



*Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor*

**Prof Mandla Makhanya**

**Principal and Vice Chancellor of UNISA**

**Welcome and opening remarks**

Algerian Ambassador Lecture

*"The Algerian Revolution and Liberation of Africa"*

**16 November 2015**

**Enoch Sontonga Hall, Sunnyside Campus, UNISA**



Programme Director,



Your Excellency, Ambassador El Abd--Naceur Belaid, the Algerian

Ambassador to South Africa



The Acting Director of the Institute for Global Dialogue, Dr Philani

Mthembu



The Director of the Unisa Foundation, David Farirai




Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners and the

entire diplomatic corps present today

 Members of the South African government in attendance

 Members of Unisa extended Management and staff

 Students

 Distinguished audience, ladies and gentlemen

It is indeed an honour and privilege to welcome you to our university which is increasingly becoming a home and a space of exchanging ideas for diplomats. Feel the warm embrace of African Ubuntu as I invite you to relax and absorb ideas that will flow from this lecture.

The passage of time and the appeal of recency often lead to the fading away of some important historical facts. This situation often robs everyone of us of a rich liberation heritage that demonstrates the ties that bind us as Africans. The subject of the Algerian Revolution and its impact on the African liberation is an outstanding example of this, as an average young African is generally unaware of the details of the Algerian revolution that stretched from mid 1950s until 1962 when Algeria became independent from the French colonial control. Even more important, they are generally unaware of the role that Algeria played in supporting the liberation struggles across the African continent. In the

Southern African liberation struggles we often allow a dominant narrative that show support from neighbouring countries such as Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Mozambique and others while almost forgetting to amplify the role of Algeria in these struggles. The potency of this lecture is that it promises to close this knowledge gap whilst at the same time making us appreciate the strong liberation heritage ties that bind us as Africans.

The inspiring role of Algerian liberation struggle against the French mighty colonial army and propaganda had a ripple effect across the continent in later years. The legendary role of Ben Bella and his cohort of liberation fighters inspired many other leaders of liberation struggles and guerrilla warfare. The widely read seminal academic work on liberation and anti-colonial struggle of Franz Fanon was also informed by his first-hand experience of Algerian liberation struggle. Once Algeria became independent it became the very first country to offer military training to fledgling liberation armies of liberation organizations such as the ANC, FRELIMO, SWAPO, and many others. Algeria continued to play a crucial pan-African role as one of three country-leaders which conceptualized and championed African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development commonly known by its acronym, NEPAD. All these are clear beacons of Algerian prominent and often pioneering role in the continent

but these are rarely part of the dominant narrative and public consciousness hence the significance of this lecture today.

I, therefore, commend the Institute for Global Dialogue for once more bringing the vintage subject for our public reflection. University of South Africa's strategic intent, as articulated in its vision statement, of being "The African University Shaping Futures in the Service of Humanity" is given concrete meaning by a seminar of this nature as it reinforces our Africa focused agenda. The City of Tshwane has one of the greatest concentration of diplomats in the world and this remains an untapped knowledge resource and reservoir which IGD is actively unearthing for public engagement.

With knowledge encounters of this nature, Unisa is destined to become a knowledge centre of learning following in the footsteps of Timbuktu in Mali and Alexandria in the ancient Egypt. We are, as Unisa, proudly African hence our emphatic association with programmes of this nature. I implore IDG and organizers of this programme to intensify the utilization of ambassadors and high commissioners and diplomats in general, to come to Unisa and share their

country or global experiences for the benefit of our scholars, students and the general public of South Africa and the continent.

I cannot think of an eminently qualified person to tackle this important subject than His Excellency, Ambassador El Abd--Naceur Belaid. We look forward to the lecture that will surely give us nuggets of wisdom and open a window to moments in history that had started to fade in our minds. It is in this context that I often take refuge and wise counsel in Amilcar Cabral's thesis that History is a Weapon, it is an antidote and memory against forgetfulness. Lest we forget what Algeria and the rest of Africa did to assist South African struggle and the hospitality shown during their exile years. Consciousness brought by public engagements of this nature often form seeds of our pan-African consciousness and a fuel for the Africa Agenda 2063.

I invite you to enjoy and reflectively absorb the lecture being delivered this morning.

I thank you.

Merci.

Shukran.

