



Media Release

TRADE MINISTER ACKNOWLEDGES WORK OF AFTT, FILMTT AT FILM FESTIVAL'S OPENING GALA

May 24, 2023:- Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry, recognised the work of the Africa Film Trinidad and Tobago (AFTT) and its collaboration with Trinidad and Tobago Film Company Limited (FilmTT), during an Address at the AFTT festival's opening gala held on Wednesday at Central Bank Auditorium, Port of Spain.

The Minister noted that the AFTT festival, now in its ninth year, aims to build capacity in the local film industry through key activities such as film screening, outreach sessions and workshops. ***"I take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of AFTT in hosting this annual event which connects African film producers with stakeholders from the local film industry,"*** she said.

Considering that Africa is a powerhouse in the global film industry with a record of 12 countries in the continent submitting films to the Oscar Awards in 2021, the Minister said, ***"The African film market continues to be of interest to stakeholders from the film industry in Trinidad and Tobago. ... During the period 2021-2023, 30 African films were submitted to the Oscars which is emblematic of the growth and success of Africa's film industry."***

In her address, the Minister highlighted that an encouraging trend in Africa over the last decade has been the steady rise in the volume of production across the continent, with countries experiencing an increase in the number of films and television series being produced. This has been supported by cheaper technology and distribution via online platforms and increased investment from global media and entertainment giants such as the Multichoice Broadcasting Company, Canal+ and Netflix.

In addition, she noted the potential of film industries to generate employment and growth as experienced in Nigeria and Ghana. ***“Nigeria’s major film district-Nollywood produces over 2,500 films and employs more than a million persons per year. According to Price Waterhouse Coopers in 2021, Nigeria’s film industry contributed approximately US\$660 million to the country’s gross domestic product or GDP. These statistics are quite impressive and is suggestive of the attractiveness of Nigeria’s film industry,”*** the Minister said.

“Ghana is also a popular filming location in Africa that has expanded over the last couple of years attracting famous actors to film on location, positioning the country a major contender in the global film market. The popularity of films from Ghana, such as the 2016 Netflix Original “Beasts of No Nation,” starring Idris Elba, is indicative of the prowess of the Ghanaian film producers.”

The Minister recognised AFTT Founder and Director Asha Lovelace and her team for their efforts and commended the festival’s line up, which will feature a “Bridge Session” and other workshops focusing on connecting film industry stakeholders from Africa and Trinidad and Tobago with the aim of generating commercial opportunities and cultural exchanges between both locations.

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