

Speech for North West Film Festival - 2006

Issued by: National Film and Video Foundation

Presented by: Ms. Jackie Motsepe, Head of Marketing and Public Affairs

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Honourable Chief, Kgosi Jeff Montshioa (Chief of the Barolong Tribe),
Mayor of Mafikeng, Ms Mosa Sejosingoe,
CEO of Mmabana Arts and Cultural Centre, Mr Piet Smit
Board Member of SEDA, Mr Tebogo Diutlwileng,
Representatives from Arts and Culture

Ladies and Gentlemen.

All protocol observed.

The National Film and Video Foundation is proud to be associated with North West Film Festival as a primary funder. In its four years of operation, the North West Film Festival has been able to reach multitudes of audiences in the province and I would like to applaud them for their efforts.

Before I go further to explain why it is important for us to continue to support a festival of this nature I would like to read you a quote from one of the most celebrated African novelist and filmmaker; he is widely known as the grandfather of African cinema, and probably one of the most respected griot in African culture, he goes by the name of Ousmane Sembene.

Sembene once said:

"I benefited from a synthesis of values - in the house, the compound, the country and Koranic and French schools. We conserved our own culture; we had nightly gatherings with tales. Now I call it my own theater."

I believe that Sembene's words typify an imagery of the cultural landscape that the North West province is laced with. This province over many years has embraced Arts and Culture in a significant way and partly, the end result of this

has been the type of protégés it has produced for our film and television industry.

This province has to continue to enjoy the cultural feats provided for by its own people. Like Sembene said “let there be nightly gatherings with tales and folklores ”... for these tales and folklores will ultimately become your cinema.

This, Ladies and Gentlemen is part of the reason why we are here tonight. We are gathered here tonight to witness the opening of a film festival which will amongst other things, celebrate talent that was unearthed in this province. For example, one of the films included in the line up- is the Oscar winning film, *Tsotsi*, and as you all know it features Presley Chweneyagae as the lead actor who was born and bred in this province.

As a statutory body mandated to develop the film and video industry in South Africa, we support the film festival due to the value it contributes to the appreciation of film and primarily local film. Over the past four years the festival has traveled in the province, showcasing South African film to audiences that do not have access to the luxury of cinemas.

Under difficult circumstances, the festival has been able to reach almost every corner of the province, providing film literacy skills to aspiring filmmakers in the province through workshops that are presented by South Africa’s well known filmmakers, producers and scriptwriters.

I believe that the festival’s affinity in creating access to film and filmmaking to previously disadvantaged communities is one aspect that closely matches the NFVF’s moral imperative, which is “to create facilities for ordinary South Africans to bear influence in the expression of their own images, thereby deepen democracy and create prosperity”.

I strongly believe that we can create prosperity in this province only if we synergise our individual efforts from various levels; from the NFVF, government, regions, municipalities and communities alike. At this juncture I would like to make an urgent call for all of us to come together to make film a living reality amongst our people as opposed to it being a luxury.

Let us come together to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated. I am referring to the time when our minds and settings were forcefully polarized in order to meet specific political agendas. Let us come together with a common agenda which I call "the promotion and development of film in the North West province".

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to thank the mastermind and vision behind this project, Mr. Omphemetse Disipi, whom over the years has shown tenacity, and dedication, in an effort to produce a festival of this kind. I would like to thank the North West Film Festival staff, and board members.

I would like to thank the co- sponsors, the Department of Arts and Culture in the North West Province, Independent Newspapers.

I thank you.