



**End of Service Speech as President of the International Theatre Institute
Mohamed Saif AL-AFKHAM**

Distinguished Members of the International Theatre Institute, Esteemed Colleagues, and Dear Friends,

Let me start with congratulating my friend Jessica and the new EC members

As I stand before you today, marking the end of my position as President of the ITI, my heart is filled with immense gratitude and pride. The journey we have shared over these past years has been nothing short of extraordinary, and I feel honored to have served alongside such talented, passionate, and dedicated individuals.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for your unwavering support, I would like to give a special thanks to my country the United Arab Emirates and its wise leadership and a special thanks to HH Shaik Hamad Al Sharqi Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Fujairah and His Crown Prince Shaik Mohamed and Shaik Rashid for all the trust and support also I thank my Family, my wife and daughters for the understanding and support they Have given me. I want to thank my team in Fujairah and my brother and sister Tobias BIANCONE and CHEN Zhongwen for working closer with me. And not forgetting Ali Mahdi for the good times we had.

It's with Your creativity, and commitment to the arts which have been the driving force behind everything we have accomplished. This organization thrives because of your collective energy, and it is that spirit that has allowed us to overcome challenges, seize opportunities, and continually elevate the mission of the International Theatre Institute.

During my time as President, we have achieved significant milestones together. One of the most profound accomplishments has been the enhancement and modernization of our charter. Through collaboration and thoughtful deliberation, we have updated the foundation of this organization to reflect the evolving nature of the performing arts in a changing world. This new charter is not just a document; it is a living testament to our shared vision of inclusivity, innovation, and artistic freedom. It empowers the next generation of artists, ensuring that their voices are heard and their talents nurtured.

We have also expanded our reach globally, strengthening the ties between our member centers and fostering deeper cultural exchange. Through our festivals, workshops, and initiatives, we have built bridges that transcend borders, reminding the world of the power of Theatre to unite, inspire, and provoke change.

None of this would have been possible without your collective effort. To the executive board, the committees, and every individual member, I thank you for your tireless dedication. Your work has made a lasting impact not only within the International Theatre Institute but in the global arts community as a whole.

As I step down from this role, I do so with great confidence in the future of this organization. I know that the work we have begun will continue to flourish, and that the International Theatre Institute will only grow stronger in the years to come.

Finally, I wish each and every one of you a future filled with creativity, passion, and success. May your lives be as rich and fulfilling as the art we so deeply love. Keep pushing boundaries, keep telling stories, and keep inspiring the world.

Thank you!

Mohamed Saif AL-AFKHAM

22 September 2024

General Assembly, Den Bosch, The Netherlands