

IFA LETHU FOUNDATION

Launch of the “Creative Hands” Entrepreneurial Incubator at the
Mofolo Art Centre in Orlando West, Soweto on 20 June 2011

Speech by Dr Anna Mokgokong

Distinguished Guests

On behalf of the Chairman Ms. Lindiwe Mabuza and Board of Trustees of IFA LETHU Foundation, I'd like very much to welcome everyone to the launch of the “Creative Hands” Entrepreneurial Incubator.

As I was travelling to Soweto this morning, I couldn't help but reminisce – as I was born in Pimville, even though I grew up in another area; Inkaba Yami Ilana Pimville! I couldn't help but think of many of our fallen heroes who came from Soweto the most recent being Mama Albertina Sisulu. A soul that worked tirelessly and intricately with the youth of Soweto.

Her dream was to see our youth liberated not only politically but educationally and economically. Her realms were to see you all empowered with knowledge and skills to uplift you. That was her dream and wish and that of all other fallen heroes, heroines and cadres. May their souls rest in peace for their efforts were not in vain. This initiative that we are launching today is indeed part of their mandate to us to continue with the struggle.

The “creative hands” incubator seeks to develop youth from Soweto into economically sustainable professionals in the Arts and Creativity fields. Most unemployed people in our country are those who dropped out even before completing matric. The plight of unemployed graduates who trudge the streets day to day seeking jobs is a nightmare.

Hence the role of business and entrepreneurship can play in the equation in the area of the transformation of the economic landscape to bridge the economic divide is immense. As part of their Corporate Social cause Business is an integral part of our communities.

Corporations such as Transnet have a phenomenal contribution to make hence this initiative of today that is being launched. Our youth shouldn't seek to be employed as there are not enough jobs to go around but rather to be value creators and employers through entrepreneurship.

Our President's state of the nation address succinctly articulates and addresses the plight of youth in our country in terms of unemployment. President Jacob Zuma, declared this year 2011 as a year of job creation. He also highlighted the challenges of our youth. Hence from the fiscal an additional amount of R9 billion over 3 years in manufacturing and 29 billion in incentives for businesses with a job creation potential and a significant sum of on youth development.

The existence of the National Youth Development Agency and the support of that of government is a clear indication of our government's resolve to address this matter.

What does all this jargon I have mentioned today mean to us?

Our great talented artists some of whom have left us, such as the likes Gerard Sekote etc. were poor and struggled day to day. However their work today has become highly acclaimed and acknowledged worldwide after their passing. We need to change this. They have proven to all and sundry that South Africans despite their legacy have world class talent and potential, what is lacking is nurturing, support, promotion, and marketing of our products world -wide. Our young talented artists should seek to achieve that.

We expect you to turn around this legacy. You should leverage your talent into real megabucks. That what entrepreneurship is all about, use it or lose it.

Our country has no room for armchair critics who sit all day analyzing what is not being done for them. Rather our country has plenty of room for go-getters. The marathon is on! There may well be a Comrades Marathon and yet economically I see another. It is called “the race for economic liberation of our people” We not only have the commercial banks, but also can tap into state enterprises such as SEDA, Microfinance Apex. Fund, IDC, Small Business Fund, Government and National Youth Development Agency. They are there to provide support and assistance. You must commercialize the talent that you have gained in this training, and nurture it. That’s what entrepreneurship is all about!!

We are grateful to Transet that have taken a stand and have made a bold move of supporting such initiatives.

In conclusion ladies and gentlemen, I believe it would be a wasted opportunity as a Business Leader if I do not impart some words of advice of what drives me as an Entrepreneur.

1. Values: - Be enterprising and innovative. Seek and smell out opportunities and be creative!
2. Diligence:- there is no short cut to be successful it goes with hard work and long hours
3. Be fearless of failure: - In business you sometimes have to take hard knocks and fall hard. Just get up, shake yourself and move on and remain focused on your goal
4. Integrity: This is a God given value. It will make sure you are in business forever. Develop a passion for your work and serving your customers.

Offer your customers quality products and a long term relationship, then do everything possible to build and maintain it.

5. Be creative! There are no glass ceilings in as far as this is concerned; the world is your oyster!

And finally,

- Every great success is an accumulation of thousands of ordinary efforts that no one sees or appreciates
- Success comes in cans, not cants.
- The price of success must be paid in full, in advance
- Success comes when you do what you love to do, and commit to being the best in your field.

Once more, may I take this opportunity to thank our distinguished guests and CEO of Transnet Mr. Brian Molefe for not only creating this forum but also for gracing the occasion. We thank you all for attending.

Thank you *(June 2011)*

Ifa Lethu Foundation opens arts incubator in Soweto

- Σ Three year creative entrepreneur development programme comes to fruition
- Σ Incubator to be used to create market-ready products for local and tourist trade
- Σ Soweto youth to benefit with sustainable income

The Ifa Lethu Foundation – South Africa’s leading heritage repatriation and creative development organization – will officially launch their “Creative Hands” arts incubator at a function on 20 June 2011 at the Mofolo Art Centre, 1209 Mzilikatse Street, Mofolo Village, Soweto.

This is the second arts incubator to be launched by Ifa Lethu, the first being opened in Mamelodi in May 2011. CEO, Dr Narissa Ramdhani, says the Incubator is the culmination of a three-year development programme for creative entrepreneurs. The Soweto project has been sponsored generously by Transnet, in partnership with the University of Pretoria - School of Entrepreneurship, to develop youth from Soweto into economically-sustainable professionals in the Arts and Creativity field.

Ramdhani continues: “We started our development work in Soweto three years ago and identified 12 talented young people who showed real promise in the creative sector.. We developed these talents by using some of our heritage artists to transfer their artistic skills to these youngsters in a series of workshops aimed at developing market and export ready products. The next phase was designed, together with the University of Pretoria, to teach the participants both entrepreneurial and business skills and how to make a sustainable living for themselves and their families from their artistic talents. The opening of the Art and Creativity Incubator will complete the project by giving these young people a place to work and to create market-ready products particularly for the tourist market. Ifa Lethu will also use this Phase to open markets for the products in South Africa and abroad. In this way the youth of Soweto will play a significant role in contributing to the economic development of their communities”

The Incubator facility will be officially opened by the Department of Public Enterprises, Deputy Minister, the Honorable Mr Benedict Martins and Transnet CEO, Mr. Brian Molefe.

“We are especially delighted to welcome Minister Martins to our opening,” says Ramdhani, “as he is one of our original ‘heritage’ artists and we have repatriated his work to South Africa. It now enjoys pride of place in our art collection.. He will relate closely to the struggles of young people to make their work heard and seen. And we’ll be able to personally thank Transnet for its continued support of the creative entrepreneurial development of youth.”

“Being situated on the Soweto tourist beat and not far from the Hector Petersen memorial, we envisage tourists also visiting the Incubator and engaging with the artists as they create their pieces and ultimately buy professional-standard creative products such as visual art, sculpture, craft and fashion-from these emerging artists. The students are already producing wonderful paintings, drawings, sculptures and other works – all way beyond what we consider to be ‘crafts’,” says Ramdhani, “and we hope this puts Soweto firmly on the map as a destination for both local and international art lovers. This project will also showcase the cultural strength that resides in South Africa and the economic power of our youth”

Ends

About Ifa Lethu Foundation: Empowering the Nation’s Soul

Ifa Lethu, a nonprofit Foundation based in Tshwane, South Africa is devoted to the development and economic growth of the creative sectors in the country.

Ifa Lethu today manages the largest heritage repatriation effort in South Africa with collections having been repatriated from countries such as the United States of America, Canada, France, Australia, Spain, Holland, the United Kingdom and Germany. Further collections have been identified across the globe and every endeavour is made by Ifa Lethu to facilitate their repatriation to their home country. The very first donations were received in 2004 from veteran Australian diplomats Bruce Haigh and Dianne Johnstone who had long sought to return their collections to their rightful home and to be shared by the people of South Africa.

Recent activities marked a rapid growth and an extension of our mandate, which has resulted in the Foundation focusing on the provision of skills for creative practitioners so they may become successful entrepreneurs. This extension has allowed the Foundation to align its work with the national priorities of poverty alleviation and community upliftment. Creative Entrepreneurship training initiatives are ongoing in the visual arts, fashion design and small business skills. In addition Ifa Lethu’s is committed to its education of the public and specific local and international communities through their extensive programme of exhibitions, workshops and conferences.

Ifa Lethu is headed by CEO Dr. Narissa Ramdhani and Chaired by Amb Dr. Lindiwe Mabuza.

Contacts: Bette Kun, Marcomms Consultant Cell: +27 (0) 82 576 9739 Tel: +27 (0) 11 646 0821 bettekun@gmail.com	Dr Narissa Ramdhani Chief Executive Officer Ifa Lethu Foundation Tel: +27 (0)12 346 2985 email: cshoeman@ifalethu.org.za www.iflethu.org.za
---	--