



*The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor*

**PROF MS MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE CHANCELLOR**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**WELCOME ADDRESS: COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE ON THE  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF YOUTH WORKERS (CCETYW 2013)**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**ZK MATTHEWS GREAT HALL, MUCKLENEUK CAMPUS**

**19 MARCH 2013**

Mr President, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

This very important conference represents another striking example of the multi-stakeholder collaboration that has been taking place at our University, since the beginning of last week, in celebration of Unisa's 140 years of existence.

But in truth, this Conference is not so much about our university or any of the many stakeholders in attendance today, or about Unisa's deep

commitment to being a university *of* the people and *for* the people of South Africa, our Continent and indeed, the world. Rather it is about *our* collective aim to facilitate the establishment of youth work as a profession – long overdue in the opinion of everyone here I believe. So this conference is about providing a platform for the discussion of education and training in the youth work sector, and to developing an “as is” and a “to be” strategy map for the way forward to our end goal. I believe that we are all very clear on that.

Clearly, by being ready to host this conference Unisa has already evidenced its commitment to the establishment of youth work as a profession, and so my message of support this morning is not aimed so much at the conference *per se* – I think that goes without saying. Rather it is aimed at reminding us of the rationale behind the establishment of youth work as a profession – and that of course, is the growth, nurturing and development of our youth into the kind of citizen that will be an asset to our respective societies and whose values promote the development of all and not just the privileged few.

In his presentation to the HER-SA Academy in 2009, Dr Saleem Badat, Principal and Vice Chancellor of Rhodes University summed up the *value* of higher education as follows:

1. The first is to cultivate highly educated people. *Universities must provide imaginatively and rigorously designed and implemented academic programmes.* Our graduates must be in a position to critique and construct alternatives, and communicate effectively orally and in writing.
2. The second key role is to contribute to *forging a critical and democratic citizenship.* Our societies require graduates who are not just capable professionals, but also sensitive intellectuals and critical citizens.
3. The third key role is to *actively engage with the pressing development challenges of our society.* This role is carried out through teaching/learning, research and community engagement functions of the university.
4. The fourth key role is to contribute to the intellectual and cultural development of the public as critical citizens, through *informed social commentary and critique and public engagement around ideas.*

5. The final key role of HE is to creatively *conduct different kinds of rigorous scholarship –discovery, integration, application and teaching – and rigorous research, which has different purposes (fundamental, applied, strategic, and developmental), aims and objects.*

This conference I would suggest, is doing all of that!

So in essence, Mr President, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, this conference is about encouraging our youth to get excited about education – their own and that of their peers; it is about the possibilities that education brings for them and their families; it is about prioritizing properly for a brighter future - for themselves and for their countries; it is about understanding that whatever path they may choose in life, they will need education to fuel the journey. In the final analysis, it is about the *hope* that education brings into situations of hopelessness.

We know statistically, that the longer a young person remains unemployed and uneducated the less likely he or she is to be educated or employed. This conference is about breaking that cycle, and I am pleased and honoured to offer my own support and that of the

University of South Africa, to these vital deliberations. Please accept our sincere best wishes for positive and successful outcomes!

Thank you