



MICT

Ministry of Information and
Communication Technology

SPEECH BY HON. EMMA THEOFELUS ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE TALA NAMIBIA ONLINE FILM FESTIVAL

11 MAY 2021

NATIONAL THEATRE OF NAMIBIA

Directors of Ceremonies,

Executive Secretary of the Namibian Film Commission: Ms. Florence Haifene,

Chairperson of the Filmmakers Association of Namibia: Ms. Caillin Basson,

Chairperson of the National Arts Council of Namibia: Mr. Patrick Sam,

Curation Manager of TALA: Ms. Marinda Stein,

Product Manager for Telecom Namibia: Mr. Samora Ndakukamo,

Managing Director for TALA Online Streaming CC: Ms. Sophie Haikali

Distinguished invited guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Members of the Media

Today we are gathered to witness a historic moment, a breakthrough for the Namibian film industry. We are here to witness the future of film elevated to new heights and I am very excited for this momentous milestone that Namibia has reached.

I am firm believer that we can be tremendously impactful in all our endeavors if we collaborate. Now, TALA Online Streaming in partnership with the Namibia Film Commission and other stakeholders are presenting the first Namibian online & mobile-based festival which will run until 19 May 2021. This initiative celebrates 31 years of Namibia's independence through films and content created over the past three decades. Therefore, showcasing Namibian diverse cultures, beauty, creative talents and our enduring spirit of resilience.

The TALA Namibia Online Film Festival comes at an opportune time when creative practitioners have struggled to exhibit and distribute their works due to the

ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Opportunely this reminds us that the 4th Industrial Revolution is upon us, that information and communication technologies are progressively changing the way we do things and it is up to us to step up to the challenge and it is imperative that all industries adopt innovative ways to keep up with these ever changing times. The government of the Republic of Namibia has demonstrated its commitment to embrace the 4IR by adoption and development of progressive policies such as e-government headed by the Office of the Prime Minister and legislation including the Data Protection Bill, Cybersecurity Bill, Electronic Transactions Act with all three being championed by the Ministry I deputise as Minister, the MICT. I am also happy to indicate that the highest office in the land, the Presidency is in the process of putting together a 4IR taskforce as announced by His. Excellency the President, Dr. Hage G. Geingob during his recent State of the Nation Address. Which can come off as a film by itself if you watched the proceedings. Depending how you looked at it. 😊

As you may know, the National Theatre of Namibia which hosting us this morning has moved online swiftly and has discussions, plays and other activities online. This is a true demonstration of the potential for online / hybrid operations. Speaking of hybrid operation, our Ministry recently concluded a global conference here in the capital which could have been the first since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and I cannot tell you how many good lessons we have learned.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have been reassured that the TALA Namibia festival presents a unique opportunity to multiply audiences and to give plays which have been recorded an opportunity to be appreciated.

In light of the development and exposure of our talented industry to foreign countries, I am happy to learn that Tala Online Streaming has secured a commitment from the technical partner, Nuella TV, to consider the films entered for global distribution on their Nuella TV platform as an added benefit for participants.

This festival showcase will undoubtedly create a necessary boost in additional marketing for Namibia as well as Namibian creative talent. In the Namibian context, through its long-term vision of becoming a monetizing streaming platform, TALA Online Streaming will certainly assist in offering solutions to existing challenges or creating opportunities in the following:

1. Digital Transformation
2. Monetising of locally created film/ creative audio-visual works
3. Creating an “Appreciation for Film” culture through audience development.
4. Embrace and celebrate what is Namibian – in all its forms.
5. An effective future-facing solution that can move with the times.

All very bold but doable solutions.

Finally I acknowledge all the partners that have come on board to make this festival a reality and believe that there is hope for the film industry in Namibia, we of course have a lot of work to do, but let me assure you that there is political will to do the work. Let us continue to collaborate and create lasting partnerships in order to realize prosperity in Namibian Film.

It is therefore my pleasure to declare the TALA Namibia Online Film Festival - 12 to 19 May 2021 officially launched.

I thank you.