

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ENVISION 2013: Stories of the Global Health Challenge**

*April 10 and 11 - New York City*

**Award-Winning Filmmakers Come to Together with UN Officials and Experts to Spotlight Global Health and New Ways of Storytelling**

NEW YORK--April 10, 2012—The Independent Filmmaker Project (IFP) and the United Nations Department of Public Information today announced details of the fifth annual ENVISION conference, which will be held April 10-11, 2013 at the Directors Guild of America Theater and the 92Y Tribeca in New York City.

**ENVISION 2013: Stories of the Global Health Challenge** will connect UN experts and NGOs with some of the most creative minds in filmmaking and new media, enabling them to work together to find new and compelling ways to create momentum for social change. The program will be built around three key global health issues: reversing the spread of disease, maternal health and society's approach to aging. The event will be an opportunity for filmmakers and social change activists to forge partnerships that help them promote their causes and reach wider audiences.

Highlights of the event include an opening night screening of ***Blood Brother*** winner of the U.S. Documentary Grand Jury Prize and the Documentary Audience Award at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival. The screening will be followed by a Q&A with director Steve Hoover.

Academy-Award winner Fisher Stevens and story architect of film, TV and games Lance Weiler head a stellar cast of speakers and presenters that also includes Alexandre Kalache, Founder of the International Center on Policies on Ageing, and Gene Bukhman, Director of Partners in Health Program in Non-Communicable Disease and Social Change.

"It is our goal to challenge and empower creative thinking around the global issues of health and aging through this year's edition of Envision," said Joana Vicente, Executive Director of IFP. "Storytelling plays a vital role in the way our community addresses these issues, and advancements in technology have only strengthened the impact of these voices. Envision is an opportunity to bring together experts and storytellers working on different platforms, with the shared goal of building creative solutions to global problems."

"Documentary filmmakers play a crucial role in pushing health-related issues to the forefront of the global agenda," Said Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information. "Our opening night film, winner of the Sundance Jury and Audience Awards - *Blood Brother* - clearly demonstrates the ability of non-fiction filmmaking to influence a wide audience and move the needle on pressing social issues," he added. "Envision is a laboratory for

creatives, experts and activists to formulate insightful and entertaining films that inspire action."

"Everyone has a different perspective on healthy aging – and Pfizer is proud to partner with IFP and the UN to sponsor Envision 2013, inspiring filmmakers to highlight this important societal issue," says Sally Susman, executive vice president, policy, external affairs and communications at Pfizer. "Aging well is important to each of us. As our global demographics change, we must reframe how we think about aging, embrace the age we are in, and look forward to every stage of life."

Program details of the two-day event include:

- ***Open Heart***, a 2012 Academy-Award nominee, is the poignant story of eight Rwandan children who leave their families behind and embark on a life-or-death journey to receive high-risk open-heart surgery in Africa's only free-of-charge, state-of-the-art cardiac hospital. Through a humanitarian lens, director Kief Davidson offers insight on the difficult nature of healthcare in impoverished Africa.
- ***Kings Point***, directed by Sari Gilman, another 2012 Academy Award nominee, follows five seniors in an American retirement resort. A bittersweet look at our national obsession with self-reliance, ***Kings Point*** explores the dynamic tension between living and aging—between our desire for independence and our need for community—and underscores our powerful ambivalence toward growing old.
- Fisher Stevens, 2010 Academy-Award winner for his social issue documentary ***The Cove*** will moderate the highly-anticipated Envision Pitch Session in which champions of innovative global health projects pitch ideas to filmmakers and producers who, in turn, offer their thoughts on how to bring the work to life through film and media.
- ***My Sky is Falling (MSiF)***, an immersive experience, will be conducted with volunteer Envision audience members. ***MSiF***, which harnesses technology and story to create empathy for the challenges faced by foster care children is a Reboot Stories project that was designed with former foster care children through the Orange Duffel Bag Foundation, with interdisciplinary teams of Columbia students and data scientists from the Harmony Institute.
- Drawing on the day's ***MSiF*** experience, Lance Weiler, Co-Founder of ReBoot Stories, will speak on the social impact of immersive storytelling and harnessing technology to form an innovation engine for cross-generational learning and social change.
- The maternal health revolution is believed by many to be the key to achieving all of the Millennium Development Goals. We unlock how healthy mothers make all

the difference. Television-producer-turned-social-entrepreneur Robin Smalley, maternal health expert Jill Sheffield and activist filmmaker Lisa Russell, get tactical in a conversation about the power of mothers to transform the future.

- We're living longer and healthier at every stage of life. After lunch, join an interactive session that will inspire you to talk about how you want to Get Old.
- The social, economic and health benefits of combatting non-communicable disease and increasing human longevity are parts of a new paradigm to be discussed by some of the leading thinkers in global health. Longevity guru Jay Olshansky and Harvard cardiologist, Gene Bukhman sit down and strategize with the World Health Organization's Gaya Gamhewage.
- Mashable's Stacy Martinet demonstrates how 21<sup>st</sup> century technology and media are already advancing changes in healthcare with social entrepreneur Kirsten Gagnaire, transmedia activist Lina Srivastava and veteran independent media strategist Michelle Byrd.

Envision is pleased to have Pfizer as a major supporter of this year's event.

On Thursday, April 11th from 9:30 am – 5:00 pm EDT, Envision will be streamed live at [envisionfilm.org](http://envisionfilm.org). Full details of the program are now available online.

*About the partners:*

### **The United Nations**

As the public voice of the United Nations, the department of public information is dedicated to communicating the ideals and work of the United Nations to the world; to interacting and partnering with diverse audiences; and to building support for peace, development and human rights for all. The department promotes global awareness and understanding of the work and ideals of the United Nations, maximizing its global impact. Launched in 2009, the United Nations Creative Community Outreach Initiative was designed to collaborate with the creative community in order to achieve our mutual goals of promoting peace and raising awareness of critical global issues. We believe that awareness is a powerful tool in the face of injustice because it inspires compassionate action. Through creative media, we can bring honor, empathy and compassion to our stories, and, ultimately, to the people who live them.

<http://www.un.org/en/creative>

### **Independent Filmmaker Project**

The Independent Filmmaker Project (IFP) is the nation's oldest and largest not-for-profit advocacy organization for independent filmmakers. Since its debut at the 1979 New York Film Festival, IFP has supported the production of over 7,000 films and offered resources to more than 20,000 filmmakers, providing an opportunity for many diverse voices to be heard. IFP believes that independent films enrich the universal language of cinema, seeding the global culture with new ideas, kindling awareness and fostering activism. The

organization championed the early work of pioneering independent filmmakers Charles Burnett, Todd Haynes, Mira Nair, Michael Moore, Joel and Ethan Coen, Kevin Smith and Todd Solondz. IFP continues to play a vital role in launching the first films of many of today's rising stars on the independent scene, including Debra Granik (*Down to the Bone*), Miranda July (*Me, You and Everyone We Know*), and Ryan Fleck & Anna Boden (*Half Nelson*). [www.ifp.org](http://www.ifp.org).

### **Social Good Summit Partners**

The Social Good Summit partners host a three-day conference where big ideas meet new media to create innovative solutions. Held during UN Week in September, the Social Good Summit unites a dynamic community of global leaders to discuss a big idea: the power of innovative thinking and technology to solve our greatest challenges. The most innovative technologists, influential minds and passionate activists will come together with one shared goal: to unlock the potential of new media and technology to make the world a better place, and then to translate that potential into action.

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