

**REMARKS BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIROMENT  
AND TOURISM, MR NORMAN MOKOENA, MPL, DURING**

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**Tuesday, 14 June 2011**

Ladies and gentlemen, the Province of Mpumalanga views creative industries as a critical sector with the potential to create the much needed job opportunities. We have thus prioritised this sector – being the potential job driver – in the proposed New Growth Path for our province, to be known as the Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path.

Creative industries are one of the few sectors with a potential to create employment and business opportunities to rural communities, women, illiterate, poverty stricken communities, youth, indigent males and to the physically challenged.

Over the decades it was found that people increasingly travel to places that they have seen on television or movies. The film and televisions sector in the province has a diverse cultural and social heritage which is a tourism niche that is untapped. The sector, moreover, is able to preserve heritage and communicate ideas, transform information and ideologies.

The British Tourism Authority Report estimated that locations featured on successful films can expect an increase in tourist of at least 54% in the following four years. I am therefore confident that aside from the potential for film to enhance the tourism potential of the province, its rich natural resources will serve as an important magnet for film producers and thus boost the number of tourist visiting the province.

We therefore believe that our involvement in depicting and immortalising the life of our own son and comrade, **Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu**, through a film, will not only preserve our history of struggle, but will also contribute in promoting our Province, our culture and heritage, and more importantly, boost our creative industry by contributing towards the much needed job opportunities.

A Production the story of **Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu** is planned to be labour intensive. At least 500 youth will be directly employed and another 1500 indirectly employed as a result. This production will provide the Youth with job opportunities as freelancers, camera operators, sound and lighting technicians, caterers, plumbers, carpenters, stylists, make-up artist, graphic artists, photographers, painters, writers, actors and so on. The benefits and excitement of films such as this, are that its spending is not confined to a narrow economic band, but rather impacts across a range of sectors.

Production budgets are spent on a range of products from hardware to props, plants to steel, paint to timber, draperies to carpets, furniture to portable dressing rooms and to generators. It is therefore my humble belief that successful films can promote a film industry that is able to draw on natural resources geared to assist in building the entire value chain of the economy.

Although film and television in Mpumalanga is relatively small and underdeveloped, opportunities with makers of films, commercials and other productions are abound and are attracted by the province's natural beauty, developing infrastructure and availability of talent and skills.

It should be acknowledged that in the province majority of the service providers in the film and television industry are SMMEs, and operate under serious hurdles of access to public and private sector financial and non-financial support. It thus becomes clear that there is a need for government intervention through policy to encourage, support and create a conducive environment for SMME development and sustainability, particularly in the film and television industry.

This will make them to be more eligible in benefiting from the supply-side measures developed for manufacturing and export assistance. The cultural and creative industries need to be lifted out of its marginalised status in the economy. Internationally, it is precisely such industries that have grown the fastest in terms of employment creation and contribution to the GDP in the economies of North America, Canada and Europe. South Africa is yet to experience this growth for the film and television industry.

South Africa has a vibrant, growing film industry that is increasingly competitive internationally. Local and foreign film makers are taking advantage of the country's diverse, unique locations, low production costs as well as the favorable exchange rate, which make it up to 40% cheaper to make a movie here than in Europe or the US, and up to 20% cheaper than in Australia. The Creative South Africa Report states that "the South African entertainment industry is valued at approximately R7.4 billion and employs an estimated 20 525 people. Of this, the film and television is worth R5.8 billion and has proven to have a strong technical base of skills and infrastructure.

Ladies and gentlemen; Mpumalanga has a potential to become the next "Hollywood" of South Africa, given our scenic beauty, culture and heritage and its talent.

This is supported by films such as "***Jock of the Bushveld;***" "***Ghost in the Darkness;***" "***Catch a Fire;***" just to boast. The filming of these movies have placed our province on the world map, and could led to rising number of international tourists.