



Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor

Prof Mandla Makhanya

Vice Chancellor and Principal of UNISA

Message from UNISA

16th Annual Steve Biko Memorial Lecture

12 November 2015

ZK Mathews Hall, UNISA

Muckleneuk Campus

 Programme Director and Director of Unisa Vice Chancellor's projects, Dr Somadoda Fikeni.

 Your Excellency and the former President of the Republic of Mozambique and the Chairperson of the African Forum of the former African heads of states and governments, Joachim Chissano.

 The acting Chairperson of Unisa Council, Dr Sibeletso Mokone-Matabane and Council members present

 Members of the Biko Family with special mention of Mrs Ntsiki Biko, Mr Nkosinathi and Mrs Lebo Biko, Mr Samora Biko, Ms Nobandile Biko and Mr Hlumelo Biko.

 Members of the Steve Biko Foundation Board led by Mr Ishmael Mkhabela.

 Members of Unisa Executive and Staff Members

 Mr Mduduzi Mabuza, President of Unisa National SRC and other student leaders as well as students present tonight

 Africa Forum led by Ambassador John Tesha

 Your Excellencies, Ambassadors, and High Commissioners present

 Leaders of government, business and civil society

 Members of the media present tonight

 Members of this distinguished audience

It is with a great sense of excitement and humility that I welcome you to the 16th Steve Biko Annual Memorial Lecture. This is a historic event as it is the very first Steve Biko Annual Memorial Lecture to be hosted by UNISA and it also marks the beginning of our partnership with the Steve Biko Foundation. Through this relationship we shall reinforce the legacy of this towering liberation fighter, Steve Biko, while at the same time using this platform to give concrete meaning to Unisa's Vision Statement of striving to be "The African

University Shaping Futures in the Service of Humanity.” There is a natural synergy and iconic convergence between the ideals Steve Biko espoused and Unisa’s vision and mission thus making this relationship an organic relationship that is of mutual benefit. Unisa’s national, continental and global footprint will make it possible for the Steve Biko Foundation to access areas that they hitherto had not penetrated whilst Unisa will also effectively and positively utilize the global reputation and ideals of Steve Biko, who in his own right was not only a struggle icon but an intellectual giant who explored fresh perspectives in pursuit of our emancipation. We look forward to great impactful achievements of our partnership with the Steve Biko Foundation. The measure of success will be how this impact on our society and on our intellectual enterprise of knowledge production as a university.

In the face of our challenges today I often think of the relevance and potency of Steve Biko’s seminal ideas, particularly the one of self-reliance and a new consciousness in our quest for liberation and development. A forum of this nature is a reminder that may invoke soul-searching in our quest for a difficult redemptive national and continental conversation on how to make real the promises of our liberation struggles and developmental aspirations.

I cannot immediately think of a more eminently qualified person than our keynote speaker tonight, His Excellency, Joaquim Chissano, who fought the war for liberation and also won peace for Mozambican people, and also knew when to handover the baton to the next generation of leaders. He remains an eminent statesman and a peacemaker across our continent. 2015 marks 40 years since the Mozambican independence, where he was one of instrumental midwives for the new nation led by Frelimo. This also gives us an opportunity to appreciate and remind ourselves of the ties that bind Mozambican and South African people in their quest for liberation and justice.

Working together in all our various spaces during this historical moment of great social, political and economic challenges, we stand a realistic chance of achieving what Steve Biko predicted when he proclaimed “In time, we shall be in a position to bestow on South Africa (indeed on Africa as well) the greatest possible gift- a more human face.”

Let us sit and reflect on the nuggets of wisdom from the doyen of African liberation struggle and post-war reconstruction and take the conversation beyond these walls to all corners of our society.

I thank you.

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