



## **Address by the SALGA President, Cllr Parks Tau, at the SA-EU Community Arts Dialogue, Benoni**

04 April 2018

Master of ceremonies,  
Minister of the Department of Arts & Culture, Mr Nathi Mthethwa,  
Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs, Mr Andries Nel,  
Ambassador of the European Union Delegation to South Africa, Dr Marcus Cornaro,  
Ambassador of Ireland to South Africa, H.E. Liam MacGabham,  
Managing Director of Sibikwa Arts Centre, Mr Smal Ndaba,  
Distinguished guests and friends,  
Ladies and gentlemen:

### **Introduction**

I am honoured to join you today at this South Africa (SA) and European Union (EU) Dialogue which, undoubtedly highlight a strategic partnership between our respective governments and people. Such a Dialogue is important – more so, between equal partners – to conceptualise, stimulate and implement shared projects in social and economic areas.

It is most appropriate that this Dialogue takes place at the Sibikwa Arts Centre which is, indeed, a “visionary arts centre that promotes quality arts education, vocational training and job creation”. I wish to congratulate this growing partnership between the local Departments of Arts and Culture and our Irish, Flemish and French friends who have supported the Shukuma Mzansi initiative.

What is more, I hope that through our robust engagements we can share best practice on institutional capacity building and sourcing funding for our innovative projects which, if harnessed appropriately, can renew and revitalise our townships and cities.

The organisers of this event, under the heading of Shukuma Mzansi II, requested me to share a few words with you on the relationship of local government and the role of arts and culture in generating social cohesion and job creation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

## **Mama Winnie Mandela's Passing**

Under the current circumstances, we cannot proceed without paying a respectful homage to, inarguably, a representative stalwart of the anti-apartheid movement and the continued struggle to build an inclusive democratic society.

Of course, I am referring to Mama Winnie Nomzamo Madikizela-Mandela who has sadly proceed to the hereafter to join other ranking stalwarts we have lost in 2018, namely, Bra Hugh Masekela, Councillor Connie Bapela and Prof Keorapetse Kgositsile.

As to be expected, already there has been an avalanche of tributes paid to this steadfast beacon of the liberation movement. As the state president Cyril Ramaphosa has said, in Mama Winnie's passing, without doubt a "gigantic tree has fallen".

In similar glowing terms, the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, António Guterres, was effusive in his admiration that in Mama Winnie, here "was a strong and fearless voice in the struggle for equal rights" and a "symbol of resistance".

As we prepare to lay her mortal soul to rest, let us pause to remember her constant counsel to the living that, political freedom will carry meaning for our people if it is translated into tangible material liberation.

I share her sentiments because it is incumbent upon all of us, in order to be truly emancipated, that we work resolutely for our people to realise the basic human rights such as decent employment and liveable housing.

The intentional or unintentional denial or absence of these basic human rights not only shames all of us but, indeed, stifles our collective ability to realise a socially cohesive country.

Distinguished guests,

## **Local Government and Creative Economies**

As a representative of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), I join my colleague in government, Deputy Minister Andries Nel, in underscoring the role of creative economies to implement the goals set out in the National Development Plan (NDP) through capacitation of developmental local government.

By a 'developmental local government' is meant government that, holistically, maximises social development and economic growth; a government that democratises development and is also a sphere that is leading and learning.

As you would know, the NDP 2030 Vision envisages, among others, prosperity and equity, an active citizenry, higher investment and greater labour absorption, encouraging strong leadership throughout society.

I draw a relation between local government and the creative economies since 'culture', by definition, is an expression of our relationship to ways of being and our

connection with our selves and the surrounding ecosystem. The denial of such platforms for self-expression, which are afforded by creative industries, certainly deprives us of the instruments to realise our individual and collective identities, histories and futures.

As we endeavour to build a better life for all South Africans, there is no doubt that the creative economies – working in tandem with local government – are the most effective vehicles to build a common vision, generating skills especially amongst the young who are most capable sector in our population to, for example, exploit the upstream and downstream opportunities afforded by the knowledge and digital economies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

### **Local Government and IUDF**

Developmental local government also talks about integration and coordination of functions. One of the major obstacles we have faced as government in general, revolves around transitioning from apartheid spatial patterns – which hinder inclusive growth and development – towards transformed democratic spatial patterns – which are geared to ensure safety, equity, inclusivity, and prosperity for all.

As SALGA, our role in this regard is to support and safeguard such initiatives by fully implementing the Back-to-Basics (B2B) programme which emphasises putting people first, delivering on basic quality services, ensuring good governance, ensuring sound financial management and building capable and resilient institutions.

In this regard, cities and towns comprise the nucleus to realising the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) which calls for cities to drive shared economic growth, job creation, and social cohesion which, in essence, talks to mutual solidarity that is premised on active citizen participation and contribution leading towards a common goal.

Master of ceremonies,

### **Conclusion**

Local government, as the sphere of government closest to the people and most accountable for effective service delivery, has an incalculable role to play in skills development, job creation, institutional capacity building and economic growth.

This SA-EU Dialogue serves as a seminal benchmark for all stakeholders, from diverse sectors, to engage and propose practical solutions by especially mobilising the creative economy to deal with job creation which, if not effectively addressed, threatens to undo the stellar work already done to improve the lives of all of our people.

Therefore, for social cohesion to take hold in our society, economic opportunities are necessary. Needless to say, the opposite also holds.

Community arts centres like Sibikwa Arts Centre, can serve as positive cauldrons to nurture and hopefully produce future generations of Bra Hugh and Prof Kgositsile.

I thank you.