



Championing Arts Development



PRESS RELEASE 31/03/18

The Board of the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) would like to inform all partners, artists, and arts and culture stakeholders that **Mr. Elvas Mari** has resigned from his position as Director with effect from the 16th of March 2018. Mr. Mari has served the NACZ with distinction for the past 16 years. He is leaving the Arts Council to pursue other interests outside the arts.

The National Arts Council of Zimbabwe will miss Mr. Mari's visionary, strategic and professional leadership which placed a high premium on integrity, servant leadership and good corporate governance. The Board, Management and Staff of the Council wish him well in all his new endeavors.

Mr. Mari has held senior positions in the NACZ since he joined the organization in January 2002, when he was appointed as the Assistant Director for Arts Promotion and Development. He was promoted to the position of Deputy Director in March 2005. Due to his leadership qualities in fostering development and promotion of arts and culture in Zimbabwe, he was elevated to the position of Director in November 2009, the position in which he served for 8 years before tendered his resignation.

During his long tenure in various senior positions at the NACZ, Mr. Mari demonstrated passion for, and commitment to, development of the arts and he contributed immensely to the transformation and turnaround of organization. Prior to his ascendancy to the Directorship, he played a key role in several achievements of the Arts Council as a senior manager. As Director thereafter, he takes the credit for even more important achievements of the Council despite facing known challenges that affected the arts and culture as a whole.

All in all, NACZ made tremendous strides during the 16-year period that he served. These achievements may be summarized in chronological order as follows:

- Establishment of programmes such as the National Arts Merit Awards (NAMA), Jikinya Dance Festival and Culture Week, among others, to promote the arts in Zimbabwe. These programmes have encouraged corporates, bi-lateral and multi-lateral partners to invest funds in the arts and culture sector in Zimbabwe and helped in the Council's audience building agenda.
- Successfully lobbying government to gazette Statutory Instrument 136 of 2003, which allows artists to import musical, broadcasting and recording equipment, as well as PA systems, duty free. Over the years, this has changed the face of the arts and culture sector in Zimbabwe as it has led to growth of the theatre, film, television and music sub-sectors.
- Introducing a policy to encourage and support the holding of festivals in all the 10 provinces of Zimbabwe. The first provincial arts festival created as a result of this policy by NACZ was Intwasa Arts Festival koBulawayo in 2004. Many other festivals have since been established in all the provinces of Zimbabwe. To date there are over 35 arts festivals in Zimbabwe.
- Lobbying Government to come up with a law that protects the works of artists in Zimbabwe leading to the passing of the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act (Chapter 26:05) in 2004. This has improved the protection of artists from piracy.
- Publishing *A User's Guide to Copyright Law in Zimbabwe* in order to ensure that artists were able to enforce the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act. This handbook was distributed free to artists and arts organisations/institutions.
- National Arts Council of Zimbabwe participated in the compilation of the dossier for the nomination, and in the process that led to the successful proclamation, of Jerusarema/Mbende Traditional Dance as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2005. Subsequently, NACZ established a successful annual Jerusarema Mbende Dance Festival that is hosted at Murewa Culture Centre. The festival attracts schoolchildren and the general public, both as performers and as audience. This has helped to bring goodwill and economic benefits to the Murewa and Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe (UMP) communities.
- NACZ successfully took over the running of Murewa Culture Centre with effect from 1st January 2006. This decision has allowed artists to effectively use the centre more productively as it has become more accessible to artists and to the community.
- After many submissions to the Minister, Statutory Instrument 87 of 2006 read together with Statutory Instrument 166 of 2009, were gazetted. These empowered NACZ to charge certain fees and to make certain regulations enforceable at law. These SI have become one of the major tools in creating meaningful income, which enables the Council

to implement arts development and promotion programmes for the benefit of the artists in Zimbabwe.

- In 2006, NACZ was supported by UNESCO to carry out a survey on the contribution of the creative industry to Gross Domestic Product entitled “Research Report: an Assessment of the Contribution of Arts and Cultural Industries to Economic Development in Zimbabwe”. The research report provoked debate, which led to the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust commissioning another survey.
- NACZ published the first ever *Zimbabwe Arts Directory* in 2006, and followed up with another one in 2011, with funding from the Embassy of Spain and the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust. These directories have helped in professionalizing the sector by ensuring that arts partners have easy access to the artists in Zimbabwe.
- In 2010, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe in partnership with Cell Funeral Assurance Company established a Cell-ebrity Funeral Cover which provides decent and affordable funeral cover and services for the artistes of Zimbabwe.
- Through its Annual Arts and Culture Indaba in 2013, NACZ caused the establishment of the Zimbabwe Chamber of Creative Industries which is intended to professionalize and industrialize the sector.
- Zimbabwe submitted its first quadrennial report to UNESCO in 2016 as a State Party to the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. NACZ was the link organization that collected the information and did the report on behalf of the Ministry of Rural Development, Promotion and Preservation of National Culture and Heritage.
- In 2016, a framework for a cultural exchange agreement between Zimbabwe and Zambia was developed in the form of a memorandum of understanding. The MOU is now ready for signing by the respective Arts Council Boards of the two countries.
- NACZ is up to date with its audits and it has been consistently receiving clean audit reports.



Professor Herbert Chimhundu

BOARD CHAIRMAN

NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL OF ZIMBABWE