

DV8 launch - 11 April 2003

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this reception today. I would like to take the opportunity of welcoming the new Deputy Minister on board. As you step into the well-heeled and experienced shoes of former Deputy Minister, Brigitte Mabandla, we trust that you will pick up where she left off.

I am excited by the potential of a project like DV8. It supports the NFVF's philosophy of funding a slate of films within a project. This way, we can begin to achieve levels of sustainability for the industry. The DV8 project also substantiates our call for the industry to consider more joint partnerships or consortia. This sharing of resources will create an enabling environment under which we can all thrive and produce more.

A paradigm shift of this nature leads us to think as business people – yes artists – but artists in the business of making money. Therefore, we should abide by general business practices in the way we plan, execute and deliver our works. DV8 is a solid example of this mindset, which we hope will lead to substantial rewards for all involved.

DV8 is also an example of the triple P model, which the NFVF subscribes to. In securing private and public partnerships we are evolving a multi-faceted approach to creating an economically dynamic sector. I firmly believe that the development of film lies within many sectors.

The NFVF values its principles of supporting creativity, freedom of expression, entrepreneurship and spearheading equitable redress at all levels.

We have successfully emerged through our founding phase and are consolidating our projected establishment through a number of programmes. Currently, our strategic focus is rapid sector development and growth which will positively impact disadvantaged sections of the population, embrace and exploit technological developments in order for us to penetrate existing markets more deeply.

We strongly believe it is a national moral imperative to create platforms for ordinary South Africans to be able to bear influence in the expression of their own images. In this way, we, as an industry, can contribute to furthering our democratic ideals and creating prosperity.

The last year has seen much interest from international film industries wanting to create mutually beneficial platforms where we can exchange skills, experience, facilities and talent. A number of international cultural agreements are in the pipeline. Last year, we tied up a cultural agreement with a similar body in India. South African and Indian filmmakers are already beginning to benefit from that agreement.

We have also not long returned from Burkina Faso – the home of Africa's biggest film festival, FESPACO - where we held promising initial talks with the Minister of Culture regarding a cultural agreement.

Co-productions of the DV8 nature also give us as an industry, a stronger hand in negotiating co-production deals with international partners. Currently, South Africa sits on the low-volume, low-margin end of the production scale. This year alone signals a wind change from that perspective. There are a number of feature films set to be produced. Ntshavheni wa Luruli's *Wooden Camera* is about to finish shooting and Ramadan Suleman's *Zulu Love Letter* is about to go into production as we speak.

These and other independent productions and projects like DV8 are all positive steps moving towards achieving the higher end of the volume ratio and promises better margins in the medium to short term.

We encourage filmmakers to continue to work with cheaper formats like digital. This brings higher returns more quickly and is a cheaper model, which aids our competitive position. More current examples of films, which were shot on digital and received funding from the NFVF to be blown up to 35mm, are *PROMISED*

LAND and *GOD IS AFRICAN*. The NFVF also funded one of the development of one of the DV8 productions. At that time a short; it then attracted more finance from the EU-ACP fund.

We often receive criticism about our funding policies and choices from filmmakers. People are quick to compare South Africa to developed nations like Australia and Canada and expect that our industry will be turned around overnight. I urge you all to continue to be positive but patient. The seed money that Government has put up has grown. The regular budget of R20 m / annum was pumped up by an additional R35m for funding over the next three years. This only happened because collectively we are beginning to prove that we can manage the money allocated professionally and effectively.

As the NFVF, we will continue to engage government in enhancing legislation, which is conducive for filmmakers. Policies, which create an enabling and dynamic environment while guarding against abuse.

We are also currently engaging the Department of Trade and Industry to secure incentives that will benefit the sector.

Internally, we are strengthening our own systems of governance, structure and operations – I believe this is critical for effective service delivery.

In a nutshell, I'm saying we have not arrived yet. However, the energy is still encouraging, keep it positive and find innovative ways to work with what we have.

Getting to this stage of the DV8 project has been a long and arduous process but you will be aware that we are managing public funds and therefore have to be accountable and make sound business decisions.

IN this case, we truly believe we have. I congratulate the team behind DV8 and wish them all the best as they embark on an initiative that is a landmark evolution for the industry.

I thank you.