



*The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor*

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

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**PRIVATE DINNER WITH MR THABO MBEKI, PATRON OF TMALI**

**SAXON HOTEL, JOHANNESBURG**

**25 MARCH 2015**

***“Introducing TMPL”***

- President Thabo Mbeki, Patron of TMALI and former president of the Republic of South Africa and Mrs Zanele Mbeki
- Dr Brigalia Bam, Chairperson of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation and all the Members of the Foundation
- Members of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation and Unisa Board
- Members of the media
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening, and thank you for taking the time out of your very busy schedules to share with us our vision and strategy for the Thabo Mbeki Presidential Library.

The establishment of the Thabo Mbeki Presidential Library (TMPL) in partnership with the Thabo Mbeki Foundation is consonant with the University of South Africa's vision to be *the* African University shaping futures in service of humanity, and our fundamental resolve and commitment to preserve and grow our African heritage and legacy for future generations.

The project is planned in two phases. In phase 1 (ending in 2018) TMPL will be housed in the renovated library on level 4 in the Samuel Pauw Building, Muckleneuk, at the University of South Africa. A concept library has been established on the Unisa Muckleneuk Campus on Level 1 in the Kgorong Building, as a preview to the envisaged library, and has drawn very positive responses from visitors. Phase 2 will include a stand-alone Presidential library.

The journey thus far has demonstrated the importance of this innovative project. The Thabo Mbeki Presidential Library was officially announced at a press conference on 16 September 2014. A two-day Colloquium with a carefully selected theme "The power of memory in

shaping humanity” followed the announcement and formed part of a comprehensive consultation process aimed at ensuring the proper conceptualisation and planning of the unique character envisaged for TMPL. The outcomes the colloquium and future consultations will be an important part of the development of the Thabo Mbeki Presidential Library (TMPL) and complements research done on Presidential libraries. The planning is done by TMPL committees with representation from Unisa and TMF.

The establishment of this library was prompted by the fact that official and private papers of political leaders in African countries are often not kept or archived by their own governments, with the result that these valuable resources are hosted by institutions outside the continent, with ownership of and access to them being vested in the hands of others. This denies Africans the opportunity to retain knowledge about their own countries and leaders on the Continent, and provides the space for “other voices” to bestow it with their own versions of legitimacy. African scholars are also faced with the situation of having to travel outside the Continent to research their own institutions and leaders.

The Thabo Mbeki Presidential Library is intended to become a living Library and museum covering three major time frames, namely the pre-

presidential time, presidential time and post-presidential time. It will not only focus on the life and times of our former President, Mr Thabo Mbeki, but also on the broader context in which Mr Mbeki's activities took place and will therefore:

- Enable a reflection on South African, African and global developments stretching from the first decade of the 20th Century;
- Provide space to reflect on the processes and realities which have created the conditions for Africa today, through the three broad time-periods: (1) the pre-colonial and colonial period; (2) the struggle against colonialism; and (3) the post-colonial era;
- Offer the possibility to confront the question – where should Africa be tomorrow, as it pursues the objective of the Renaissance of Africa? ; and
- Serve as an important vehicle for re-energising the broad African Renaissance Movement aimed at contributing towards Africa claiming the 21st Century.

African scholars, students and the general public will be the primary beneficiaries of TMPLM. These benefits will accrue in the following manner:

- Access to a world-class African information collection centre which will offer rare and valuable resources;
- An interactive Centre of Learning, Research and Discourse for the attainment of the African Renaissance, with access to a network of similar institutions that are part of the “virtual global library”;
- An accessible place for Africans and global citizens to engage on issues of the African liberation struggle and the African renaissance;
- A forum for analysing and studying Africa and its developmental challenges and prospects;
- A place to constructively participate in processes and efforts towards Africa’s development.

Clearly, the Thabo Mbeki Presidential Library will play an important role in the history and future of our country, creating a platform for dialogue, research, programmes for children and information services to scholars internationally.

TMPL offers a unique opportunity to become involved in *history-in-the-making* and to be a part of the establishment of a world-class information collection centre, which will offer free and ready access to the rare and valuable materials. It will be an indispensable Centre of Learning, Research and Discourse towards the attainment of the

African Renaissance, and part of a “virtual global library”. The library will offer a tranquil place for citizens of Africa, the diaspora and tourists to visit, learn and reflect on the African liberation struggle and her renaissance.

I’m sure that you will agree that this is an innovative and seminal project. As a university we are called to ensure that we protect, curate and build on the legacies of those who have shaped our society and who will shape it in future. The TMPL will fulfil that role.