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> IBBY Congresses
Hans Christian Andersen Awards
IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award
IBBY Honour List
International Children's Book Day
Periodicals

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Books for Africa
Books from Africa

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Site Map
Useful Links

Search

Ahmad Redza Khairuddin - Opening

Speech by IBBY President Ahmad Redza Khairuddin at the opening ceremony of the 33rd. IBBY Congress 2012

Dear Friends

It gives me the greatest pleasure to welcome all of you to the 33rd IBBY Congress in this cosmopolitan city of London. A couple of weeks ago, all eyes were on London being the host of the Olympic Games and what a show that was. As we all know by now, it was one of the best-organized Olympic Games and likewise we are all looking forward to an equally successful IBBY Congress.

I would like to congratulate the organizers, Kathy Lemaire and Ann Lazim, as well as the whole IBBY UK team of volunteers, in making all this happen. The theme for this year's congress, " Crossing Boundaries: Translations and Migrations" is apt given the pace of globalization around the world. This gives rise to the all-important need to appreciate and understand each other better. Working with and through children is our way of reaching this goal as they have so much promise as they move towards a better and peaceful future. With the exciting programme that is planned for the rest of today and until the 26th, I wish everyone a fruitful and successful congress.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you all for making a huge effort to come here to participate in this congress. I know that for many of you it has not been easy at all. Apart from the universal financial constraints, the system of getting visas continues to be an issue. I congratulate you all on your determination to be here.

Ladies and Gentlemen

At every Congress we have the opportunity to honour individuals who have greatly contributed to the continued success of IBBY. These individuals have given time and energy selflessly to IBBY and its cause and today IBBY is where it is, partly thanks to their untiring efforts. The Executive Committee met in Bologna in March and approved the conferment of Honorary Membership of IBBY on three individuals for their outstanding contribution to IBBY. May I now have the pleasure to invite on stage:

Ana Maria Machado
Your presence in IBBY has been long and fruitful. You guided the Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury for the 1988 and 1990 awards, and went on to win the Award yourself in 2000. You have been a staunch supporter of IBBY International as well as the Brazilian Section of IBBY. In 2010 you were elected to become the President of the Brazilian Academy of Letters – a very worthy honour.

Peter Schneck
You guided the Hans Christian Andersen Award Jury for the 1996 and 1998 awards, and went on to serve on the IBBY Executive Committee for the next four years. In 2002 you were elected President of IBBY and served in this role throughout the difficult changes following the retirement of Leena. You later joined the IBBY Foundation Board becoming its President from 2007 to 2010, and continue to support IBBY by serving on the IBBY Foundation Board.

Urs Breitenstein
Your presence in IBBY has been long and fruitful. In 2002 when the IBBY Jubilee Congress was planned for Basel, you willingly stepped in and joined the organizing team and with your great generosity and patience supported IBBY in a way that was outstanding. Furthermore, you made close ties at that time by becoming Treasurer of the international organization, serving until 2008, and securing a large donation that has kept the Secretariat alive and functioning. You continue to support IBBY by serving on the IBBY Foundation Board.

With that I conclude my speech. I hope you will join with me and enjoy the rest of this the 33rd IBBY World Congress.

Ahmad Redza Ahmad Khairuddin
London, 23 August 2012