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CHIEF MINISTER WELCOMES DISTINGUISHED WRITERS TO THE ROCK

The Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Fabian Picardo MP, has welcomed the first Gibunco Gibraltar International Literary Festival.

Mr Picardo said the Government of Gibraltar was delighted to welcome so many distinguished novelists, historians, writers and public figures to the Rock.

He added: 'Gibraltar stands at the crossroads between the cultures and civilisations of Africa and Europe – the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. This remarkable blend of traditions is reflected in the brilliant programme of speakers that Sally Dunsmore has devised for the three-day festival – with eminent figures flying in from all over the world, together with a strong contingent of Gibraltar writers.

'In particular, we are very pleased to have so many speakers from Morocco and Spain – our two closest neighbours.

'We believe the festival will provide a memorable weekend for the people of Gibraltar and for visitors to the Rock – enabling us to showcase our magnificent Garrison Library, and other beautiful historic buildings as festival venues.'

Among the speakers at this year's festival are the renowned historian of Spain, Paul Preston, novelist Joanne Harris, BBC journalists Kate Adie and Gavin Hewitt, and world-renowned food writers Madhur Jaffrey, Ken Hom and Claudia Roden.

The Minister for Commercial Affairs, Tourism, Public Transport and the Port of Gibraltar, Neil Costa MP, said the festival promised to be a major generator of premium tourism and an annual opportunity to bring key opinion formers and journalists to Gibraltar.

He added: 'A vitally important element of the festival will be the programme for school children and young people.

'A generous grant from the John Mackintosh Educational Trust has enabled the Department of Education to schedule a free schools' day on Friday, October 25, and for talks and events over the weekend for children and young people to be free of charge at the John Mackintosh Hall; while senior students and their teachers can attend other appropriate festival events.'

The festival takes place between Friday, October 25, and Sunday, October 27. Tickets can be booked now through this website, and a box office will open in the main Tourist Information Office in Gibraltar on Monday, October 7.

For the full text of the welcomes by Mr Picardo and Mr Costa, click here <http://gibraltarliteraryfestival.com/about>