

**Speech delivered by Consul-General Tselane Mokuena at the launch of
the “I Am Not Afraid” Photo Exhibition, Munich, 5 March 2009**

Sehr geehrte Frau Dr. May

Sehr geehrte Frau Frisinghelli

Sehr geehrter Herr Dr. Seidl

Sehr geehrte Frau Gerschner

Sehr geehrter Herr Fleetwood,

Verehrte Künstler,

Meine Damen und Herren,

Guten Abend,

Programme Director, Dr May

Curators of the Exhibition, Ms

Frisinghelli and Dr Seidl

Head of the Aspekte Galerie, Ms

Gerschner

Head of the Market Photo

Workshop, Mr Fleetwood,

Artists exhibited here this evening,

Meine Damen und Herren,

Guten Abend,

Es ist für mich eine grosse Ehre heute Abend hier bei der Eröffnung dieser wunderbaren Ausstellung dabei sein zu dürfen und ich möchte der Münchner Volks-hoch-schule meinen aufrichtigen Dank dafür aus-sprechen, dass ich heute Abend zu Ihnen sprechen darf.

[It is an honour for me to be here this evening at the launch of such a prestigious exhibition, and I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Münchner Volkshochschule for allowing me to address you this evening.]

South Africa, Ladies and Gentlemen, is a land with a painful past. Our history has resulted in some voices being heard more than others. It is with this in mind, that I was drawn to this exhibition. It was important for me to be here because I greatly admire the work of The Market Photo Workshop.

The Market Photo Workshop aims to develop new talent, and in so doing it brings a voice to people who would otherwise remain voiceless. You may not be able to hear the voice, but I suppose

that's why they call photographers "visual poets".

And the work here this evening *is* poetry. It is a reflection of a side of South Africa that you do not often see in glossy travel magazines or tourism material. It is a side of South Africa that is real to so many millions.

As a land with 48 million people, South Africa is used to diversity. And these photos bring that to the fore too. We see young black men at initiation, we see young white men struggling

to escape their community, and we see women battling prejudice and invisibility. We see the challenges faced by some of our sisters in neighbouring Zimbabwe, and we also see the bright and inspirational colours of the youth.

“I am not afraid”. The title of this exhibition also speaks to a general attitude in South Africa. The inequalities of the past continue today – with the gap between rich and poor remaining unsettlingly high. But we wake up every day and say “I am not afraid” to challenge this unfairness. Indeed, in the world, we see

lots of unfairness too. South Africa – and Africa as a whole – cannot seem to escape the negativity that persists in the media. But everyday, brave Africans say: “I am not afraid”. We have faced injustices before and we have overcome them. So whatever injustices await us today, we are not afraid to tackle them.

To the talented artists represented here tonight, congratulations on getting our voices out there. And please allow me also to welcome you to Munich! Last week there was so much snow here that some cars were practically buried in it. So it’s great to see

that you've brought some South African warmth with you!

Once again, Ladies and Gentlemen, please allow me to thank the Münchner Volkshochschule for this opportunity.

I thank you.