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FESTAC 2010

(Senegal '66 Nigeria '77 South Africa 2010)

"3rd All Africa, Diaspora & World Festival of the Arts & Culture" Feb. 2007

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**CHAIRPERSON
PARLIAMENTARY PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON ARTS AND CULTURE
CAPE TOWN**

February 5, 2008

Dear Chairperson,

**PRESENTATION OF FESTAC 2010 PREPARATIONS TO THE
PARLIAMENTARY PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON ARTS AND CULTURE,
FEBRUARY 05, 2008 - SUMMARY DRAFT BRIEF ON THE PROBLEMS OF
FESTAC WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURE, 1998-2008**

In-spite of the support Festac received first in South Africa from the following:

government since 1998 (beginning with the then Director General, Dr Musa Xulu and the then Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Dr Ben Ngubane-refer to his letter of support), the Portfolio Committee on Arts and Culture-refer to letter of support from then Chairperson, Dr Wally Serote), the Office of the President (refer to letter from Mrs Zanele Mbeki), Western Cape and KZN provincial governments (refer to letters of support), University of South Africa (refer to letter of support) and indeed, many other role players including Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA), national House of Traditional Leaders, NAFCOC, National Arts Council, Industrial Development Corporation, Absa Bank, Eskom to mention a few;

Inspite of the support Festac received secondly from the international community including the following:

Organization of African Unity-African Union, UNESCO, World Bank and Africa and Diaspora governments, cultural organizations, institutions and individual eminent persons (refer to list of endorsement letters and documents);

The line function department of arts and culture has consistently, at best, deliberately frustrated all efforts at realizing the hosting of Festac in South Africa and at worst, deliberately undermined and sabotaged the initiative.

A litany of incidents to confirm this behaviour and action by the department includes:

1. After the Nigerian government in 1999 endorsed the hosting of Festac in South Africa in 2000 following both Minister Ben Ngubane and DG Musa Xulu's support and confirmation of funding for Festac and hosting of an announcement reception in Durban to be attended by both, Dr Ngubane, President Obasanjo of Nigeria and other South African and African and international dignitaries in Durban the same year, someone (or some people) in the department sabotaged the funding and announcement reception and it failed to materialise
2. In 2001, after successfully lobbying international support for Festac in other countries in Africa, the US, South America, Caribbean and UK (who pledged millions of pounds in funding support) and we went on to launch Festac in Johannesburg attended by Africa (Nigeria, Senegal etc), UK, US, Caribbean, Brazil delegates as well as hundreds of diplomats, business and civil society leaders and government led by the then Home Affairs Minister, Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi and Transport Minister, Dullah Omar, and followed by a meeting of the Festac International Organizing Committee members with Dr Ben Ngubane (accompanied by current DG, Themba Wakashe and current DDG Victor Julius), despite Dr Ben Ngubane apologizing for the unfulfilled undertaking to support Festac by department and instructing the two officials to work on details of the department's support within 7 days, to-date, that has not happened.
3. In the same year, following World Bank support for Festac translating amongst other, in the convening of World Bank sponsored international workshop on the preservation of African heritage sites which we facilitated and was hosted in Kimberly, as a resulting of the department undermining this event (even reaching and requiring intervention at cabinet level), a World Grant for cultural industry sector development in the Kimberly township of Galeshewe was cancelled.
4. In the same year as well, the department, having continued to try and hijack Festac, officials communicated to the World Bank, African Union and Nigerian government, amongst other, not to support the Festac we were organizing as they (the department) would organize and host festac. As well, many other role players both in the country and outside were told by the department not to support Festac.
5. In 2002, following the intervention of your Portfolio Committee and presidency, Dr Ben Ngubane was advised to deal with the matter of the actions of his department and facilitate submission of Festac to Cabinet for support. He then instructed that the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) house Festac and

create a (national) Task Team of relevant departments and role players to work with his department in preparation of such cabinet submission. These included amongst other, representatives from the presidency, foreign affairs, environmental affairs and tourism, home affairs, Unisa, National House of Traditional Leaders, NAFCOC etc. Housed at AISA, amongst the milestones achieved, we hosted the official AU delegation to the World Summit on Sustainable Development at a reception re-launch of Festac hosted by UNISA. With Cabinet submission drafted, the National Task Team requested a meeting to present the submission to the minister Dr Ngubane and this was blocked by the said officials from the department. Dr Ngubane confessed defeat to me in this matter.

6. In 2003, at the 32nd Session of the General Conference of UNESCO, inspite of UNESCO (from the international headquarters in Paris to the Africa Regional Directorate in Mozambique to the National Commission in South Africa, supporting Festac and including it (for support) in the agenda of the conference, the department (arts and culture) protested and had Festac removed from the agenda. Unesco requested a written submission why and event though the department said they would present in writing reasons why, to date, they never did.

7. In the same year, UNESCO and Presidency welcomed the hosting of Festac in 2004 as a lead international event to celebrate 10 Years of Democracy with the city of Cape Town as main host. Again, the department of arts and culture prevented this from happening.

8. In early 2005 we were back again presenting before the Portfolio Committee, and the committee resolved that new minister, Dr Pallo Jordan be invited to parliament the same week to answer to Festac (and we should stay on in Cape Town for this meeting). For some reason, there was never such follow-up joint meeting. We repeatedly tried to secure a meeting with the minister after that but to no avail.

9. In 2007, the Department of Arts and Culture, deliberately misled, reneged on agreements and undermined and hijacked one of the Festac associate initiatives, the Mendi 90 Anniversary Commemorations. This, even though Minister Pallo Jordan had personally called me and then instructed the department (led by now DG Themba Wakashe) to fulfill their role and commitment to us for Mendi commemorations.

10. In January 2008, I met with Minister Jordan's Spokesperson, Sandile Memela (former journalist who wrote the feature article on the launch of Festac in 2001 in City Press) who assured me and Festac of the ministers support and we have since requested a meeting with the minister in regards to FESTAC 2010 which he has accepted to honor and we are currently awaiting confirmation of a new date (after the one confirmed for February 12, 2008 was changed).

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We have also been trying ceaselessly to secure a follow-up meeting (to the last Mendi commemoration one around February) with the new DG, Mr Themba Wakashe on FESTAC 2010 since last year to-date and have consistently been told by his office TODATE that he is too busy to meet with us.

In conclusion, all we ask, just as at the last presentation before the portfolio committee in 2005, is that the bad experiences of Festac by the department of arts and culture, as well as the bad experiences of all others (i.e. government departments, civil society, foreign countries, international organizations and institutions etc) by the same department, warrant a full investigation and enquiry and solutions found to remedy the situation in the interest of both transparency, accountability, delivery as well as restoring the image of our country in Africa and internationally ensuring meaningful and productive cooperation and partnership between our country and the international community in the field of the arts and culture, ensuring the opening of the door in particular, for the commensurate flow of multilateral local and international development and investment resources into our cultural industries sector for the production of quality products for the local and export market, reducing poverty and creating jobs and wealth for our people, an one end objective of Festac 2010.

Sincerely,

MK MALEFANE

CHAIRPERSON: FESTAC INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE