

SA, UK strengthen arts, culture sector

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PRETORIA: South Africa and the United Kingdom have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen the arts and culture sector between the both countries.



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Arts and Culture Minister Paul Mashatile and British Commissioner Dame Nicola Brewer signed the MoU in Pretoria on Tuesday, 16 April 2013.

"The significance of the MoU is to strengthen the cultural relations between the two countries. We are also strengthening trust, mutual respect as well as creating opportunities for the further advancement of relations between our two nations.

"We note that it is not the first time that we undertake such an initiative with the United Kingdom," Mashatile said.

Minister Mashatile said in 2005 they signed a Statement of Intent on Bilateral Co-operation, followed by the signing of a Film Co-production Treaty in 2006.

He said as a result of the Treaty, eight films have been certified and co-productions involving South Africa, Canada and the United Kingdom have been developed.

"This memorandum was renewed in February this year, where the British Library committed to train the staff from the National Library of South Africa in the areas of digitisation and preservation.

"We are also pleased that as a result of our interactions on the cultural front, thirty South African curators were trained at different museums in the United Kingdom since 2006," he said.

In 2010, Mashatile also led a South African delegation to the United Kingdom on a fact finding mission to establish a National Skills Academy for the Creative Industries in South Africa.

The following year, the department launched a project to support South African playwrights which was done in partnership with the British Council, Sustained Theatre from the UK and Wits University.

Through the MoU, the two nation's relations will specifically focus on:

- Sharing experiences intended to promote and develop the creative industries in both our countries;
- Establishing links between arts festivals in both countries;
- Collaborating between artists and arts institutions; and
- Artistic exchanges as well as joint publications.

Brewer said the signing of the MoU marked a new stage in furthering the cooperation between SA and UK in the Arts and Culture sector.

She also announced that together with South Africa they will host the South Africa-United Kingdom Seasons connect.

Brewer said this will provide an opportunity to celebrate the two nation's achievements and to use culture to strengthen further development for both South Africans and the people of United Kingdom.

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