

**ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM,
MR VUSI MKHATSHWA, MPL, DURING THE OCCASION OF THE AMILE PRODUCTION
GALA DINNER, HELD AT McBEST GUEST HOUSE, ERMELO, MSUKALIGWA LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY**

Thursday, 23 September 2021

Programme Director;
Executive Mayor of Msukaligwa Local Municipality;
Chairperson of the MTPA Board;
CEO of the MTPA;
CEO of Amile Production and Advertising;
Government officials present;
Our esteemed guests;
Members of the media;
Ladies and gentlemen;

Good evening!

1. Let me outrightly state that, I am humbled and honoured to be addressing this important gathering, and I send my sincere and profound gratitude to the **Amile Productions and Advertising**, for inviting me.
2. This gala dinner is organised in September, ordinarily known as Tourism Month; the month we annually utilise to reflect and celebrate our rich historical heritage and cultural diversity, and this year, we celebrate tourism under the theme: ***“Tourism for Inclusive Growth”***.
3. Programme director, it is not my wish to use this opportunity to lament, since we launched our tourism month programme as a Province; we have already had an avalanche of speeches, deeply characterising the dynamics in the sector, and how it has been devastatingly affected by the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic. I will, thus, avoid the risk of repeating myself.
4. However, there are few salient points which I would like to underscore in this event; I should indicate that this event is amongst many things, a symbol of the good work done by our Provincial government, in the context of disrupting a tendency which has been continuing unabated in our midst; a tendency of having people coming to the Province to tell our stories through film without us.
5. Most importantly, *Amile Production and Advertising* is female-owned, and this, to many respects, gives a practical meaning to the theme which speaks about inclusive growth, owing to the fact that the film industry is to a larger extent, predominantly male-owned.

6. Programme director, we must report to this Gala dinner, that working together with our sister Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation, have made concerted efforts in ensuring that there is an establishment of a Film Agency in the Province, in order to be a watchdog and promoter of filming in our shores.
7. We are delighted to indicate that since the signing of core agreements governing the relations between our film agency and institutions of the Provincial government, MTPA included, have given young film makers in the Province an exposure and opportunity to showcase their talent. *Amile Production and Advertising* is the case in point; we are practical in our support; hence they have been fantastically profiling us as we drive our Tourism Month programme across the Province.
8. This we do, to give young people in the film production space, an opportunity to unleash and unlock their potential as entrepreneurs in their own right, and to create the much-needed jobs in the industry, so as to prevent the high volume of talent leaving our Province.
9. Programme director, I must also hasten to indicate that, the intention is also to encourage channel owners and renounced content creators, to come and support the development of the industry in the Province. We urge them to share their skills and assist the many small and emerging production houses and film makers in Province. We also urge them to come and shoot their productions in the Province, and to partner with our local talent.
10. We also celebrate those who have made their indelible mark in the National stage, while at the same time putting Mpumalanga on the map; we, thus, do not start from zero.
11. However, our story tellers and film makers are scattered throughout the country; and with this groundbreaking intervention, we want to ensure we keep them in the Province. Most importantly, we urge them to promote our Province as a tourist destination of choice, using their talent and popularity.
12. Programme director, we shall build on these already established and existing relations, to build a strong and robust film industry in Mpumalanga, through the signed Memoranda of Agreements (MOAs) between parties concerned.
13. As we build an eco-system in the industry, our collective view is that these agreements must derive utility value for local film makers and artists. The people of Mpumalanga must be the first priority, in the context of industry value chain, and we pin our hopes to the Film Agency, to ensure we realise this dream.
14. It is not our wish to be attached to the proverb: '***Until lions have their own story tellers, hunters will always be the hero in their story!***'

15. The Film Agency of Mpumalanga must tell our stories.

#ExploreMpumalanga

#VisitMpumalanga

#DiscoverMpumalanga

#Silindzile

#WeDoTourism!

I thank you!