

**Welcome by Moloko Sepota, Unisa-North Eastern Regional Director**

**Official Table of Precedence**

**Business Breakfast and Signing Ceremony between Limpopo Provincial Government and Unisa**

**Monday, 07 May 2018, 08:30 for 09:00 - 12:30**

**Unisa Polokwane Hub, 23A Landros Mare Street, Polokwane**

**Programme Director:** Dr Somadoda Fikeni, Director of Special projects and Advisor to the Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of South Africa

Mr Chupu Mathabatha, Premier of Limpopo Provincial Government

Prof Mandla S Makhanya, Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of South Africa

Prof MT Mogale, Executive Dean of Unisa College of Economics and Management Sciences

Mr Nchabeleng : DG

Ms K Mahlare, Executive Director of Unisa Department of Institutional Advancement

Members of Unisa Executive and Extended Management present

Representative from various Institutions of higher learning present here today

Representative from various Limpopo Provincial and local Government present

Representatives from the various sections of the Limpopo Premier's office

Members of the business community present

Mr Tebogo Mabidilala, Chairperson Unisa Regional Student Representative Council and other members the regional SRC present

Invited guests from various Media fraternal present

Distinguished members of the audience

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good morning to you. It is an honor, on behalf of our VC to welcome you all here today. We are honored to have you here today to witness and share in this important ceremony. The fact that you graced this occasion with your presence gives us courage to carry on with what we are doing and are happy to be witnesses of this great ceremony.

We are here this morning to witness the signing of this agreement. I need to indicate that the agreement covers a broad range of activities that will help to advance research activities in line with the Limpopo Development Plan as well as any other competing programme. The gathering further serves as an attempt to create awareness and extend an invitation to all the people of Limpopo to participate in this programme aimed at uplifting the community.

Unisa is extremely excited to be an active participant in this project. We do not take this partnership for granted, don't even for minute think that we do, because we don't. We view it as an opportunity to share ideas from diverse minds and the limited resources in search of workable solutions to the challenges facing the communities we serve. This dovetails very well with John Maxwell's views when he said "Great thinkers do not birth brilliant ideas in isolation. Rather, they form their thoughts through interaction and communication with others." He avers that shared thinking matures the mind by allowing others to access experiences that they do not personally possess.

It is on occasions like this when Henry Ford's line of thought comes to mind. He says "coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress and working together is success. I believe his words are as pertinent today as they were then. Our presence here today serves as that beginning.

Prof Mogale and his team from Unisa and Mr Nchabeleng and his team from the Premier's office brought us here today, to mark that significant beginning. As a region we worked with Prof Mogale and his team before negotiating possible partnerships in the province. We can attest to the fact that they are capable and always willing to share their expertise as "true African academics shaping futures in the service of humanity". I have got no shadow of doubt in my mind that after this beginning, we will

stay and work together as a focused team for the benefit of our community. We are hopeful that this collaboration will go beyond cooperation and will be mutually beneficial to the institution and the province.

I need to indicate at this point that at the moment we have active partnerships with public libraries, schools, TVET colleges and some municipalities throughout the province. We are able to offer physical access to our students through these entities. Given the fact that our student profile has drastically changed over the past few years, access to computer labs and libraries, is very important to us. With this ever changing student profile, there are always some expectations for almost all services offered by residential universities. As an ODL institution, offering physical access is one way of reducing distance between our students and the institution and we appreciate such opportunities. This is exactly why we need partnerships more than ever before.

Most of these libraries benefited in the sense that their staff members are constantly trained on e –platforms and other related systems. They have also experienced an increased number in the feet walking on their grounds through Unisa students on a daily basis.

Through this agreement today, we hope to build upon and strengthen these existing partnerships. We hope to further create a new era of partnership that will influence and guide future research activities for the benefit of the province in particular and the country in general. This agreement is more important for us as a region and we will take full advantage of the opportunities likely to be created by the accord.

I do hope very much that that this partnership will also contribute to making our province a better place for all its citizens and will open doors for our students to actively participate in knowledge production in an endeavor to respond to the market needs of the province.

I would like Mr VC, to make an appeal to the business community as well as to all our traditional leaders here to please open their doors when our students come knocking. One current partnership worth mentioning now is the partnership with Waterberg municipality. We will be hosting Golf Challenge tournament in an attempt to raise funds

in Waterberg later this month. We appeal to everyone here to support us for this worthy cause.

We further Mr VC, like to extend our sincere and heartfelt gratitude to the Premier and his entire team, for having opened up his doors for us and agreed to this strategic partnership. Your efforts and support in this partnership are highly appreciated. This gesture means far more than you can ever imagine. Both our students and the community will definitely benefit from the sharing of expertise and resources.

Distinguished guests, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, this is your home, this is your