



Annual African Renaissance Festival Report

The 19th edition of the annual African Renaissance Festival was hosted at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (Durban ICC) from the 25 to 27 May 2017.

The Festival included a two day conference, which was held on Thursday 25 and Friday 26 May with the theme of “Innovation and Transformation for Inspired Entrepreneurship”. A fundraising banquet was held on 26 May 2017 at 19h00 at the Durban ICC, where the guest of honour was Mr Sim Tshabalala, CEO of Standard Bank. Entertainment was provided by Lira who was also one of the motivational speakers for day two of the conference. The African Renaissance Concert, a highlight event of the festival programme, was held on the 27 May and this year showcased three superb artists – AKA, Naima Kay and Nasty C. East Coast Radio DJ Phat Joe was the host for the evening’s entertainment.

The African Renaissance Festival is held in May each year as part of the Africa Day celebrations, which are held on 25 May. Africa Day marks the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963; subsequent to that, the African Union (AU) was launched in Durban in 2002. In so doing we not only celebrate an African Renaissance but also a KwaZulu-Natal Renaissance. It is a day of reflection and reaffirmation of our commitment to fight all forms of exploitation meted on the African continent.

The Festival programme is closely aligned with the need to promote an entrepreneurial culture in KwaZulu-Natal. Government has identified that poverty; inequality and unemployment are the main challenges that face youth in our society today. In order for radical economic transformation to occur it is necessary to provide holistic and innovative interventions to counter these socio-economic problems.

In addition, in order to facilitate entrepreneurship, ease of access to education to acquire skills and knowledge must be provided. The Festival programme will also promote and maximise the opportunities for our youth that are available through obtaining college and university bursaries to international institutions. The

opportunity to study internationally is an excellent experience that provides not only the possibility of acquiring new knowledge and skills but promotes personal growth. Another SDG target is that: By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island, developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.

Prof Sihawukele Ngubane, Chairperson of the African Renaissance Festival said, “Development of the youth as entrepreneurs plays an important part in Africa’s future. The conference aims to give the delegates examples of business success to aspire to, as well as the resources to achieve similar success. Representatives of educational institutions, parents and youth were encouraged to participate in this unique event in order to access the information presented by the conference speakers and networking.”

Plenary session: Pan-Africanism

All speakers in the plenary session made mention of the founding sentiments of the African Renaissance Festival including that of pan-Africanism — the development of a strong and unified Africa.

KZN Premier Mchunu, on behalf of the provincial government spoke of ongoing support for the African Renaissance Festival in respect of these sentiments. He said, “As the provincial government we have always supported the African Renaissance Festival because it is about reawakening the spirit of brotherhood and strengthening the solidarity amongst African people and to remind us that our fate is bound together.”

He said that the African Renaissance Festival should be seen in the same light as WEF Africa and the Tourism Indaba in terms of being used as “instruments to unite brothers and sisters in the continent and the Diaspora”.

Premier Mchunu added, “Our view as government is that the upliftment of the continent and African people in general lies in their solidarity and in the numbers that they constitute. Stronger lines of communication must be maintained with Africans in the Diaspora as we continue to be inspired by our common history and heritage.”

“It is an opportunity to look at the strengths that we must utilize to advance ourselves and the weaknesses that we must correct to advance the African child. It is important to remind one another that our struggle is not over”.

The spirit of Africa Day was captured by the key note speaker – Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, who quoted a number of African leaders and poets to illustrate his message.

He said, “We are Africans – Kwame Nkrumah told us – not because we were born in Africa, but because Africa was born in us.” Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah was a passionate advocate of pan-Africanism.

Deputy President Ramaphosa added that this sense of liberation and resurrection was most vividly captured in the poem ‘Ghana Calls’ by the father of Pan-Africanism, Dr W.E.B. Du Bois.

He said that the renaissance envisioned by Dr Pixley ka Seme in his seminal work, ‘The Regeneration of Africa’ is “one that affirms the bonds of solidarity and humanity of all Africans”.

Of note, Deputy President Ramaphosa said, “This gathering should be about affirming our individual and collective self-worth as a people. It should be about raising our consciousness to the endless possibility that the idea and experience of being African carries. It should be about us taking advantage of the vast, golden opportunities available in the programme of rebuilding Africa.”

Deputy President Ramaphosa also quoted Robert Sobukwe, an academic, lawyer, founder of the Pan-Africanist Congress, one of the South Africa’s greatest heroes of the struggle for freedom, human rights and non-racialism. He concluded with the words of Robert Sobukwe: “Let me plead with you, lovers of my Africa, to carry with you into the world the vision of a new Africa, an Africa reborn, an Africa rejuvenated, an Africa re-created, young Africa. We are the first glimmers of a new dawn.”

Mr Sbu Ndebele

The 2017 Festival was honoured by the presence of Mr Sbu Ndebele. One of the founders of the African Renaissance in KwaZulu-Natal. Mr Willies Mchunu, Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, on behalf of the provincial government, gave tribute to Mr Sbu Ndebele for initiating the African Renaissance Festival nineteen years ago. He said, “We want to acknowledge his sterling work over the years.”

Mr Sbu Ndebele was welcomed to the podium to officially thank Deputy President Ramaphosa for attending the Festival. In his address, Mr Sbu Ndebele reflected on the African Renaissance quoting the poem *Africa* by David Diop, a French West African Poet:

Africa my Africa
Africa of proud warriors in ancestral savannahs
Africa of whom my grandmother sings
On the banks of the distant river
I have never known you
But your blood flows in my veins
Your beautiful black blood that irrigates the fields
The blood of your sweat
The sweat of your work
The work of your slavery
Africa, tell me Africa
Is this your back that is unbent
This back that never breaks under the weight of humiliation
This back trembling with red scars
And saying no to the whip under the midday sun
But a grave voice answers me
Impetuous child that tree, young and strong
That tree over there
Splendidly alone amidst white and faded flowers
That is your Africa springing up anew
springing up patiently, obstinately
Whose fruit bit by bit acquires
The bitter taste of liberty.

Regional Economic Integration

The importance of inter-African trade and development was also emphasized by Deputy President Rampahosa, who said, "The future of enterprise development in South Africa is intertwined with the future and unity of Africa as well as with continental efforts to promote inter-African trade and development. He said, "The unity of the African continent and its prosperity must be the vision that inspires all of us."

In the second session of the day, the call for African integration was continued by KZN MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Mr Sihle Zikalala who said,

“The quest for regional economic integration is one we must pursue with vigour and the urgency that it deserves. Indeed all of us as Africans must be concerned about the low levels of intra-Africa trade. For example, Europe’s trade figures for 2014 show that intra-regional trade in that continent stood at 69%. In Asia, that figure stood at 52% and in North America at 50% while Africa had the lowest level of intra-regional trade, at just 18%.

Apart from the fact that well managed integration would, among other things, lead to accelerated growth and development as transaction costs become lower, we also do believe that regional integration could help to prevent and resolve bloody conflicts by strengthening economic ties among countries.”

Festival Themes

Since the beginning of the Festival, various themes have been adopted for the programme. These themes have moved from a focus on African identity, culture and heritage, to a focus on connecting with the African Diaspora and supporting the efforts to promote peace, democracy, intellectuality, growth, development and prosperity throughout the continent. Then, more recently the proceedings have examined connectivity in Africa through air, land, sea and rail routes as well as information technology.

The Festival themes over the years were as follows:

- 1999 Beyond conflict
- 2000 Beyond conflict in the new millennium
- 2001 Be the best we can be
- 2002 iBuya: Our time has come (turning to each other and not on each other)
- 2003 NEPAD: Quest for an African Renaissance
- 2004 Peace and democracy
- 2005 iBuyile iAfrika: Reflecting on human rights triumphs
- 2006 African Renaissance and African intellectuality
- 2007 Unpacking the African century
- 2008 Uniting the African diaspora
- 2009 Uniting the African world
- 2010 Take charge Africa – the future is in your hands
- 2011 to 2013 Connecting Africa
- 2014 Africa in motion

For the three-year period from 2015 to 2017, the overall chosen theme has been ‘Entrepreneurs of Africa’. The conference programme for 2017 focused on ‘Innovation and Transformation for Inspired

Entrepreneurship'. This context is closely aligned with the need to promote an entrepreneurial culture in South Africa. Government, at all levels, has identified that poverty; inequality and unemployment are the main challenges that face youth in our society today. Currently, the expanded rate unemployment stands at 40 %, which is the highest in South Africa's history. Consequently, various holistic and innovative, national, provincial and municipal strategies have been developed to counter these issues. In particular the call for radical economic transformation forms the basis for many of the programmes currently being implemented.

There is a need for entrepreneurs to establish more successful small and medium business as they are the largest contributors to new employment opportunities. It is also important for our talented youth to be encouraged and supported to enable them to be innovators in creating and using new technologies, products and processes for the benefit of all our communities. This in line with one of the targets of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

In reference to the festival theme of "Innovation and Transformation for Inspired Entrepreneurship", Deputy President Ramaphosa commented, "This conference is essentially about the role of enterprise in bringing a better life to all our people." We therefore applaud the organisers of the African Renaissance Conference who have been seized with the role of the African entrepreneurial ecosystem in the restoration of Africa's self-worth."

Deputy President Ramaphosa also stressed that people needed to take control of their own development. This call in line with Agenda 2063, which is a call to action to all Africans and people of African descent to take personal responsibility for the destiny of the continent.

Premier Mchunu made mention of the variety of programmes and strategies that the provincial government of KwaZulu-Natal has in place to uplift the economic well-being of young people. He said, "In order to create more youth entrepreneurs in the province we are exploring more interventions as government such as a dedicated fund for the promotion of youth enterprise development. It is critical that the talent and potential of our youth is fully developed and harnessed so that we can guarantee the continuous socio economic development of KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa."

MEC Zikalala commented, “We are pleased that this year’s Conference pays a particular focus on entrepreneurship development as a means to ensure that more and more of our people participate and drive the economic trajectory of our continent. Also, we commend the Conference organisers for further highlighting the need for the pursuit of innovation as a springboard for accelerated growth.”

The consequences of not dealing with the various problems facing the youth of South Africa were the same as those mentioned by former Nigerian head of state, General Olusegun Obasanjo. “My greatest fear is youth unemployment; their frustration will lead to anger. It will know no political boundary, no regional boundary, no regional boundary, no religious boundary, it will be an explosion.” said Obasanjo.

MEC Zikalala commented on a number of interventions that were underway in the province to address the various challenges facing the province. These include:

- Black industrialists programme
- Partnerships for Entrepreneurship and Skills development
- Gijima KZN Local Competitiveness Fund
- Partnerships for Export Promotion

The youth empowerment plan which is complementary to the Provincial Enterprise Development Strategy that besides skills training, also stresses the importance of the:

- Creation of access to local and international markets
- Provision of infrastructural and technological support for competitiveness
- Facilitation of access to finance
- Championing a mentoring and incubation programme for emerging enterprises

An Entrepreneurial Mindset

Conversations around developing an entrepreneurial mindset were an important aspect of the African Renaissance Conference 2017 presentations. A number of speakers presented on their own journeys to success and of the various challenges that they have overcome in order to both inspire and to motivate the audience to assess the opportunities that they have in life more clearly.

Ms Gugu Mjadu – Executive GM Marketing, Business Partners said that one of the most burning challenges facing countries in the world today is one of youth unemployment. With nearly 200 million Africans are aged between 15 and 24, the continent is expected to have the largest young workforce by 2040 surpassing both China and India. However the formal sector employment is unable to support these numbers. What is Africa

to do? Beyond the statistics, the reality is that Africa has to deal with this challenge, the continent has to deal with poverty and its underlying causes.

She said, “We should look at including investing more funds to finance their entrepreneurial endeavours. I would also like to highlight how through celebrating and honouring existing entrepreneurs, we can contribute towards stimulating entrepreneurship in the continent.”

This session provoked much interest from the delegates. The message of the importance of working on one’s own personal growth was reinforced by Rapelang Rabana, Rekindle Learning, in responding to a question from one of the delegates who asked the panel how to deal with peer pressure and another regarding the issues of social media and alcohol as distractions .

Hlubi Mboya Arnold host of Future CEOs on CliffCentral captured this insight in her advice to delegates to reflect on “What is your unique selling point? What sets you apart from other people?” Of note she said that much of our ability to grow must come from within ourselves. Too often people expect solutions to our problems to come from outside us rather than using our own abilities and resources.

An example of a South African innovation was presented by Ntuthuko Shezi of Livestock Wealth who has used the concept of crowd funding to allow people to buy cows as an investment fund. Shezi says, “Everyone is able to own cows on free-range beef farms and earn income from the sale of grass-fed beef.”

Mr Naipaul Khamal – CEO: Adlife Holdings presented on innovation and entrepreneurship citing his own developments as examples that could make a difference for lessening water wastage when changing elements in geysers.

Mr Siboniso Mhlongo – Executive Director: Iqhina Consulting Engineers & Project Managers spoke of his professional journey and the successes that he now has achieved through his motivation and determination to succeed which serve as an impressive example for many of the delegates attending the conference.

Mr Lunga Ntuli – Alebag Sports & Skills Development gave an account of his journey to success as well as the challenges that he had faced. His final words were, “It is important that you put yourself first, that you do things not too please other people or other people’s expectations of you.

I want to close by saying, you were never born to be the next somebody, you were born to be you – the first and only. Look up to them but don't strive to look like them. You are unique so go out there and show the world what you have and never be satisfied by being compared to others. Make your mark, make your trend, and make your own history.'

Lerato Molapo, known professionally as Lira spoke of the business side of her singing career. She emphasized that building Brand Lira and being a business owner takes hard work and sacrifice. Building her business has required that she has had to change her self-concept. Lira says, "I had to change how I perceived myself as an African child and a big part of that is self-acceptance."

"Where we come from really does not determine where we end up, we have the power to write new stories. Not everyone can be employed. You as young people have to be investors, innovators and changemakers." She added that question people need to ask is, "How can we make Africa better?" Entrepreneurship starts with finding solutions to challenges and problems facing South Africa.

"Write a new story – it starts with you," concluded Lira.

Education and Skills Training

This year, the South African government allocated around R37 billion for tertiary education to ensure that young people receive essential skills to be actively involved in the country's economy (MEC Sihle Zikalala)

In his presentation, Dr Thabo Mashongoane – Department of Higher Education and Training, National Skills Authority, Developing relevant skills to meet market demand, said, "The 2017 State of the Nation Address indicated that growing the South African economy remains our immediate challenge."

Dr Mashongoane reported that, "The gap between the labour market and the current post school system continues to be one of the sources of unemployment, and this needs to be addressed. The skills planning system of the country needs to be intensified to be able to recognize the skills demand and supply gaps that exist.

As a country and as a continent we need to find the missing piece of a puzzle in order to understand and to answer the difficult questions. Research has revealed that skills are a critical asset for individuals, businesses and societies. The importance of skills is even more prominent in a dynamic, globalized world.

Of note he said that our skills development system requires an urgent collaboration of industry and government in the main and broad skills development stakeholders in general.

In addition, in order to facilitate entrepreneurship, not only is education to acquire skills and knowledge required but the promotion of a culture of entrepreneurship through education at our tertiary colleges and universities is necessary. Speakers on day two include Professor Thandwa Mthembu – Vice Chancellor: Durban University of Technology, Professor Irrshad Kaseeram - Dep Dean: Res & Internationalisation, University of Zululand, and Dr Johan van Koller – Institutional Planning & Research, Mangosuthu University of Technology.

Professor Thandwa Mthembu felt that his presentation was not sufficiently targeted at the audience present.

International Scholarship and Exchange programme

Mr Mbongeni Mathe – Youth Chief Directorate, Office of the Premier, KZN presented on the KZN Youth International Scholarship and Exchange Programme as well as the website platform www.kznyis.gov.za. The programme promotes the opportunities for our youth that are available through obtaining college and university bursaries to international institutions. The opportunity to study internationally is a brilliant experience that provides not only the possibility of acquiring new knowledge and skills but promotes personal growth.

This session provoked great interest by all delegates and the table manned by Office of Premier youth directorate staff was much visited by out of school youth pupils, teachers and school principals who would like to further explore opportunities available to pupils.

The availability of international study opportunities was further explored in the final session of the Conference.

Mr Mthandeni Dlungwane – MEC for Education, KZN, was unable to attend due to illness. A representative of the department spoke in his place (presentation copy pending)

Dr Shashank Vikram – Consulate General of India, Ms Susan Knowles – Education Advisor, US Consulate General, Mr Marcus Cornaro – European Union Ambassador to South Africa and Mr Andrzej Kanthak – Polish Ambassador to South Africa provided information on the various opportunities available to study internationally.

Mr Marcus Cornaro suggested that all diplomatic missions should be invited to exhibit the opportunities that can be provided to students by their countries at some stage.

The importance of making study opportunities available to students was stressed as these allow our young people to participate on a global stage and gain new skills and knowledge, which not only benefit themselves but also potentially South Africa in the future. The question of allowing our talented young people to leave South Africa was raised. However it was stressed that the opportunity for development should not be overlooked and that these opportunities were limited. The future benefits could not be dismissed.

iBuya

All information provided by the speakers on international bursaries is available in iBuya , the tabloid publication produced as part of the Festival which is available electronically on the www.africanrenaissance.net and on the www.kznyis website.

iBuya also features a number of the bursaries available from other countries, however these are not exhaustive of all opportunities.

Copies of the printed tabloid will continue to be distributed after the festival as required to schools and at career exhibitions.

The African Renaissance Banquet

The African Renaissance Banquet, a highlight event of the annual African Renaissance Festival was hosted at the Durban ICC on Friday 26 May with much success.

The banquet provides an opportunity to celebrate Africa month as well as the traditions and culture of our continent, which was well evident in the glamorous attire of the guests. The event was attended by a number of guests from government, as well as captains of industry and civil society. Alan Khan, the master of ceremonies, was a relaxed host who set the tone for the enjoyable function.

EThekweni deputy mayor Fawzia Peer welcomed the guests on behalf of the City of Durban.

Sim Tshabalala joint Chief Executive of the Standard Bank Group gave the key note speech and used lessons from Renaissance history – especially that of Florence – to highlight Durban’s advantages as well as the challenges that need to be addressed.

Mr Tshabalala called upon the private sector to invest in the province’s economy to ensure that agriculture, agroprocessing, technoparks, mining and mineral beneficiation grow to promote employment.

He said, “That KwaZulu-Natal’s success is dependent on attracting local and foreign investors’ investment.” However, while investment is key to growth clear and stable regulatory frameworks with regard to mineral rights, property ownership and visas for investors are required.

He added that KZN is a most attractive tourist destination with great weather and friendly people. But, he said that the Province should be actively working with Department of Home Affairs to ensure that the procedure for tourists to travel to our beautiful country is simple.

Mr Tshabalala stressed that in order to make the most of what the Province has to offer we need to have coordination between all spheres of government and the private sector to build social and economic infrastructure and to address regulatory constraints and to create an attractive business environment. The need for South Africa to participate in the greater African market, in an integrated manner, to support growth is also essential to compete on the global stage and fulfil our aspirations for an African Renaissance, said Mr Tshabalala.

“We need to be bold, optimistic and patriotic and we need to show the rest of the world that put our money where our mouths are and believe in our country and our region and that we are willing to make investments now in infrastructure which will only payoff in future generations,” said Mr Tshabalala.

Singer Lira entertained the guests superbly, with the majority of the guests soon on their feet singing and dancing, and providing a fitting close to an enjoyable evening.

Africa Day Concert on Saturday the 27 May at the Durban ICC at 6pm.

The annual Africa Renaissance Concert was held on Saturday the 27 May at the Durban ICC starting at 6.30pm. The event was preceded by a VIP cocktail party.

Master of ceremonies East Coast Radio DJ Phat Joe said, "Developing a better Africa and a better world has been the core mantra of my professional life. Ever since I came back to Africa 25 years ago, at the age of 17, I pledged my life to serve and contribute passionately to Africa and its Renaissance. The road is not easy, but it has been enjoyable and given me purpose and meaning beyond anything else I could imagine. Events like the African Renaissance Festival are important in that they remind us of the difficult road behind us and the exciting road ahead. I am excited to celebrate Africa Day, and KZN's Renaissance with my fellow African's at the 19th Annual African Renaissance Festival at the Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre in Durban on the 25th to the 27th of May 2017."

Kiernan Jarryd Forbes known by his stage name AKA, is a South African hip hop recording artist and record producer. He is a multiple award nominee and winner, both internationally and locally. His breakthrough came after the release of his single, "Victory Lap", followed by its remix. On the back of this, he released his debut studio album, Altar Ego, which became a great success. In 2016, after the completion of the Finale of Idols Season number 12, AKA released his single entitled "The World is Yours". AKA has developed to be one of the most noteworthy hip hop artists in the world. He is appreciated for his support to the development of hip hop business and the establishment of a legacy in Africa.

Naima Kay was discovered by Mdu Ngcobo of Touch Africa during the Ugu Jazz Auditions in Port Shepstone in 2010. On her debut album entitled 'Umsebenzi' Naima worked with seasoned award winning producers, Robbie Malinga and Mjakes "Mojalefa" Thebe. The quality in the production of this album was validated by nominations for the Metro FM Music Awards SATMAs and the 20th South African Music Awards in the very year, where she walked away with Newcomer of the year award; Subsequent to the nominations, the album went gold. Naima Kay has just released her third album entitled 'All about Love' and already the single 'Thando' is earning exceptional airplay across radio stations nationwide. On this album she has worked with Mjakes Thebe, Mondli Ngcobo, Joe Nina, Sphiwe Jula and Wonder Khwela.

David Junior Ngcobo better known by his stage name Nasty C is a South African rapper, songwriter and record producer. He is most known for the single "Way It Go" by DJ Switch featuring Tumi and Youngsta, as

well as the well-received remix to his single "Juice Back", which features Davido and Cassper Nyovest. He was the youngest recipient for an award at the 2015 South African Hip Hop Awards, namely the Best Freshman Award.

Nasty C originates from Durban in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. He started rapping at the age of nine, having been influenced by his older brother who was a producer at the time. He is currently nominated for five South African Music Awards for Best Newcomer of the Year, Best Male Artist of the Year, Best Album of the Year and Best Rap Album.