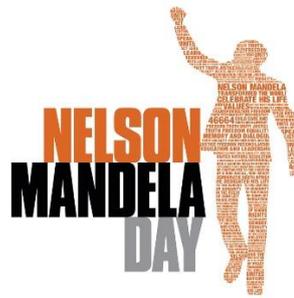




The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor



PROF MS MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE CHANCELLOR

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

**REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF MANDELA DAY BUILD A ZOZO
COMMUNITY PROJECT**

***“Honouring Madiba’s Legacy through community
engagement with communities - An ethical
imperative for a sustainable future”***

UNISA Muckleneuck Ridge, Pretoria

17 July 2015

 Programme Facilitator and Vice Principal-Advisory
and Assurance Services, Prof Divya Singh

 Members of the Unisa Executive and Extended
Management participating in this project today

 Postman, Brendan Grealy

 The principal of Tshegofatso Special School, Mr
Milton Ngobeni and your staff members in attendance

 The head of Mamelodi Old Age Home, Mr Johan
Strydom

 Participating Unisa staff, students and community
members

 A special mention and recognition of the organizers
of this event.

 Distinguished Volunteers

 Ladies and Gentlemen

On this very special Mandela Day event at Unisa I extend a special welcome to each and every one of you. I am mindful of the fact that today is not a day of long speeches or treatise on the value of community engagement and responsible active

citizenship. Today is the day of action that give dignity to manual labour and full meaning to the value of Ubuntu/Botho. I will, therefore, not take long to share a few thoughts and reflections on the significance of the work we are about to do and how it links up to the very soul of who we are as UNISA.

I stand before this army of volunteers and people of goodwill who give real practical meaning to the African philosophy of Ubuntu/Botho. We are also joined by some of the representatives of institutions and people who will be beneficiaries of the Zozo that we are building. This demonstration of human solidarity is an answer to the United Nations' clarion call for the preservation and promotion of Mandela Legacy through demonstration of human solidarity that touches those who are in need.

The central pillar and fountain of the University of South Africa's Strategy Vision 2030 is expressed through its vision statement, **“The African University Shaping Futures in the Service of**

Humanity.” I cannot think of a more practical and meaningful manner of living up to this ideal than being responsible and ethical citizens of our community, of our society and indeed being conscientious global citizens than this symbolically rich and profound act of community work. But to Unisa, every day is a Mandela Day, as shown in the work of the Directorate for Community Engagement and Outreach and that of sustainability and our ethics and sustainability programme. Just to illustrate this point, Unisa has 250 projects in which Unisa staff and students participate with communities. This is a conservative figure given that anyway our work is geared towards community development. Today we use this event to celebrate and showcase our relentless commitment as community of academics, students, support and administration staff and NGOs. This year we have mobilized 17 teams of 20 people each and we are building houses on 3 campuses: Muckleneuck, Sunnyside and Florida. We will be building and painting Zozo huts which are inspired by a theme of environmental sustainability.

This year I have identified Tshegofatso Special School and Mamelodi Old Age Home as part of Vice Chancellor's Charity Work to be added as beneficiaries of some of the Zozo Huts that will be donated to the identified needy institutions and people. I have also mobilized resources for these two institutions. I am deeply touched by the overwhelming response from our own staff members and members of Unisa community is general who donated more than 600 sanitary towels, clothes and some cash. I am always reminded of Riana Zaayman, a Unisa staff member driven by love and passion flowing from a heart of gold, who initiated the project of mobilizing Unisa family, NGOs and Community to build the Zozo Huts which are then donated to needy institutions. Let me also acknowledge Prof Sunette Pienaar and her team for organizing and coordinating the complex and intricate logistics of this day.

To those representing the institutions that will benefit from the Mandela Day projects, today you have come face-to-face with

men and women driven by what Madiba coined as the RDP of the Soul, who are giving their time, energy, skills and resources, to make this day a spectacular act of Ubuntu. As you leave for your various communities, take part of Unisa with you and leave part of you with us. We are part of you as much as you are now part of us. To all of us volunteers, let us dream of more audacious and far-reaching projects for coming years as we continue to service humanity.

Many of the most vulnerable of our country and around the world are hurting from social, political, economic and psychological ills of our times and it is through these acts of generosity which have a redemptive restorative justice to their dignity and soul. The profound words of Steve Maraboli best capture the essence of this sentiment when he proclaimed that **“A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal.”** Out of modesty, some amongst us may even look at this work and say but this is only a drop in an ocean but be reminded of Mother Teresa’s wise counsel that **“What we are**

doing is a drop in an ocean. But if that drop was not in the ocean, the ocean would be less.”

With those few remarks, let the work begin, and let the labour of love flow through your hands and fingers. You are touching lives of people you may never even get a chance to see but they will always feel your love and presence. We hope that this gesture of kindness and selflessness shall be habitual and contagious as the epidemic of love is always welcome to this world.

I wish you a happy, fulfilling and productive Mandela Day!

I thank you all

Enkosi

Re a leboga

Siyabonga