



## Africans for Africa Network launches game-changing North-South Collaboration at WOMEX 13

**Wales Cardiff: 25 October 2013:** The recently inaugurated *Africans for Africa Network* today launched a game-changing North-South collaboration at WOMEX 13.

The collaboration takes the form of a two-week residency programme and two public events taking place at the Emthonjeni Arts in South Africa in December 2013, in partnership with Mali's the Festival au Desert.

This first-ever partnership between cultural initiatives in the two countries has emerged out of Africans For Africa Network's mission to change prevailing narrative of Africa from one driven by Western media to one that reflects the inherent strengths of the continent across various Afro-centric platforms.

The *Africans for Africa Network* is the brainchild of Vanessa Perumal, founder of JT Communications Solutions and the JT Comms African Media Resource Centre of Excellence, based in Johannesburg, South Africa.

"Africans for Africa Network is a bold initiative but one that is long overdue," says Perumal. "However the groundswell of support that we have received for the network since we launched in July means that it can play a meaningful role in radically changing the African narrative. We're delighted to have launched our Africans for Africa Network website at the biggest world music festival in Cardiff, Wales. We are truly delighted to have **IMEXSA** as a key partner and would like to thank them for their generous support."

In launching the ground-breaking **North-South collaboration at WOMEX 13**, Perumal worked with IMEXSA (Independent Music Exporters South Africa). As part of the celebration of this new initiative, IMEXSA will host the South African welcome party at the IMEXSA stand on 25 October 2013 from 13h00 to 14h00.

The North-South residency taking place mid-December will include cross-cultural dialogues, creations and collaborations between Mali artists, Xhosa traditional groups from the local community, a Zulu group lead by legendary storyteller Gcina Mhlophe and cultural leaders and thinkers from the South African creative landscape. There will also be cross-generational dialogue during a session of the residency earmarked for emerging artists and young people.

Two public events will take place during the collaboration between **Emthonjeni Arts**, which is based in the Eastern Cape town of Hamburg and the Festival au Desert.

On December 13 the public is invited to a **Festival of Ideas**, where they will engage and celebrate African ideas, both historic, current and for the future. The event will be driven by a narrative of Africa that defines the continent's people as a people of ideas, and a people of innovation and creativity. During this festival a youth dialogue will take place where young leaders and emerging artists will meet to discuss the African Narrative and what it means to them. This dialogue will be podcast to different regions.

On December 14, in solidarity with the Festival au Desert on their return to Timbuktu, a re-enactment of the festival will be performed at Emthonjeni, in the heart of our own beautiful dunes. Special South African guest artists with voices that have stood for truth, diversity and peace will also give blessings and join the journey.

Founded in 2001, and recently faced with enormous challenges when forced into exile by separatist movements and armed extremists in 2013, the Festival au Desert provides an arena where Africa's history and deep-rooted culture can find expression in a way that ensures it resonates with a contemporary audience. It returns to its home just outside Timbuktu in January 2014.

Executive director of the festival, Mohamed Aly Ansar Manny, pinpoints the Festival au Desert's multifaceted impact, *"The Festival is focused on generating new African markets, content access to new audiences, Pan African Festival promotion, opening trade routes and tourism destinations."*

Emthonjeni Arts Director, Nomsa Mazwai describes the upcoming North-South collaboration as *"incredibly special"*. *"Here, all the artists will have a stage in the heart of our own beautiful dunes to perform on, and it is here where Oumou Sangare will bless the road to Timbuktu with a performance, an ode, a prayer for the road ahead."*

October 2013 also sees the launch of the **Africans for Africa website**, created by Webjunkies, a division of 4sa Technologies. Founders Rajen Govender and Kevin Naidoo offered to assist in the launch of the **AfricansforAfrica** initiative by developing the much-needed website that will plug into open source networks like Howiviewafrica and Sam Mkorosi's Africa The Good News.

*"As entrepreneurs, we face numerous challenges daily but remain committed to shaping the social landscape where we can,"* commented Govender and Naidoo. *"Joining this initiative was a way of us 'paying it forward', accordingly, we hope to see Africans for Africa achieve its objectives of groundbreaking, lasting change and creating the platform dialogue it wishes. It's about time that Africans take control of their destiny!"*

Perumal, an activist, entrepreneur, innovator, pioneer and a visionary, recently led a global call for action to support the banned and exiled Festival au Desert in Mali through a global Caravan for Peace.

She is determined to change the African narrative and hopes to see a united Africa where Africans for Africa Network can help change the negative perceptions of the continent. *"I am amazed by the groundswell of support this initiative has generated from across Africa; it is indicative of the will of ordinary Africans to set the agenda for change on the continent and drive the production of authentic content which frames Africa in a positive light,"* she says.

**The Africans for Africa Network**, spearheaded by the JT Comms African Media Resource Centre of Excellence, will focus on: ongoing exchanges, topic specific dialogues and the creation of platforms for African artists within and outside the continent throughout the year; an annual pan African Dialogue; hosting a Global Concert for Peace, featuring top African and international artists, performing for an international audience; hosting dialogues with **Yvonne Chaka Chaka, Mahotella Queens, Dorothy Masuku and Yogi Nambiar** (Programme Director of the Goldman Sachs-GIBS 10,000 Women Certificate Programme in South Africa), in November at the Media Centre and the first of the Africans for Africa Network's pan African exchanges which will be hosted by Emthonjeni Arts, Hamburg in the Eastern Cape.

The Africans for Africa Network will be instrumental in providing content and programming for a myriad of bilateral activations in Africa, realised through a network of partnerships with various groups and organisations.

For media enquiries or interview opportunities, please contact Dee's on [media@jtcomms.co.za](mailto:media@jtcomms.co.za) or 011-788-7631.

Issued by JT Communication Solutions on behalf of IMEXSA - [www.imexsa.org.za](http://www.imexsa.org.za)

### **Note to Editor**

About IMEXSA (Independent Music Exporters South Africa) - IMEXSA is a non-profit organisation which focuses on developing and increasing the number of music exporters in South Africa by identifying trade opportunities and assisting companies to take advantage of these opportunities. Annually IMEXSA ensures that emerging South Africa artists and independent music artist are promoted at WOMAX. This service has the potential to kick start careers on an international level. Further demonstrating its dedication to developing locally produced music around the world, IMEXSA, as part of the WOMAX13 Official Showcase selection, will present Nomfusi and Shangaan Electro, in celebration of their ground-breaking new talent, diversity and creativity.

**Africans For Africa Network** partners include **FestivalauDesert** (Manny Ansar), **Emthonjeni Arts** and the key stakeholder and trade exchange, **Webjunkies**, a division of 4sa Technologies (Rajen Govender and Kevin Naidoo); **IMEXSA**, **iStart2**, **SA Women Engineers**, **Howiviewafrica**, **Woldegiorgis Ghebrehiwot from Mekelle University, Tigray, Ethiopia**; **Johnny Muteba from Democratic Republic of Congo**; **Sam Mkorosi's Africa The Good News**, **Gcinamasiko Arts & Heritage Trust - Nozincwadi** (Dr Gcina Mhlope) and Harem Clothing.

All the partners believe that this initiative will provide a conduit for both youth and economic development in the cultural industries:

### **Messages from partners:**

Manny Ansar, Festival of the Desert director: *"Our Festival, although small, is in the top three festivals in Africa; this shows how powerful creative platforms are in shaping both the human rights and citizen activism agendas in Africa. Adapting these platforms to sustainable markets for Africa's creative voices across Africa and the world is the key challenge we must address as a matter of urgency. The Africans for Africa Network provides this impetus."*

Mali's famed Festival of the Desert, now exiled due to instability in the region, was the catalyst for the realisation of the need for a pan African network.

Nomsa Mazwai, Director Emthonjeni Arts: *'As Emthonjeni Arts, we are thrilled to be kicking off the Africans for Africa programme with a residency at our facility in the Eastern Cape. The Africans for Africa network articulates what we hope will become the African narrative. One that celebrates our many talents and achievements as Africans. Emthonjeni Arts a project of the Eastern Cape department of Economic Development Environmental Affairs and Tourism is a sterling example of an African solution for the economic challenges of the rural poor of South Africa. We look forward to hosting this prestigious residency on an annual basis, as we see it will give hope to young Africans that no matter where you come from, anything is possible in Africa.'*

Lamin Sawaneh of Howiviewafrica: *"Thank you for creating this (Africans for Africa Network). I see myself being a voice and face for Africans4Africa movement. I want to contribute in bringing solutions to changing the narrative of Africa. I am obsessively passionate about Africa and more than motivated to take action. I want to be that "I" in Howiviewafrica - and my hopes are to inspire the world to do the same, especially Africans. I love your heart for people, Vanessa, and I feel it's destiny that we connected online. Thank you."*

Pierre du Toit of iStart2: *"With her vision of Africans for Africa and the Human Rights activism at the core of its value system Vanessa is one of the most valuable partners in communicating our stories to the rest of the world. As a social entrepreneur, she is PASSION and ENERGY in capital letters – she gives renewed meaning to being part of the magic in Africa."*

Sam Mkorosi, Chief Operating Officer at Africa The Good News - a news website highlighting positive developments in Africa: *"We at Africa, The Good News are excited about the launch of African for Africa Network. We exist to balance the tone of the conversation about Africa. Without turning a blind eye to the challenges facing Africa, we want to steer the conversation away from the doom and gloom perspective that African events are often reported on. Africans for Africa Network is a much needed addition to this conversation about our great continent. It is a great platform for the building of Africa's own narrative about her past, present and future. We welcome any initiative to broaden and the balance the conversation about Africa, and we wish AfricansforAfrica Network the greatest success!"*

**ENDS**



Emthonjeni Arts, the artists' residency at Hamburg South Africa, is a multidisciplinary artists' residency, specifically geared for those with creativity and passion and leaders in new thought.

On site is a dance studio, a craft studio, a media lab (Mac), artists working spaces, a theatre and an acoustic recording studio. The venue can host up to 40 creatives, and in Hamburg, approximately 150 more in community home stays. There is a fully operational restaurant and the food on offer is sourced locally and grown organically. At Emthonjeni Arts you will not only enjoy a beautiful and comfortable experience, but you will also be provided with an opportunity for regional rural economic development, as these operations are a catalyst for economic development in this small rural town and region.

### **Africans for Africa**

This December Emthonjeni Arts will be working in partnership with the Africans for Africa Network and hosting a two-week residency with artists from the Malian Festival Au Desert. During this residency, there will be cross-cultural dialogues, creations and collaborations between the Mali artists, Xhosa traditional groups from the local community, a Zulu group lead by legendary storyteller Gcina Mhlophe and cultural leaders and thinkers from the South African creative landscape.

There will also be cross-generational dialogue during a session of the residency earmarked for emerging artists and young people.

### **Two events will be open to the public:**

**13 December** - A festival of ideas will be hosted at the residency. Here, the public is invited to engage and celebrate African ideas that have been, but also share ideas that will mould our future. Here we celebrate a narrative of Africa that defines us as a people of ideas, a people of innovation and creativity. During this festival of ideas, a youth dialogue will take place where young leaders and emerging artists will meet to discuss the African Narrative and what it means to them. This dialogue will be podcast to different regions.

**14 December** - As part of the residency, and in solidarity with the Festival Au Desert on their return to Timbuktu, a re-enactment of the festival will be performed at Emthonjeni, in the heart of our own beautiful dunes. Here, all artists will have a stage in the dunes to perform on, and it is here where Oumou Sangare will bless the road to Timbuktu with a performance, an ode, a prayer for the road ahead.

Special South African guest artists with voices that have stood for truth, diversity and peace will also give blessings and join the journey.

Emthonjeni Arts is funded by the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism, in the Eastern Cape, South Africa.



## **IMEXSA developing locally produced music in international markets - WOMEX 2013**

WOMEX 2013 is about to heat up Wales and the Independent Music Exporters South Africa IMEXSA in further demonstrating its dedication to developing locally produced music around the world and is all geared to promote South African music talent as a delegation of SA music industry players make their way to WOMEX.

WOMEX 2013 will be hosted in Cardiff, Wales from 23 -27 October and is the most important event on the world music market.

Bringing together professionals from the worlds of folk, roots, ethnic and traditional music in an extraordinary five-day event WOMEX remains a key highlight on the music global scene. This year's event promises over 60 concerts featuring around 300 artists, a trade fair exhibiting in the region of 650 companies from over 90 countries, as well as more than 400 national and international journalists. Delegates can also attend conferences, a DJ summit and a documentary film exhibition.

Independent Music Exporters South Africa (IMEXSA) ensures that emerging South African artists and independent music companies are effectively promoted at WOMEX by providing a service that has the potential to kick start their careers on an international level. IMEXSA is a non-profit organisation focused on developing and increasing the number of music exporters in South Africa by identifying trade opportunities and assisting companies to take advantage of those opportunities.

In celebrating ground breaking new talent, diversity and creativity, IMEXSA will present Nomfusi and Shangaan Electro as part of the WOMEX13 Official Showcase Selection. Over 40 artists, music industry practitioners and stakeholders will converge under the umbrella provided by IMEXSA which is supported by the DTI to penetrate global market opportunities. From speed dating, dialogues, showcases, conferencing, networking and more WOMEX 2013 promises to offer delegates a melting pot of opportunities.

"WOMEX 2013 is the most important trade show globally and South African emerging artists and independent music companies attending are enabled to position their standing and showcase their musical products at a festival that has the potential to kick start their careers on an international level," says IMEXSA's spokesperson Renneth Tshisikule

As in previous years, IMEXSA will continue to ensure that developing exporters and musical professionals' benefit from the international expertise offered by influential industry players such as record labels, publishers and established artists at WOMEX 2013.

IMEXSA's core aim is to assist emerging and independent South African musicians to maximise on the international market by creating opportunities, promoting professional exchanges and to increase the number of South African exporters.

The organisation also assists up-and-coming exporters and musical professionals to identify trade opportunities at world-renowned events like the PRIMAVERA SOUND (Spain, Barcelona 2012), South by Southwest in Texas, the Reeperbahn Festival in Hamburg and MIDEM.

IMEXSA has, in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry, conceptualised the Independent Music Exporters Development Programme that is designed to equip small and medium enterprises with crucial skills and knowledge to enhance their export capabilities and to expand their businesses internationally.

For media enquiries or interview opportunities, please contact Dees on [media@jtcomms.co.za](mailto:media@jtcomms.co.za) or 011-788-7631

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#### Note to Editor

Independent Music Exporters South Africa (IMEXSA) will host the South African Welcome party and a Press Conference to announce the launch of the 'Africans for Africa Network' and its support to host the FestivalauDesert programme together with Emthonjeni Arts in the Eastern Cape in South Africa. The welcome party will take place at the IMEXSA stand on 25 October 2013 from 13h00 to 14h00. This year over 40 delegates made up of artists, practitioners and music business stakeholder will attend WOMEX.

For further details please contact spokesperson of IMEXSA Renneth Tshisikule [info@imexsa.org.za](mailto:info@imexsa.org.za)



***JT Communication Solutions – Home of the JT Comms African Media Resource Centre of Excellence***

JT Communication Solutions cc is Africa's leading creative industry and SMME media and publicity specialists, designing custom-made solutions that integrate print, broadcast, online, social and other digital media platforms, to effectively reach their target markets and audiences.

JT Comms is owned by a team that specialises in African Communications, Public Relations, IT Solutions, Media Relations, and Public Affairs turning it into one of the most measurably, successful companies in South Africa's media industry.

J.T. Comms specialises in working with the arts, creative industries and small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs). Since the company was founded in 1994, it has built a client base that includes some notable cultural and artistic figures including Hugh Masekela, Lebo Mashile, Gcina Mhlope, Jessica Mbangeni, Ben Turok, Mak Manaka, Thandie Klaasen, Wale, Sibongile Khumalo and Alice Walker, as well as industry leaders and organisers of major conferences, expos and exhibitions, including the MOSHITO African music industry conference and expo, the Southern African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO), The Standard Bank Joy of Jazz Festival, The Wits University Art, Culture and Literature Festival, The Mpumalanga Botshabelo Heritage Programme, Pusiano Live Jazz Performance Project, Johannesburg's flagship festival Arts Alive, the FIFA 2010 World Cup Cultural Manifestation and many more.

In 2009 JT Comms initiated the JT Comms African Media Resource Centre of Excellence.

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# FESTIVAL AU DÉSERT

## FestivalauDesert – Programme

Dear friends of the Festival au Désert,

It is with great pleasure that we inform you that, following the constant positive evolution of the political and social situation in Mali, we resumed preparations for our next edition, which, if everything is confirmed, will be held in Timbuktu around the January 10, 2014.

The final dates will be posted on our website.

But before that date which represent the "Great Return" long-awaited of the festival in its land, we inform you that the Festival in the Desert:

☐ participated from 4 to 6 September in partnership with the International Festival Ain Farba's (Mauritania) with artists from Bamako (Amy Koita) Kidal (AMANAR) and also refugee camps M'bera (Imarhane and Tadiast). This was to celebrate with the Malian refugees, the return of peace and to advocate for reconciliation.

☐ Saw several of its artists perform at concerts in the United States: on 14 and 15 September in Chicago (Bassekou Kouyate, Sidi Toure, Mamadou Kelly, Leila Gobi and others); on 19 September in Manhattan for the 25th anniversary of Radio Afropop programme (Mamadou and Bassekou) and also during parallel cultural events in the UN General Assembly in New York in the last week of September 2013.

☐ From October 28 to November 03, the Festival Au Desert undertook a Scandinavian tour in Sweden and Norway.

From 15 November the Festival in the Desert Festival will be in M'Hamid, Morocco, at the Taragalte festival to actively participate in the launching of the Cultural Caravan for Peace in the Sahel-Saharan region organised by Taragalte Festival; Butterfly Work Foundation (Holland); Festival on the Niger and the Festival in the Desert.

This caravan will pass through Burkina Faso (Bobo Dioulasso, Village Opera Ziniaré near Ouagadougou, the camp Djibo) before joining Timbuktu for the 14th edition of the festival in the desert and finally at the Festival on the Niger in Segou in February 2014.

All information on the programme and on the conditions of participation will soon be available on our websites.

We look forward to being with you in Mali to share together, images of peace and reconciliation, not of war.