



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Speech by Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, at the filming of the stage play promoting heritage tourism

6 July 2015

The Guild Theatre, East London

After that performance, what can I say? Halala! Halala! What a wonderful way to give expression and celebrate the Freedom Charter whose anniversary we celebrate this year? What a wonderful way to celebrate and to round off Youth Month. What a wonderful way to celebrate the coming of age of our democracy

South Africa tourism has always been known for its “safari type” or “natural environment type” of tourism initiatives. But we have shown that we are much more than that. We have shown that the very diverse nature of our melting pot of cultures is the fabric that weaves our nation together. And what better medium to do it than this?

We have a strong and vibrant cultural diversity and this includes tangible and intangible culture and heritage tourism products in the form of the arts, crafts, festivals, indigenous knowledge systems, oral history, storytelling and folklore, heritage sites, natural heritage, to name but a few. And we need to share that with the world!

Tourists are now looking for more niche markets. Currently, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation estimates that about 40 percent of all global tourists are people in search of culture and heritage experiences. And it's a number that grows steadily all the time making it an extremely potent economic engine providing for a wide range of entrepreneurial opportunities for people in the arts and crafts industries; in the promotion (and protection) of the cultural landscape; in culture festivals and in heritage sites; in design and in a plethora of other leisure tourism experiences and pursuits.

During most of the 20th century culture and heritage resources and tourism were viewed as largely separate aspects of destinations. Heritage resources were seen as part of the physical fabric (authenticity) of destinations, largely underpinning local identities or national identity. Tourism on the other hand was viewed largely as a leisure-related activity separate from everyday life and the culture of the local communities. From the 1980's onwards culture and heritage tourism products became viewed as a major source of economic development for many destinations. Therefore, a key objective of the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) are to ensure that newly developed niche tourism products are developed in order to grow the tourism industry in support of its global competitiveness. Heritage and cultural tourism is one of the important niche tourism products that have been identified in support of tourism growth.

This event is part of a programme that was initiated by Aubrey Silinyana, an Mdantsane-based filmmaker, in June 2014. A partnership was initiated with Zanempucuko High School, situated in Ilitha Township near the small town of Berlin. The school has a total student enrolment of 857 pupils and serves Ilitha Township, Lingelitsha Township, Ndevana and the villages of Tshabo and Dongwe. The total number of pupils who participate in the programme is 78 learners, made up of 51 girls and 27 boys.

The aim of the programme is to produce a world class stage theatre DVD (6 July 2015) and feature film (10-19 December 2015) that will showcase the culture of the Xhosa as it was in the 17th century through drama, song and dance. During this process it is envisaged that the young participants will acquire skills in scriptwriting, acting, photography, cinematography, video and film editing, singing and

traditional dance choreography. Secondary gains include young people learning more about the Xhosa language, culture and customs. The programme has been well received by educators and parents and is credited with improving the academic performance and being effective at getting young people off the “streets” – and away from the lure of social ills.

This programme has so many vital spin – offs and addresses so many of our societal needs. Not only do we get to document and showcase our heritage, we engage our young people to be actively part of it. Not only to keep them busy but also to transfer skills and capacitate them for future opportunities.

South Africa has become a great magnet for film makers from around the world and this generates a significant percentage of revenue for the tourism industry. By capacitating our young people in this field, we expose them to these future possible opportunities.

Let us take a lesson from this experience here today. I want to tell you today – the sky is the absolute limit! Reach for the stars, chase your dreams. We live in a land of possibility! Celebrate and embrace your culture, your heritage and your South Africaness.

I thank you.