

President Lungu knows challenges in arts industry - Siliya

President Edgar Lungu is alive to the numerous challenges hampering the growth of the creative arts industry in the country.

Information and Broadcasting Services Minister Dora Siliya says this is why Government announced the setting up of a K30 million revolving fund for those in the sector.

Ms. Siliya says Government is currently working out modalities on how the K30 million will be disbursed to various artists across the country.

She says if well harnessed and supported, the creative arts industry has potential to create employment for many people especially the youth.

Ms. Siliya said this during a meeting with the Film Makers Guild of Zambia at her office in Lusaka today.

The Minister called on the private sector to join hands with Government in revamping the creative arts industry by offering financial support.

She said there was need for Zambian financial institutions to take a chance on Zambian filmmakers by coming up with financial products that would help spur the growth of the industry.

Ms. Siliya said in countries like India and Nigeria where the sector is a huge contributor to their Gross Domestic Product, financial institutions have played a center-stage role.

"There is need for all Zambians to come together and work on improving the film sector because this is a hanging fruit with potential to grow our economy," she said.

Ms. Siliya noted that while Government has a responsibility to facilitate the promotion and growth of film in the country, filmmakers have an equally important role to play in telling the Zambian story.

"There are a lot of stories that you can tell about Zambia. We are tired of hearing stories about politicians, you have to think outside the box so that people can easily relate with their everyday life," she said.

Ms. Siliya said as long as people do not accept the need to watch locally produced content, the industry will continue to face challenges of financing.

She challenged artists to organize themselves and avoid working in isolation for the growth of the industry.

Ms. Siliya said Government has built studios in all the ten provinces of the country in order to reduce the cost of production for artists.

Meanwhile, Information and Broadcasting Services Permanent Secretary Amos Malupenga advised artists not to despise humble beginnings.

Mr. Malupenga said artists should not feel discouraged when they have little capital but instead work harder in order to grow their businesses.

“You have to start from somewhere, all businesses start small. All you need is to have an idea, you need so little to make so much,” he said.

And Filmmakers Guild of Zambia vice president Chala Tumelo said the guild is ready to work with Government through intervention such as the formation of a positive economic relationship between film makers, advertisers and broadcasters.

Mr. Tumelo also stressed the need for capacity building for broadcasters to acquire local content using more profitable and sustainable models.

Speaking at the same meeting, a local film maker Wycliff Mwamba cited lack of financial support as one of the factors limiting the growth of the country's film industry.

He said despite having good local content, many filmmakers were failing to make it in the sector due to unavailability of film tailored products on the financial market.

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