**Press Release**

**Commemoration of the International Day of Yoga June 21, 2015 –Summer Solstice**

**On June 21, 2015, the Portuguese Yoga Confederation and the Embassy of India will jointly commemorate the International Day of Yoga, with support from the City of Lisbon. The celebrations will begin at 08:00 hours at the Prof. Moniz Pereira Stadium, with the message from the Prime Minister of India, Shrí Narendra Modi, followed by a Global Yoga Class based on the Common Yoga Protocol developed in India.**

**On September 27, 2014, while addressing the 69th session of United Nations General Assembly, the Prime Minister urged the world community to adopt the International Day of Yoga. India’s draft resolution on declaring June 21 the International Day of Yoga was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 11, 2014, within 75 days of its introduction. The resolution was co-sponsored by 177 of the 193 member states, the highest number of co-sponsoring countries ever for such a resolution in the United Nations.**

**At 10:00 hours a ceremony will begin with the release of a Commemorative Postcard by CTT Correios de Portugal, honouring the event, in the presence of dignitaries in attendance. This will be followed by remarks by the Ambassador, Dr. Jitendra Nath Misra, Jagat Guru Amrta Súryánanda Mahá Rája, President of the Portuguese Yoga Confederation and Mr. Jorge Máximo, Councilor for Sports and Information Systems in the Municipality of Lisbon.**

**The activities of the day will include recognition of the key figures in Yoga, Yoga demonstrations and a Yoga Master Class, a Bharatanatyam classical dance, a musical performance by Ajay Sharma on the sitar and Rão Kyao on the flute, an Aria by Luís Peças, a Sufi dance and a performance by the Omkára – Choir Orchestra. There will be a special Yoga session for children.**

**As a prelude to the celebrations, there will be a flash-mob at Saldanha from 18:00 to 18:20 hours on June 17, 2015. Yoga instructors and practitioners from the Portuguese Yoga Confederation will initiate Asanas and invite the participation of the general public. On June 20, 2015, there will be an international conference on Yoga at the Champalimaud Foundation, and a concluding reception on June 22, 2015.**

**The International Day of Yoga has the Art of Living of Portugal as a partner, with the collaboration of ISKCON / Hare Krishna of Portugal, and the participation of the Brahma Kumaris of Portugal. Others present will include Master Rupa (of the Ginásio Clube Português), Professor António Pedro – the first Portuguese Yoga teacher, and Master Maria Helena Freitas Branco, who will honor the Yoga teacher Maria Emília.**

**On April 8, 2015 Jagat Guru Amrta Súryánanda Mahá Rája was awarded the Padma Shri, a high civilian award of the Government of India, being the first Portuguese to have this honour. According to him “On June 21, thousands of persons all over the world will show how this millennial philosophy and its benefits can unite humanity – regardless of their race, religion or party – on behalf of a common purpose, peace on the planet.” “What unites us is more important than what separates us,” he underlines.**

**In 2001, the Portuguese Yoga Confederation proposed the celebration of World Yoga Day on June 21, the Summer Solstice, and has been celebrating World Yoga Day since 2002. In 2011, the Confederation was a partner in the Yoga Summit at Bengaluru, India, where the main Yoga schools endorsed the celebration of World Yoga Day on June 21. In 2012, Jagat Guru Amrta Súryánanda Mahá Rája proposed this concept. In 2013, the Portuguese Parliament unanimously approved a motion to support the commemoration of World Yoga Day on June 21. The Confederation and the Embassy of India collaborated to celebrate World Yoga Day on June 21, 2014 with attendance from India, the U.S., Spain, Italy, Greece, Russia, and other countries.**

**Yoga symbolizes the union of the individual consciousness with that of the universal consciousness, creating harmony between mind and body, man and nature, as well as promoting a holistic approach to health and well-being. Harmony and peace is the essence of Yoga. June 21 holds special significance, being the Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year. The International Day of Yoga is envisioned as a day without bloodshed, when humanity is united in demonstration of its respect for ethnic and cultural diversity, and inter-religious tolerance.**

**June 16, 2015**