**South Africa Celebrates National Book Week**

**05-11 September 2016**

***Johannesburg, South Africa* (1 September 2016)** – The 7th annual National Book Week kicked off at the Apartheid Museum with a keynote address by the Gauteng MEC for Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation, Ms. Faith Mazibuko, who spoke on the importance of reading to build future leaders of our country.

National Book Week (NBW), which runs from the 05th -11th September 2016, is a strategic national campaign brought to you by the South African Book Development Council, in partnership with the Department of Arts and Culture. NBW, envisioning a reading South Africa, provides an overarching platform to get the nation reading and will be celebrated across all nine provinces of South Africa.

The 2016 launch of National Book Week presented a very contentious question: Are Books Expensive, to which 70% of about 80 guests responded YES and 30% said NO.

An illustrious panel of speakers, comprising of key stakeholders in the book industry and other interest groups, unpacked the production elements of the book, and the contributing factors to the end price of the book. The importance of the book also came out of the discussions, with MenCare highlighting how the book is used to form a bond between fathers and children.

Says CEO of the South African Book Development Council (SABDC), Elitha van der Sandt, “By encouraging people to buy books and more importantly to read local books, particularly amongst our youth, we believe a significant impact can be made in terms of up-skilling our youth and empowering them to achieve higher levels of education. Increasing the number of book buyers and readers also leads to significant increases in economic contribution, and increased demand can have a very positive impact on the cost of a book.

According to the Ministerial Task Team Report by the Department of Arts and Culture, it is estimated that only 1% of the South African population are book buyers.

A 20-year study across 27 countries reported “having as few as 20 books in the home has a significant impact in propelling a child to higher levels of education”. Numerous research studies over the years show clearly that good readers with high levels of reading fluency do well in all school subjects.

What is alarming is that more than half of South African homes do not have a single leisure book to read. This is a key motivator for the #BUY\_A\_BOOK strategy under the National Book Week Campaign.

This year, NBW ambassadors Aaron Moloisi, Refiloe Mpakanyane, Stoan Seate, Azania Mosaka along with the favourite Mascot Funda Bala will join in the line-up of activities and share in the joy of reading. Some of the activities lined up for the week include: Storytelling and a Wordathon, all speaking to this year’s focus: ‘The pages that build us.’

From 01-18 September, the public can support the #BUY\_A\_BOOK campaign by buying a book for only R20 at either Bargain Books or Exclusive Books and dropping it in the National Book Week donation bins; books can also be purchased on Takealot.com. These books will be donated to key NBW reading initiatives and to those who do not have books in their homes.

“It takes public participation to build a reading nation and we encourage the public to participate,” says van der Sandt.

Concurrently, NBW also motivates the #READ\_A\_BOOK campaign aimed at getting more South Africans to read books. “The more pages we turn, the more valuable knowledge and insight we gain; insight that we can share with those around us, and insight that can empower us significantly,” explains van der Sandt.

Join Funda Bala in making South Africa a reading nation and share in the joy of reading this National Book Week. Share a book, visit your local library, volunteer in the programme in your province or read to a child. You can also create your own reading activities and let NBW know about it.

#BUY\_A\_BOOK so that we can get the rest of South Africa to #READ\_A\_BOOK whose pages can build and edify us as a nation.

From an investment as small as R20, you can make a difference by buying a book for a home that does not have any – or share a book with someone – it only takes one book to change a life. It takes one book to change a life forever.

For more information visit: [www.sabookcouncil.co.za](http://www.sabookcouncil.co.za/) or social media: Facebook (NationalBookWeekSA) and Twitter (#BUY\_A\_BOOK)

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**NOTES TO EDITOR:**

To find out more about NBW programmes around the country, visit our Facebook page for regular updates.

* Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NationalBookWeekSA](http://www.facebook.com/NationalBookWeekSA)
* Twitter: @NBW\_SA / #READ\_A\_BOOK #BUY\_A\_BOOK

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**About National Book Week**

National Book Week is a dedicated week on the South African calendar created to celebrate the book and promote a love for reading. The annual, national programme is a joint initiative between the South African Book Development Council (SABDC) and the Department of Arts and Culture.

National Book Week was developed in response to a study commissioned in 2007, by the South African Book Development Council (SABDC). The study, which focused on the reading and book reading habits of adult South Africans, showed that only 14% of South Africans are avid book readers and a mere 5% of parents read to their children. The survey also indicated that 51% of households in South Africa did not have a single book in their home.

All National Book Week events will promote a key message to encourage reading as a fun activity with each province or location tailoring the programme to meet local demands with a strong focus on promoting indigenous languages, local authors as well as library awareness and access.

Parallel to this, as part of The SABDC’s Indigenous Languages Publishing Programme (ILPP), funded in 2015 by the National Arts Council (NAC we will also be donating books to children/youth and adults hat we engage with along the way a brand new book in the language of the region.

At the same time, the Department of Correctional Services will run parallel activities in correctional services facilities to encourage reading as a growth and rehabilitation tool with the Reading for Redemption Programme.

While the South African Library for the Blind (SALB) will also join certain programmes during the National Book Week to enlighten sighted and non-sighted people about the available resources. Communities, churches, social groups, schools and libraries and anyone with an interest in promoting reading, are encouraged to participate in the campaign to bring awareness to the enjoyment and value of reading books.

**What can YOU do during National Book Week?**

* Participate in the programme in your province.
* Donate books to organisations working with women, children, youth, disabled – in all languages.
* #BUY\_A\_BOOK for someone who does not have any.
* Create your own activities and let the NBW team know about it.
* Promote NBW on your social media platforms by sharing news you from our Twitter: @NBW\_SA/ #BUY\_A\_BOOK #READ\_A\_BOOK and [www.facebook.com/NationalBookWeekSA](http://www.facebook.com/NationalBookWeekSA) pages.

**About National Book Week Media Launch:**

The National Book Week Media Launch was held at the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg on Thursday 1st September 2016. The aim of the day was to unpack the question: “Are books expensive?” as a means of understanding what really goes into making the books whose pages we turn every time we read a leisure book. The aim is also to find solutions to get more South Africans reading and to get more books in the home.

The MEC for the Gauteng Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation, Honorouble Ms. Faith Mazibuko was the key note speaker. A high profile list of panelists including: Ms. Jane Molony, Chairperson of the SABDC; TV personality Aaron Moloisi, National Book Week Ambassador; CEO of the SABDC Elitha van der Sandt, Andre Lewaks, Manager of MenCare, Fezile Sipamla, National Director for Sports, Recreation, Arts & Culture and Department of Correctional Services, amongst others.

Children from the Kids@Play nursery school were also invited to the event and enjoyed a storytelling session with the MEC for the Gauteng Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation, Honorouble Ms. Faith Mazibuko.

**About Ambassadors:**

**Aaron Moloisi:** Aaron is a TV best known for his presenting on the popular SABC Education talk show Shift. He is also a National Book Week Ambassador for the seventh consecutive year this year.

**Refiloe Mpakanyane:**The radio personality, is also staying on board this year. Her proudest achievements have grown to include championing causes close to her heart, such as literacy advocacy. Alongside providing under-resourced schools with reading books for their libraries she is also a NBW ambassador as well as a mentor to a young lady at the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls.

**Stoan Seate:**A TV personality and artist best known for his part in the highly successful kwaito band, Bongo Maffin, since 1996.

**Azania Mosaka:**Radio Personality Azania Mosaka is the presenter of the 1pm to 3pm show on 702 and brings her style and charm to early afternoons in Gauteng.