



Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor

**PROF MANDLA MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

REMARKS

**BUSINESS BREAKFAST AND SIGNING CEREMONY BETWEEN UNISA &
THE LIMPOPO GOVERNMENT**

Unisa Polokwane Hub, Polokwane

7 May 2018

- Programme Director, Dr Somadoda Fikeni
- The honourable Premier of Limpopo Province, Mr Chupu Mathabatha
- The leaders and representatives of various departments of Limpopo Provincial Government
- The Executive Dean of the Unisa College of Economics and Management Sciences, Prof Mathukhu Mogale, and your colleagues from the college
- Prof Moloko Sepota, Regional Director of the Unisa North Eastern Region and members of your team

- Ms Khanya Mahlare, Executive Director of Unisa Department of Institutional Advancement and your team
- Members of Unisa Executive and Extended Management
- Representatives of various institutions of higher learning present here today
- Members of the business community and civil society
- Mr Tebogo Madibilala, Chairperson of Unisa Regional SRC and other members of the regional SRC and students present here today
- Members of the media
- Distinguished members of the audience
- Ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of Unisa I bring warm Ubuntu/botho greetings as we extend a hand of everlasting friendship between our university and this great province of Limpopo. On a joyous occasion like this one which is a culmination of courtship, collaboration, and preparatory work for this special occasion, words are inadequate to express our deep sense of gratitude and our hope for a bright future of solid and mutually beneficial relationship between Unisa and the Government of the Province of Limpopo. Professor Mogale has already laid the ground in setting the scene. This has assisted in paving the way for my brief

remarks on the significance of this relationship as we have come to formalize it today.

What we are committing to this morning is a unique and groundbreaking model of partnership between Unisa and the Government of the Province of Limpopo. Whereas we have numerous partnerships, these are often with individual government departments or units or they are focused on just one or two specific projects. This partnership has gone further to bring on board the whole provincial government with a wide-ranging scope for collaboration with particular emphasis on research and training. Let me first express our deep sense of appreciation for the trust you have in Unisa. I assure you Premier and the people of this province that this is a trust that we will not betray as we will ensure that you reap the benefits of our relationship.

In most relationships where a MoU is signed it is often expressing future aspirations of what is achievable in the vistas of possibilities, the same logic as a marriage where you are issued with a marriage certificate on an understanding that things will work out after the wedding vows have been exchanged. In this instance we have demonstrated our bona fides as our College of Economics and Management Sciences has been working with some of your departments thus cultivating a rapport that has elevated this collaboration to this ceremony today. I also take this time to thank my

colleagues from this college under the leadership of Prof Mogale for being good ambassadors of Unisa and giving practical meaning to our vision statement “The African University shaping the futures in the service of humanity.”

Limpopo is a great province that has and continues to play a significant role in our country. If universities are to decolonize and Africanise our education, then Limpopo would be one of the places to start with given its rich and diverse heritage. To take one example, Limpopo is a home of a world heritage site, Mapungubwe pre-colonial civilization depicting the level of social, political, economic and technological sophistication of pre-colonial African societies thus debunking the myth that modernity came with colonial or missionary adventures into the African continent. This civilization was so sophisticated that it had commercial and trade relations with Asia and the Middle East almost a thousand years ago. South Africa’s membership of BRICS merely revived this long-standing relationship among great civilizations of the time. North of Limpopo is yet another centre of great civilization and engineering masterpiece of architecture in the form of Great Zimbabwe Kingdom.

It is Limpopo which also gave us warriors who fought valiantly against colonial conquest and dispossession and these include, but are not limited to, Queen Modjadji, Sekhukhune and Makhado. It is this

province that gave South Africa and the world a great pioneering woman who was also a struggle icon, Charlotte Makgomo (nee Manny Maxheke). We are also reminded of the great intellectual giant, Professor Eskia Mphahlele's ancestral roots in Limpopo. This list is endless and it demonstrates the footprints of this region in the formation of a modern South Africa.

We commit Unisa as a partner who will work with you as you seek to realize your provincial strategic and developmental goals. We are also answering the call of our country's leader, President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, who called for each sector of our society to play its part and join efforts in the realization of South Africa's New Dawn. We have come here this morning to say "Thuma Mina" as the iconic musician, the late Bra Hugh Masekela, had inspired us to and the President had translated this as a clarion call for civic activism and responsibility in nation building. We embark on this journey already involved in other programmes for the realization of the National Development Plan and the African Union Agenda 2063. We will use an opportunity of this partnership to invite Limpopo Government into some of these forums and also share some of information we have already accumulated for the greater benefit of the Limpopo Province.

In October 2017 Unisa opened a new building which has become a landmark of this city, and this was a bold statement in terms of our

commitment to invest in this province which has a growing number of students who are studying at Unisa. In that project we received support from the leadership of Polokwane Municipality. I would like to express our appreciation for that assistance. Polokwane is also our host for one of Unisa's prestigious flagship annual lectures, i.e. the Eskia Mphahlele Memorial Lecture. All these are indications of our footprints in the province and the city which have just been reinforced by the MoU we are signing this morning.

This year Unisa is celebrating 145 years of existence as the oldest university in the country and when future chronicles of our university are crafted in the near and distant history, this day will be marked as an important milestone when we answered that clarion made by our President and raised our hands to say yes send me to be part of this mission of nation building. To some this important step may look like a drop in an ocean but Mother Teresa reminds us that "...the ocean would be less because of that missing drop."

Again I take this time to thank you Premier Mathabatha, your team of leaders and officials, the great people of Limpopo and the Unisa family for making this possible and for the great future trajectory this is laying for us.

I thank you