byamba Sakhya depicts feelings of alienation and loneliness, which are inherent to the transition from tradition to modernity. In the words of the filmmaker: *'In the Mongolian countryside, you know what your neighbours are eating each evening, even though they live 100 kilometres away. In the city, you don't know where your neighbours come from or what they're called. This is a new reality in Mongolia.'*

The jury describes Byamba Sakhya's concept as contemporary and subtle, where fantasy and reality are alternated in an original way. The jury's members are impressed by the filmmaker's approach, powers of observation and visual eye.

The Jury of the 2009 Prince Claus Fund Film Grant consisted of:

**Karim Traïdia**, Chair, filmmaker and member of the Board of the Prince Claus Fund (Algeria/ the Netherlands)

**Harutyun Khachatryan**, filmmaker and 2007 Prince Claus laureate (Armenia)

**Alicia Scherson**, filmmaker (Chile)

**Monique Hendrickx**, actress (the Netherlands)

**Rene Mioch**, film expert and producer (the Netherlands)

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**The Prince Claus Fund** is a platform for intercultural exchange. It works jointly with individuals and organisations that are mainly located in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean on the realisation of activities and publications that contribute to a positive exchange between culture and development.

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