

**INPUT PRESENTED BY THE DIRECTOR
GENERAL ON BEHALF OF THE MINISTER OF
ARTS AND CULTURE, PAUL MASHATILE, AT
THE TOURISM SUMMIT**

17 September 2013

Programme Director

The Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, The
Honorable Nomaindia Mfeketo

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Tourism,
The Honourable Gumede

The Minister of Tourism, Honourable Martinus Van
Schalkwyk

Ministers and Deputy Ministers, here present

The Director General of the Department of Tourism

Officials from government

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Allow me to extend the sincere apology of the Minister of
Arts and Culture, Minister Paul Mashatile, who was meant
to be with us at this important Summit but could not do so,
due to other pressing work commitments.

The Minister has sent his best wishes to this Summit and is looking forward to its outcome.

We also take this opportunity to thank the Portfolio Committee on Tourism and the Department of Tourism for convening this Summit.

We have no doubt that the Summit will strengthen the synergies that already exist between tourism on the one hand, as well as arts culture and heritage on the other.

Programme Director, this Summit is convened during a month which is significant to both our sectors.

As we all know September is Heritage Month and is also Tourism Month.

It is perhaps not a coincidence that these sectors, which are interlinked in so many ways, are celebrated during the same month.

Programme Director as we seek to strengthen the linkages between our sectors, we do so against the background of them having been identified by the National Development Plan Vision 2030, as among the key drives of economic growth, job creation and the building of sustainable livelihoods.

The NDP has this to say about the role of arts, culture and heritage in our society;

“Culture, the arts and other parts of the creative economy have a potential to generate employment and export earnings. Foreigners visit South Africa to see, understand and learn about its peoples and cultures. The arts and the related creative economy are thus an asset that needs investment to promote opportunities for more people, often outside the formal economy.”

Consistent with this understanding, as the Department of Arts and Culture, we are implementing the Mzansi Golden Economy Strategy.

Through this Strategy, we are channeling large scale investment into the creative economy; to unleash its potential to contribute to nation building, social cohesion, growing the national economy, job creation and the building of sustainable livelihoods.

We are doing this also based on our understanding that the cultural and creative industries are our country’s “new gold”.

This we say in reference to the historic role that gold played in the development of the South African economy.

We think the cultural and creative industries are today playing the same role that gold historically played in our economy.

Our implementation of the Mzansi Golden Economy Strategy is also premised on the view that; societies with

greater levels of Social Cohesion tend to be more economically prosperous.

Economic prosperity, therefore, and social inclusion are two sides of the same coin. You can not have one without the other.

Programme Director as we implement the Mzansi Golden Economy we will continue to seek partnerships across sectors and with all stakeholders, both in government and in the private sector.

This we will do in order to maximize the impact of our interventions and to ensure that our sector takes its rightful place in the socio-economic development of our country.

Tourism, given its linkages with our sector, is one of those we consider as important partners and stakeholders.

Indeed we must continue to work together to ensure that both our sectors make the kind of contribution expected of them in the NDP and in our society in general.

It is our view therefore that this Summit is one of the ways in which we can increase collaboration between our sectors.

As indicated in the NDP, tourists not only want to enjoy the beauty of our flora and fauna, our breath-taking scenery and the beauty of our wild life.

They also visit our country to experience our ways of life, our food, our songs, our dance moves as well as our rich and diverse cultural heritage.

This means in addition to going to nature reserves and the sea, they also go to our museums, to our heritage sites, our theaters, our art galleries and they attend our cultural events.

The Tribute Concert held at the beginning of this month in Moretele, Tshwane, for example, attracts an estimated 30 000 patrons annually to the City of Tshwane; making a meaningful contribution to the local economy.

Equally, events such as the Mangaung African Cultural Festival, the Joy of Jazz, the Cape Town International Jazz Festival and the Buyel'eKhaya Festival attract a significant number of tourists to the host cities.

In total as the Department of Arts and Culture we are supporting twenty eight major cultural events across the country.

It is our intention to upscale these events; ensuring that they make an even bigger impact on the economies of the host cities.

Equally, visitors, especially from outside our country, are interested in knowing more about who we are as a people; where we come from and the future we are building for ourselves.

They are interested in knowing more about the South African story; which in many ways is a story of the triumph of the human spirit.

They want to learn more and draw inspiration from the “South African miracle”; how as a people we managed to turn our backs on our deeply divided and painful past to a shared future.

This we have seen on a number of occasions where we have taken local exhibitions and productions, telling the South African story, to overseas markets.

The success of Mies Julie at last year’s Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the many local films winning international acclaim and the recent success by South African artists taking part in the South Africa Season in France, are some of the examples we can show to this effect.

Also of interest to visitors, both local and international, are our eight World Heritage sites.

As a Department, we are working closely with the Africa World Heritage Fund, not only to maintain our existing World Heritage sites but also to submit more of our places of Outstanding Universal Value for nomination to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

In this regard, we note with appreciation that the Liberation Heritage Route, which links sites, events and individuals of significance to the South African struggle for liberation,

has been included in UNESCO's tentative list of World Heritage Sites.

Programme Director, the examples we have just highlighted are perhaps some of the most compelling reasons why both our sectors need to collaborate.

Working together we can improve the appeal of our cultural and heritage tourist attractions; ensuring that they attract even more visitors and offer an even greater visitor experience.

One specific area we can collaborate on is ensuring that the narrative or story line told at our heritage sites is complete, consistent and truthful.

This may involve re-writing some of the stories told at these sites. Linked to this is the need to work together on the training of tour guides.

Another area we can work together on is on the maintenance of our cultural and heritage tourist attractions.

In this regard we wish to put forward the proposal that; a heritage levy, similar to the tourism levy, be considered on all the visitors to these sites.

Alternatively, part of the proceeds from the tourism levy, as it is currently structured, should be made available for the benefit of heritage and cultural institutions.

We look forward to engaging with all stakeholders on how best we can ensure sustained funding for the maintenance of our cultural and heritage visitor attractions, including through the use of a heritage levy.

Programme Director, one area where both our sectors are already collaborating is on the implementation of the Cultural Seasons.

We are working well together with SA Tourism on the current French, South Africa Seasons.

We are also taking the lessons we have learned from this Season to the upcoming cultural season with the United Kingdom, next year.

The UK Season draws significance in that it coincides with the twentieth anniversary of our liberation; a truly historic moment that we will share with the peoples of the world, many of whom supported our struggle for liberation.

Going forward we will also be engaged in Cultural Seasons with Angola, Nigeria, Russia and China. Even on these Seasons we will work with our partners within the tourism sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the film industry is a major part of the creative economy.

It contributes R 3.5 billion per annum to our national economy, employing about 25 000 people.

Working together we can improve on these figures.

This we can do by, for example, implementing joint programmes to position South Africa as a preferred destination for film making and production.

This includes joint marketing of our iconic sites, many of whom are part of our nation's heritage; such as Table mountain, Freedom Park, the Cradle of Humankind and Isimangaliso Wetlands as possible venues for film making.

Another area of possible collaboration is on our initiative in terms of the Mzansi Golden Economy to establish an Art Bank.

Through this initiative, we will procure local art works for display in all public buildings including in our embassies; thus exposing our artists to new markets.

We look up to Tourism SA, in particular, to help us expand the reach of this initiative, by also displaying these art works in their offices outside the country as a well in the exhibitions they conduct.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we can only be stronger if we work together. Let us therefore strengthen our collaboration.

Let us emerge from this Summit more determined to work together for the benefit not only of our individual sectors but also for the benefit of our country.

Let the engagement continue!

Thank you.