
Lanka Students mesmerize French audience at the concert to mark 60 yrs of UNESCO-Sri Lanka relations

Tuesday, 03 November 2009

Last Updated Wednesday, 04 November 2009

Students from faraway schools in Sri Lanka mesmerized the French audience at the prestigious UNESCO auditorium when they performed traditional dances at a colourful concert aptly named 'Varna' held on October 29 to mark the 60th anniversary of UNESCO-Sri Lanka relations. 35 Tamil and Sinhala students from the schools in Gampaha, Kirindiwela, Vavuniya, Ingiriya and Horana kept the spectators spell-bound for nearly two and a half hours when they performed dances such as Varnam, Ves, Bharath Natyam, Kolattam, devotional songs, harvesting dances and culminated with a fantastic drum symphony.

The 1360-seat Salle 1 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris was full to its capacity when the French and Sri Lankan communities in Paris responded enthusiastically to the invitation jointly extended by UNESCO Director General Koichiro Matsuura and Ambassador Lionel Fernando. For the first time in recent years all communities of Sri Lankans in France and their friends, senior French officials and diplomats gathered together at this concert which was graced by, among others the Additional Director General Ahmed Sayyad and the newly elected Director General Irina Bokova of Bulgaria. In his message, Minister of Education Susil Premajayantha pointed out that it was a proud privilege for Sri Lanka to join UNESCO within one year after attaining independence in 1948, six years before even becoming a member of the United Nations. Addressing the gathering Ambassador Lionel Fernando said that the performance by school children from remote areas of Sri Lanka depicts the immense potential of Sri Lankan youth. He said that Sri Lanka is at a crossroad today after elimination of dreaded terrorism which had retarded socio economic development. 'Today the nation is on the forward march in peace and harmony,' he said. Ambassador Fernando, emphasising the importance of UNESCO-Sri Lanka relations, said that Sri Lanka's proud record of 92 percent literacy rate reflects the giant strides the country has made in the field of education. While the student dancers enthralled the audience with high-quality dance performances, maestro Edward Jayakody sang couple of popular songs related to children and education to the thrill of the Sri Lankan fans. - Asian Tribune – Courtesy: asiantribune.com