

SPEECH BY DR N.M. KGANYAGO

CULTURAL DINNER @ MOYO(A concept for creative industries and exports of performing arts) Hosted by the dti, 14 November 2008

Programme Director, Dr Friedrich von Kirchbach Director International Trade centre, Senior Government Officials, Representatives of Trade Promotion Organisations from different countries, Honoured Guests, I am honoured and privileged to have been invited to represent DM Thabethe of the dti to say a few words during this cultural dinner that is hosted for the participants of the Service Exporter Network.

I must reiterate the words of DM Rob Davies when he made his opening remarks on the first day of the event that South Africa is pleased and privileged to have been chosen as the venue for the first Services Exporter Network event to be held in the developing world.

Defining culture is no easy task because it means many different things to many people. There are easily as many definitions of 'culture' as there are cultures in the world!

Some anthropologists consider culture to be social behavior. To others, things such as artifacts, dance, music, theatre, and fashion constitute culture; and yet others believe that no object can be culture. Culture as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is, "the set of

distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group and that it encompasses in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.”

The common ground among anthropologists, social theorists and regular citizens is that culture is learned, shared, and integral to an individual or group's sense of identity. Cultural identity is the feeling of belonging to a certain group or society. Although a cultural group is united because members share the same norms, some argue that they only know what unites them after contact with other cultures, and that difference is what shapes identity. Simply put, you define what you are by what you are not.

Cultural diversity must be preserved and promoted, as the lack of knowledge, appreciation and understanding of other cultures often causes conflict and hate between people.

South Africa is blessed with a rich cultural tradition, with talented artistic individuals and communities living across the length and breadth of this country. In many parts of the country, communities have access to natural and material resources, human resources, cultural assets, indigenous knowledge, traditions and customs that can be the key agents for social and economic development. In this case, the designers have tapped deep into their creative talents and resources to design pieces that take inspiration from their roots. We need to invest in people. We need to invest in the things that are

important to people, things that make people grow in their chosen professions.

The arts play an important role in the life of communities. They are important for the expression of the life and culture of communities and the transmission of values and ideas from generation to generation. The arts are a major form of human communication and expression. Individuals and groups use the arts to explore, express and communicate ideas, feelings and experiences.

The South African Government has its Investing In Culture Programme. This is our poverty eradication programme aimed at creating employment. Through it we hope to integrate crafters into the “first economy” by making them agents of change, economic transformation and the creation of opportunity. This programme provides people with skills and has turned many into self-determining entrepreneurs who are now self employed.

Through UNESCO, South Africa is playing a significant role in shaping the international cultural landscape. This vindicates our strategy for international relations which seeks to place South Africa among the key players in global cultural affairs. South Africa has honed her skills on the issues of cultural diversity, intangible heritage and indigenous knowledge. Our international cooperation has also grown exponentially. Beginning April this year, we have put a number of South African acts on the stages of China. In marking ten years of bilateral relations we have mounted a major cultural expo in China

this year, including the performing arts, fashion design, film and crafts.

The Service Exporter Network event provides South Africa with the opportunity to showcase its services exports success. The event will also raise awareness of services exports and the opportunities available for South African companies.

It is anticipated that the event will go a long way in promoting South Africa's and Africa's export services potential within these countries that are participating here.

As part to encourage tourism, **the dti** decided to hold this **cultural evening** to showcase the African culture, in music, art, the cultural political history of South Africa.

Various innovative projects around the country offer insight into South Africa's cultural wealth, ranging from traditional dances, rituals in rural areas, excursion into urban and township that give SA its defining features.

Cultural tourism is one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the multibillion-Rand international tourism industry, and is an area which SA is well placed to compete. SA has many professionals and innovative museums, galleries and theatres that are key attractions for tourism.

South Africa's most historic challenges remain the establishment of harmony between the country's various communities on the basis of economic self-sufficiency.

It is encouraging to see the fruits of the vibrant partnership between thedti, the International Trade Centre, the city of Johannesburg that has culminated into this week's event.

Please enjoy the South African Culture

Thank You