

VISF 2017 Official Press Release:

Cultures unite at the 13th Annual Vancouver International Soccer Festival and Tournament: Tibet Women's Soccer Team will compete at the 2017 Vancouver International Soccer Festival (VISF) as special guests and Ambassadors of Peace.

VANCOUVER, BC, CANADA – The Vancouver International Soccer Festival (VISF) is lacing up to kick off its 13th year on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, July 7-9, 2017 when hundreds of athletes, officials, and volunteers will descend on Empire Fields in Vancouver for a tournament that promotes inclusion, respect, equality, and raises funds for worthy causes.

The VISF is a 7-on-7 World Cup-style soccer tournament that brings together up to 32 women's and co-ed soccer teams from Canada, the United States, local international schools, and multi-cultural communities to celebrate "the beautiful game" and showcase diversity and cultural harmony.

First Nations teams from BC will also participate. The World's first Indigenous Games Champions, the Native Indian Football Association (NIFA), Winners of 2016 VISF Women's Division are coming back to defend their title. Also, a team made of recent newcomers and refugees will be competing in the tournament.

First Nations elders and local dignitaries will officially open the festival on Friday, July 7, at 8:00 PM at the Historic Empire Fields, 3311 East Hastings St, Vancouver.

Admission to the festival is free! It takes place from 9:00am to 9:00pm on both Saturday and Sunday. In addition to exciting soccer action, festival highlights include globally inspired cuisine, a beer and wine garden, house DJ, games, LIVE Entertainment, and more.

One Team United for Peace and Development Society is proud to announce that the Tibet Women's Soccer Team will compete at the 2017 Vancouver International Soccer Festival (VISF) as special guests and Ambassadors of Peace. This is the first tibetan women's team of any sport to compete internationally.

The Canadian Embassy in New Delhi, India has granted the team travel visas to Vancouver, Canada for the 13th annual festival, June 30th to July 12th. The team of 15 young Tibetan women welcomed the successful invitation following the February 24th disappointment when they were denied tourist visas by the US Embassy in New Delhi to attend the prestigious Dallas Cup in Texas.

After a video of the young athletes reading a letter in front of the Embassy asking for help went viral, politicians, athletes, attorneys and human rights advocates around the world reached out to the team urging for a reversal of the decision. The story appeared in BBC, The Guardian, The New York Times, The Times of India, NBC Sports, ESPN, CNN, MSNBC, and many more. However, the decision to deny entry remained firm.

"At Vancouver's One Team United for Peace and Development Society and the VISF, we believe that soccer has an incredible power which can be used to build bridges between cultures, strengthen communities, create long-lasting friendships and bring our global community closer together," says Adri Hamael, Founder & Executive Director of the society and its showcase VISF event. "Our invitation to the Tibet Women's Soccer Team is extended in the spirit of this mandate. I am deeply touched by the team's inspiring

story. As a father of a little girl, for me it is about affording girls and women the opportunity to compete and be treated as equals."

The Tibet team will be co sponsored by the VISF 2017 and One Team Society. In addition to competing in the VISF 2017, July 7-9, the team will participate in friendly matches with local and national soccer teams and will be invited to enjoy the many cultural and sightseeing opportunities Vancouver and Canada has to offer.

During the team's stay in Vancouver, they will be working with Canada's Sport Hall of Fame inductee Andrea Neil. A pioneer of women's soccer in Canada, Neil spent 20 years with the National Team as a player and assistant-coach. Currently Andrea works in the Vancouver area with former Men's National Team player Nick Dasovic at Dasovic-Neil Coaching, where they provide individualized soccer programming and training to elite athletes.

Thank you to VISF 2017 Lead and core funding partners: Government of Canada, City of Vancouver, Vancouver Park Board, Granville Island Brewing, VOLO Athletics, Simpson Family Foundation, Simpson Thomas & Associates Trial Lawyers, Switch United, and CIBC.

For more information, visit www.oneteamunited.ca Please, contact us if you wish to become an official funding sponsor of the VISF 2017. We are growing in leaps and bounds, so is our staging costs.

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