

IFA LETHU FOUNDATION

Speech delivered by Lollo Mofolo on behalf of the CEO Dr Narissa Ramdhani

**Completion of Phase II of the “Creative Hands” Entrepreneurial Project
Ngove
24 February 2014.**

“The Honorable Mayor, our project beneficiaries and their families, other Distinguished Guests; all protocol observed.

On behalf of our Board of Trustees of the IFA LETHU Foundation, I'd like very much like to welcome everyone here to this event which marks the conclusion of Phase II of our “Creative Hands” Entrepreneurial Project here in Ngove.

Before I proceed, allow me to say how pleased we are to be back in Ngove with all of you as well as with our beneficiaries. But let me take this opportunity to first tell those of you who are not familiar with the work of our Foundation, about our work. Ifa Lethu, is a Pretoria based not-for-profit organisation which was formed in November 2005, by the then Minister of Arts and Culture, Dr. Pallo Z Jordan, to deal with challenges in the cultural heritage sector. Since then, the Foundation has leveraged cultural heritage for economic ends by engaging in the development and economic growth of the creative sectors in the country, especially of youth in the rural nodes of South Africa. This allows Ifa Lethu to align its work to the Millennium Goals and to the National Growth Plan. Through its work over the last three years, the Foundation has successfully trained and assisted 2300 young practitioners throughout South Africa, in the areas of visual arts, craft, sculpture and fashion, resulting in successful businesses and trade being developed and employment being created in the rural areas of the country.

Since founded, the Ifa Lethu Foundation today manages South Africa's largest creative entrepreneurial development efforts and stands for quality leadership

among our youth. Being a national organisation, it has left its footprint in areas such as Msinga, Ntunzini and Mandeni in KwaZulu-Natal, Mamelodi and KwaNdebele and Soweto in Gauteng, Ngove and Elim in Limpopo and Mabopane in the Northwest - to name a few.

But as I stand here today, I cannot but think of our heroes and heroines of the struggle who worked tirelessly for and with our youth, so they could leave a lasting legacy for our country. These are people who had dreams for our youth, and dreams for this country. Their goal was to see our youth liberated not only politically but educationally and economically, and empowered with all the knowledge and skills to uplift you. This initiative that we are launching today is indeed part of their mandate to us to continue with the struggle for youth of South Africa. The “Creative Hands” incubator seeks to develop youth and the community of Ngove into economically sustainable professionals in the Arts and Creativity fields. Most unemployed people in our country are those who were unable to complete matric. In addition, the plight of unemployed university graduates who walk the streets each day seeking jobs is a nightmare.

Therefore, the role of the Diplomatic sector can play in the equation in the area of the transformation of the economic landscape to bridge the economic divide is immense. Hence foreign missions such as the Australian High Commission in South Africa, through its Aid arm, AUSTRALIAN AID (AUSAID), have a phenomenal contribution to make, hence this 2nd Phase of this project that is being concluded today. With not enough jobs to go around our youth should turn their minds from seeking scarce employment. but rather to be value creators and employers themselves through entrepreneurship.

Our ongoing partnership with AUSAID has enabled Ifa Lethu to continue with its successful mobile youth entrepreneurial development programmes in the Limpopo Province. Funding from this organisation in 2011 has enabled the capacitation of 20 young unemployed beneficiaries and 100 indirect beneficiaries

from the Ngove village who were part of the skills transfer and recycled glass bead project. These young people and their communities were taught to become economically sustainable and to provide employment to other youth in the village. The sample range of jewellery products created was included in Ifa Lethu's Business Incubator and Distribution Phases, which in turn, generated orders nationally and internationally. The turnover time from training to successful trade was a mere seven months.

AUSAID's commitment to economic empowerment of youth in Limpopo was demonstrated in a further partnership with Ifa Lethu to focus addressing the gaps inherited from the previous training programme. This was done in consultation with these very trainees who are with us today. Therefore Phase II was devoted to focusing on market access, the opening of primary cooperatives to ensure compliance, and the creation of partnerships with local stakeholders such as Giyani tourism, the LEDs and other related structures. We hope that by addressing the gaps, we have succeeded in paving the way for our trainees to access markets and to exploit the mechanisms we have put in place for them.

As with all Ifa Lethu projects, we do not plan to abandon our trainees after today. We will continue to monitor and evaluate them with a view to ensuring that sustainable businesses develop in this province.

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 after their passing their work today has become highly acclaimed and acknowledged worldwide. We need to change this. They have proven to all 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 creative practitioners should seek to achieve that. We expect you to turn this

legacy around. This makes me recall the words of one of South Africa's most successful businesswomen, who is also the chairperson of our Board, Dr. Anna Mokgokong whose words to our struggling youth are as follows: *"You should leverage your talent into real megabucks. That's what entrepreneurship is all about - use it or lose it"*.

We are so very grateful to AUSAID to have taken a stand and made a bold move of supporting such innovative initiatives for our youth.

Once more, may I take this opportunity to thank our distinguished guests and all of you for attending.

