

NM0/013/2009/17

CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE - THEATRE WORKING GROUP REPORT

1. Participants: 60 to 80

2. Organisations: PAWE, ACAC, SAWCU, UPTET, ANC DAC, PAC.

3. Summary of Discussion

Theatre practice and management in South Africa should invite the participation of the majority so as to maximise the creative potential of all our people. Theatre should have a community focus and existing structures must be democratised. Facilities and resources need to be redistributed.

4. Resolutions

We resolve that:

- i. A Commission for the Performing Arts be created comprising of representatives of both community and professional structures.
- ii. A Ministry of Arts and Culture be be instituted with responsibility for amongst other things facilitating the development and sustenance of the performing arts.
- iii. While supporting the aims and objectives of PAWE in principle, that PAWE should link with other organisations in all regions to create a truly national and representative national union.
- iv. Legislation should be promulgated to ensure that no theatres paid for or subsidised by tax payers money should be privatised.
- v. Legislation is drafted ensuring that only a specified percentage of funds allocated to performing arts structures can be spent for administration purposes so as to ensure that the majority of the funds is spent on creative production.
- vi. Legislation be drafted giving statutory protection to for theatre workers in compliance with universally accepted labour law and practices.

5. Recommendations

- i. That the state be given a responsibility for the funding and support of the arts as well as the responsibility to ensure that funds are equitably distributed via national, regional and local funding structures.

- ii. That these funds should be distributed in an equitable and non-partisan way.
- iii. That funding for the arts be increased and not decreased with increased funding being made available by cutting military expenditure, amongst other things.
- iv. That funding be directed to the following priority areas:
 - a. The development of human resources
 - b. Development of youth programmes
 - c. Development of infra-structure
 - d. Development and support of workers culture
- v. That publicly funded cultural bodies be exempt from taxation, including VAT on theatre tickets.
- vi. That the private sector be given incentives for the funding of the arts.
- vii. That community art centres be planned and developed, in consultation with local communities. The state should assist with the funding of these centres.
- viii. That the allocation of funds be done in a transparent manner.
- ix. That the arts should be funded at a local and municipal level as well.
- x. That larger established performing arts structures actively encourage and enable broader community access to these resources and that these established structures embark upon programmes to tour productions to the broader community with special emphasis on the rural areas.
- xi. That there be strategic planning and co-ordination between different performing arts structures so as to ensure the maximisation of scarce skills and resources and unnecessary duplication and wastage.
- xii. That the performing arts programmes be linked and integrated in the formal and informal education system and teacher training initiatives.
- xiii. That community based performing arts structures should be strengthened through the development of skills and infrastructure and training in arts management and fundraising.
- xiv. That access to existing schools, churches, etc in the communities be made available for the development of theatre.
- xv. That there should be an awareness generated with regard to an over dependence on funding from international donors.

- xvi. That international cultural exchange be promoted and encouraged with adequate protection with regard to past exploitative practices and with proper consultation with the relevant equity.
- xvii. That South Africa should rejoin international organisations and agencies eg., The International Theatre Institute, UNESCO etc, once the political situation allows.
- xviii. That the beneficial impact of tourism on the performing arts and visa versa be recognised and encouraged but that steps are taken to protect against the commercialisation and commodification that can result without proper protection, planning and regulation.
- xix. That municipal laws and regulations promote and protect the rights of artists in the informal sector eg, buskers and street performers.
- xx.. That the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Arts review the admission requirements into higher learning institutions so as to ensure access to deprived and marginalised communities. This should also apply to the accreditation and qualification of drama teachers.
- xxi. That the implementation of these recommendations and resolutions be implemented by the proposed Commission on the Performing Arts and supported by legislation where necessary.