



The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor

PROF MS MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE CHANCELLOR

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

OPENING AND WELCOME

AT THE 7TH THABO MBEKI AFRICA DAY LECTURE-2016

PRESENTED BY ADVOCATE BARNEY AFAKO

*Theme "The International Criminal Court in Africa and Africa's quest for
Peace and Justice"*

ZK MATTHEWS GREAT HALL

27 MAY 2016

■ Programme Director and the CEO of the Thabo Mbeki
Foundation, Mr Max Boqwana

- Patron of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation and our former President, Your Excellency, President Thabo Mbeki
- Chairperson of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation, Dr Brigalia Bam and all the members of the Board of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation
- Unisa Council members in attendance
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Our keynote speaker and eminent guest for the 7th Thabo Mbeki Africa Day Lecture, Advocate Barney Afako
- Facilitator of this event's panel discussion, Professor Laurence Juma
- Panel member, Ms Ottilia Maunganidze
- Unisa's Vice-Principal: Advisory and Assurance Services, Professor Divya Singh and other members of our executive and extended management
- Our international guests with special recognition of those from the rest of our Continent

- Staff members of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation
- Members of Unisa family including staff, students and alumni
- Leadership, staff and students of the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute
- Representatives of the civil society, the public sector and the private sector as well as the international donor community
- Members of the Media covering this historic event
- Distinguished audience in this ZK Matthews Great Hall at Unisa and those viewing and listening to this Thabo Mbeki Africa Day Lecture

Once more, the University of South Africa and The Thabo Mbeki Foundation are honoured and excited to be hosting the 7th Thabo Mbeki Africa Day Lecture this evening of the Africa Month of 2016. Accept and feel our warm African Ubuntu/botho welcome into this critical conversation on a subject and theme that has become topical in South Africa, in the African continent and indeed around the

world. The theme and the topic of this lecture is entitled “The International Criminal Court in Africa and Africa’s quest for Peace and Justice.” As I contemplated this public conversation today I could not think of any more appropriate subject than this one given recent and current developments in our continent. Last year the African leaders in the African Union Summit critically reflected on The International Criminal Court and their verdict was that it seemed to have taken a profoundly troubling detour from the noble original position given the apparent bias towards the African leaders. In South Africa the appearance of Sudanese President at the South African-hosted special meeting of the African Union and the subsequent series of court battles over South Africa’s failure to arrest and hand him over to The International Criminal Court is still a vexing topical issue. The appearance of the Kenyan President before this court in The Hague also made international headlines and triggered a chain reaction of debates about the nature and the character of this court.

The seismic shifts in global politics are surely going to impact on international criminal justice as well as Africa's quest for peace and justice. Already, the waves of refugees crossing to Europe mainly from the conflict zones of the Middle East and parts of north and west Africa seem to be shaking the very foundations of European political, social and economic order as seen in their various reactions. Political developments in North and South America, adding to what I referred to in Europe and the Middle East, immediately suggest changing geopolitics and an urgent need for Africa to craft its destiny, mindful of these political minefields. Political developments in Burundi, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Libya, northern Nigeria are also an indication of the work ahead in Africa's quest for peace. Indeed, if we are to realize the AU Agenda 2063 and give the true meaning to the Africa rising narrative we, as Africans, must have difficult reflective and critically introspective conversations of this nature in

our quest for solutions located within the existing trajectory of global geopolitical matrix.

A cursory look at the profile of our keynote speaker tonight suggests that we could not have chosen a better legal mind with the requisite extensive resume and global experience. I look forward to your lecture and I am certain everyone here and those joining us from various viewing points and listening posts will be enriched by your intellectual engagement.

As we co-host this 7th Thabo Mbeki Africa Day lecture I cannot resist stating that our partnership with the Thabo Mbeki Foundation has yielded so many strategic, academic and positioning benefits for Unisa on a scale that very few would have anticipated only a few years ago. Unisa now hosts a highly regarded Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute that has trained and graduated many leaders who are beginning to make an impact and create waves around the

country, the continent and the world. The Africa Day Lecture series has placed us on a global map given the caliber of speakers and the themes selected. We recently inaugurated a state of the art Thabo Mbeki Presidential Library that hosts special archival collections of President Thabo Mbeki and work is currently underway of hosting works of many other former heads of African states. We are also hosting the Southern Africa Education Trust that has produced a series of the most comprehensive history of South African Struggle and African as well as international solidarity linked to it. All these are concrete verifiable fruits of our partnership. Under my leadership I will spare no effort to ensure that this mutually reinforced and beneficial symbiotic relationship is consolidated for even greater impact on continental stage.

I must hasten to say that the stature, intellect, and global standing of former President Thabo Mbeki has played a vital catalytic role in the success of this partnership. Many observers have described you as

the foremost impactful visionary leader of the African continent in the last two decades and the many institutions such as the AU, NEPAD, the African Renaissance Philosophy and policy outlook, the African Peer Review Mechanism and many others bear testimony to this assertion. You continue to be a trailblazer and a pathfinder as shown in your current work for the United Nations on illicit funds flowing out of Africa as well as many other peace missions in the African continent. This year, South Africa marks its 20th anniversary since the adoption of our world acclaimed constitution. It was on this occasion that you delivered a grandiloquent poetic speech “***I am an African***” which has become a South African and African literary and pan-African anthem that affirmed the indigenous while being inclusive enough to recognize a complex history that has given birth to diverse heritage of the mother continent of humanity. Indeed, as I stand here today, I am proud to be an African even though we may still face many challenges as a people – I can safely say that the

prospect of an Africa Rising born out of our collective efforts seem real.

I just want to conclude my short remarks with an observation that Africa has been known for chasing other people's rabbits and as we try to define ourselves we are trying to unlearn that habit and turn our effort into chasing our own rabbits. It is most appropriate to close by extracting an excerpt from President Thabo Mbeki's "***I am an African***" speech where he proclaimed that -

"This thing that we have done today, in this small corner of a great continent that has contributed so decisively to the evolution of humanity says that Africa reaffirms that she is continuing her rise from the ashes.

Whatever the setbacks of the moment, nothing can stop us now!

Whatever the difficulties, Africa shall be at peace!

However improbable it may sound to the skeptics, Africa will prosper."

Let me leave this podium wishing you a great evening and a feast of ideas under the African skies and around the symbolic baobab tree.

Let me wish you all a happy Africa month.

I thank you.

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