

Press Release

The Hague, 25 August 2005

Broad approach central to the activities of International Literacy Day

Within the Netherlands, the theme of International Literacy Day, to be held on 8 September 2005, will be the necessity for a broad approach to the problems surrounding illiteracy. To this end, various activities making this broad approach visible are to be organised both on International Literacy Day and the days preceding it. International Literacy Day is an initiative of the UN organisation UNESCO. In our country, there are 1.5 million people who lack good literacy skills. These people all have difficulty reading and writing which hampers their optimal functioning both at home and at work.

In a society in which language is becoming increasingly important, it is unacceptable that so many people are unable to keep pace and participate fully due to their lack of reading and writing skills. Only through a broad approach will we be able to solve this problem. This means that everyone must accept their responsibility: the government, politicians, companies, the social service sector and educational institutions. This can be done in a number of ways ranging from employers enrolling employees on reading and writing courses, to educational establishments stimulating parents to follow reading and writing courses at their children's school, and organisations making their websites accessible to those with limited literacy skills.

On the instruction of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, International Literacy Day is being organised by CINOP and *Stichting Lezen & Schrijven*. In the days prior to this day, *Stichting Lezen & Schrijven* plans to organise a wide a range of activities.

Programme for International Literacy Day 2005

9 a.m. – 10 a.m.: Visit by H.R.H. Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands and State Secretary Mark Rutte from Education, Culture and Science to the offices of refuse collector Van Gansewinkel Groep in Rucphen, Brabant. Part of the programme will include a group discussion with a number of employees from Van Gansewinkel, during which the important role that reading and writing plays in the work undertaken on the work floor will be explained.

11 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.: Presentation of the National Literacy Prizes in the central hall of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science by State Secretary Rutte from that department. Princess Laurentien will also attend these celebrations. These prizes are in recognition of projects and activities which have in some special way contributed to the teaching of literacy skills. The jury chairman, Prof. Dr. A.M.L. van Wieringen, will explain the jury report.

12.30 p.m. – 1 p.m.: Opening of the photographic exhibition '*Taal Centraal*' in the hall of The Hague's central station by H.R.H. Princess Laurentien. This exhibition consists of photographs taken by Chantal Spieard who photographed various people

deriving pleasure from reading. The exhibition is the result of cooperation between the Dutch railways, PCM publishers and the photographer Chantal Spieland. The exhibition can be viewed free of charge for one month.

1.30 p.m. – 3 p.m.: A symposium about 'Regional cooperation and the future of literacy skills teaching', will be held in South Holland County Hall. This symposium will highlight some innovative projects in the area of literacy teaching being carried out by governments (provinces and councils), educational establishments and the business world. Subsequently, there will be an open discussion led by Wim van de Camp, a member of the Second Chamber. H.R.H. Princess Laurentien will round off the International Literacy Day 2005 programme with a concluding speech.

7 p.m.: Minister Van der Hoeven and State Secretary Rutte (Education, Culture and Science) will appear on a special broadcast of the television programme 'Lingo'. These cabinet members will play the word game with people who until a short time ago could barely read and write.

Other activities taking place prior to International Literacy Day include:

Monday 5 September

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and *Stichting Lezen & Schrijven* are jointly organising a conference entitled 'Reading, Writing and Growing' about the knowledge economy, ICT and literacy teaching. Minister Brinkhorst will open the conference which will discuss the importance of developing reading, writing and ICT skills for both the business world and the knowledge economy. Lacking these skills is a serious handicap for a great many people and for the development of our knowledge economy.

Tuesday 6 September

The publisher Kwintessens NZV will present a book about illiteracy suitable for the upper half of primary schools and the first class of secondary school. The presentation will take place at a primary school in Amsterdam. The book will be presented to the director of *Stichting Lezen & Schrijven* and a number of pupils.

Wednesday 7 September

The project 'Alle ouders doen mee' (All parents take part) will be launched at a primary school in Rotterdam. The aim of this project is to offer parents with low literacy skills the chance to learn to read and write at their children's school. The project, initiated by the Centre for Educational Services (CED), has been realised due to unique cooperation between BP, Unilever, the Rotterdam Council, *Stichting Lezen & Schrijven* and the Regional Education Centre in Zadkine. The parents learn to read by means of subjects important to the rearing and development of their children.

Stichting Lezen & Schrijven was established in May 2004 and its objective is to embed the teaching of literacy skills in an innovative and targeted way throughout society within the next five years. H.R.H. Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands is chair of *Stichting Lezen & Schrijven*.

Note for the editorial board, not for publication:

For further information about the activities, please contact:

Stichting Lezen & Schrijven, Sandra van Vianen, 003170 – 3022660 or 06 – 1502 1178. www.lezenenschrijven.nl.

You will shortly receive a separate press invitation for the activities taking place on 5, 6 and 7 September.