



Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor

The Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa,
His Excellency Mr Kgalema Motlanthe;

Our Honoured Guest and Keynote speaker, Mr Mo Ibrahim;

Mrs Graca Machel and all the Members of the Mandela Family Present;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is my great privilege and that of the University of South Africa (UNISA) to work in partnership with the Nelson Mandela Center of Memory at the Nelson Mandela Foundation, in hosting the **11th Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture**.

It is heartening for us at UNISA to welcome you all today, especially this year when we celebrate UNISA's '140 years of shaping futures' in South Africa, the African continent and the world over.

It is even more remarkable for us to welcome you to UNISA to commemorate the life and work of, a global leader, a revered anchor for freedom, justice, unity and 'social cohesion', and our former President, Dr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

For us at UNISA, Former President Mandela is not only the embodiment of these values; he is also an icon, a living legend and one of the great alumni and a recipient of UNISA's Robben Island Alumnus Award.

He is a great inspiration to our students and staff, his life and work continues to propel us to tap into the best values and abilities of our lives.

In one of his letters to one of the great 20th Century South African women literary scholars, a fellow anti-apartheid activist and close friend Fatima Meer, the former President Mandela reminded her of the imperative for intellectual commitment to knowledge, not for its own sake but for societal development, stating, “[a] good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination. But when you add to that, a literate tongue or pen, then you have something very special.”

This, and his assertion that “education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”, speak clearly to our purpose at UNISA to provide knowledge, research and innovations which are attentive to, and relevant the contextual and global exigencies of our times. They also inspire us to become the leading ‘African university in the service of humanity.’

We at Unisa, strongly assert that education is the foundation for individuals’ and societies to flourish.

As we cast ourselves to the future we should strive for education that enables excellence; facilitates success and encourages commitment to social cohesion and socio- economic development as some of the most viable options for the development of individuals, their societies, and the global world.

Thank you
Prof. Mandlenkosi S. Makhanya
Principal and Vice Chancellor
August 17th, 2013