

**PHIL CLAPP, PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL UNION OF CINEMAS
KEYNOTE ADDRESS – CINEEUROPE 2016 – MONDAY 22 JUNE**

Good afternoon everyone.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and members of UNIC - the International Union of Cinemas - I am delighted to welcome you to this year's CineEurope.

This is our fifth convention in the beautiful city of Barcelona, something of which we are I think rightly proud.

But I want to take a moment to salute an even bigger achievement. As you will see from the logo behind me – and have already heard - this year sees Bob and Andrew Sunshine and their team reach the silver anniversary of this show.

In Brussels, then Amsterdam, and now in Barcelona, to hit the heights consistently over such a long period is an incredible feat.

I and UNIC colleagues congratulate them on all they have achieved and look forward to our working together for many years to come.

We believe – and by the end of this week we hope you will agree – that this year's show will be the best yet.

We are delighted this year to have the support of 11 distribution companies – including all of the major US studios, as well as leading European film companies – who will be presenting their upcoming slates.

Once again our friends at Coca Cola have underlined their longstanding commitment to the global cinema business as our official corporate sponsor, for which we offer our deepest thanks.

And the trade show - which opens tomorrow and which I encourage everyone to visit – will again provide evidence at every turn of the innovation and technological excellence that characterises and remains the lifeblood of our sector.

Since we last gathered in Barcelona, many of the 36 territories represented by UNIC have experienced a year of unprecedented success.

The graphic unfolding behind me clearly demonstrates the impressive scale and growth of the European cinema market.

A market with unparalleled diversity in terms of language, culture and film content.

And a market whose 770 million inhabitants have a seemingly infinite appetite for the big screen experience.

The media focus in recent years has understandably been on China and the wider Asia-Pacific region. And it is true that many territories within that part of the World have seen phenomenal growth.

But away from that spotlight, the European sector has quietly cemented its position as a key building block of the global industry, now representing almost a quarter of World box office.

Establishing consistent – and growing – admissions during a time of considerable change.

That success rests on a number of key pillars.

The flexibility derived from digital technology, enabling us to reach out to a wider and more diverse cinema audience.

Massive and continuing investment by cinema operators, harnessing technological innovation to enhance all aspects of the cinema-going experience.

A continuing desire amongst the cinema-going public for a shared entertainment experience of the type that only the big screen can provide.

But there is another key factor which we probably make too little of, and on which I wanted to say a few words today.

One which is the foundation of our continued strength.

The historic partnership between cinema operators and our colleagues in film distribution.

The strength of that relationship was shown most recently in the way that we as an industry came together to address the challenges of digitisation.

But on an ongoing basis – and whatever the occasional challenges – each side remains dependent on the other for its success.

Cinema operators for their part commit to show each film in the best possible environment.

And across every UNIC territory, domestic and international film distribution partners commit to provide a rich and diverse slate.

In recent years, we have seen those companies respond positively to calls for a more even release schedule across the year. To move away from the previous peaks and troughs.

And this year we are delighted to see a response to our collective calls for a stronger family slate, great examples of which we will see this week.

There is no doubt that for all its ongoing success and vibrancy, our industry faces a number of challenges.

We cannot be complacent in the face of changing demographics, technologies and audience tastes.

The threat of uncontained piracy – the impact of which a recent study suggested could be as much as 15 per cent of lost box office each year – remains ever-present.

And, while undoubtedly a friend of the industry, the intervention of the European Commission – as we have recently seen with its initial proposals around the Digital Single Market – is not always as well-directed as it might be.

But the success we have enjoyed in recent times should give us all confidence that whatever the challenges we face, these can be dealt with in the same spirit of co-operation.

Between those who wish to develop new approaches that have the cinema experience at their heart.

Not by third party disruptors indifferent to the damage their interventions might cause to the foundations of our business.

So when you return from CineEurope at the end of this week, I ask that you do so with renewed confidence as to the continued success of our European industry.

A confidence born of trust in each other and the central role that cinema plays in communities across Europe.

Thank you for your time and I wish you a successful and enjoyable CineEurope.

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