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Film studio unveils "new look"**04-12-2008**

THE new look and vision for the Cape Town Film Studios (CTFS) has been unveiled to 500 film industry stakeholders at a watershed event held on the site in Faure, outside Cape Town this week.

Addressing guests, who included The Passion Of The Christ star James Caviezel, CTFS chairman Anant Singh said: "After 90 years of filmmaking in South Africa, Cape Town Film Studios represents the first high-end, custom-built Hollywood-style studio complex on the continent."

Singh is the CEO of Videovision Entertainment which is a significant shareholder in CTFS. He is widely acknowledged as South Africa's pre-eminent film producer.

"Videovision Entertainment has an extensive network of contacts around the world and we hope our links to Hollywood, Europe, India, Hong Kong and the rest of Africa will bring top-notch productions to CTFS," he added. "We will also encourage leading international film stars to become CTFS ambassadors. These special envoys will open doors to the international filmmaking community and will help focus attention on this state-of-the-art film world we are creating.

"We intend to establish, with appropriate partners, high quality film training facilities for crew under the guidance of a selection of master filmmakers to ensure that movie production in Africa is taken to a new level."

Marcel Golding, the CEO of etv and a major shareholder of CTFS, says that the studios aim to become Africa's leading digital media hub and intend to create the most advanced new media telecommunications centre with broadband highways to connect the studios to North America, Europe and Asia.

"We are exploring the development of infrastructure that will enable the studios to host advanced 3D and hologram filmmaking. We believe that the future of high-end filmmaking lies with 3D, advanced CGI and special effects and, in a decade from now, hologram technology.

"It has taken a long time to get where we are today but I believe it was worth the wait. We are now able to integrate the latest technology into the CTFS and to explore the new possibilities offered to us by an ever-changing digital world."

The CTFS site is 200 hectares, of which 100 ha will remain undeveloped as unspoiled wetlands, ensuring that the environment is protected and preserved and the rest will be dedicated to film and film-related use.

Of the 100ha that is to be developed, explained CTFS CEO Nico Dekker, 70 percent is earmarked for studio use.

The remaining 30 percent is intended for residential, commercial and retail developments.

"By early 2010, we expect the first phase of four studios, two workshops and the production house to be complete," said Dekker. The landscaping will be indigenous and the mixed-use developments will echo the old building styles found in nearby Stellenbosch. A long fever-tree-lined boulevard will lead to a paved square that will provide a break-out zone for the offices, flats, restaurants and cafés.

"International film experts agree that South Africa should be able to produce at least 30 to 40 feature films a year. We are standing on the soil that already holds all the pictures and scripts for those future films.

This is the soil where people are going to make war and love, where stories will be told that will make us laugh, cry, yearn for different worlds and forget our own daily lives for a few moments. Images from here will go into the homes of hundreds of millions of people across the world.

"I believe we are entering a bright new age for filmmaking in South Africa and that the Cape Town Film Studios will play a significant role in breathing new life and beauty into our industry."