

All protocol Observed

Good evening

After what Michael has laid out for us this evening I am sure I'm going to see all of you out at the festival over the coming days. It is my pleasure, as Chairman of Sithengi, to welcome all of you to the Cape Town World Cinema Festival. It has been our goal as a Board to provide the support that has been needed for Sithengi to grow into the institution it is today.

It was some time ago that the Board accepted that in order to remain relevant Sithengi had to serve its public as much as it was serving the industry because at the end of the day there would be no industry without an audience for our films and it is this that we decided to grow through the Cape Town World Cinema Festival. Sithengi acknowledges the leadership of the more established festivals Like FESPACO and Carthage. They held the torch of film making alive during our struggles against apartheid, but now that we are free to participate once again it is our desire to represent Southern Africa through this Festival and Market.

We were honoured to host this year the First African film Summit and are pleased that FEPACI have decided to hold their first meeting at Sithengi.

The Board has been hard at work to ensure that the stability of the institution is maintained and in this regard we are grateful to our funding partners the DOC, DAC, City and Province. We are especially indebted to the SABC who have shown genuine commitment to the growth of the local industry through their continued and increased investment in this years market.

During the past 2 years our Board has undergone some changes to ensure that the increasing funds we manage are managed by the stakeholders themselves so that the interests of those stakeholders is adequately represented. Through this mechanism we have ensured that Sithengi has been able to weather any challenges that have appeared and we stand today stronger than we have ever been and looking forward to a bright future.

During Sithengi this year we plan to meet with our members to get feedback on our ideas around a change of date for Sithengi. It has become apparent to us that since the 16 – 24 year age group are hard at work either studying for or writing exams the continued hosting of Sithengi in November is untenable if we wish to grow our audience numbers. In this regard we believe that a change of date is in order, possibly to March, where we can join up with other cultural events in the City Like the Cape Town Festival and the Cape Town International Jazz Festival.

It is our belief that our partners in government and increasingly in the private sector are confident in the Sithengi brand and we hope that our next edition will continue the tradition of being bigger and better.

We say goodbye to Michale at the end of his contract.

It is our intention as a Board to ensure that the right leadership is put in place at Sithengi to continue the work of the current Sithengi team and we welcome the ideas of the industry as to the future direction of the organisation.

I hope that you all have a wonderful festival

Thank you