



**The Signing of the MOU between
The University of South Africa
and
The Eswatini Economic Policy Analysis and Research Centre (ESEPARC)
Vice Chancellor's VIP Lounge
13th Floor ORT Building, Muckleneuk Campus, Tshwane
11 February 2019**

- Dr Somadoda Fikeni, Unisa's Director : VC's Projects/Advisor to the Principal
- Dr Thula Sizwe Dlamini, Executive Director: Eswatini Economic Policy Analysis and Research Centre (ESEPARC) in Mbabane, Eswatini
- Professor Veronica McKay: Acting Vice- principal: Teaching and Learning, Community Engagement and Student Support
- Prof Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu, Director: School of Governance

- Esteemed colleagues and representatives of our respective institutions
- Ladies and gentlemen

A very warm welcome to our University. We are delighted and excited to be entering into this Memorandum of Understanding that provides a visible manifestation of our mutual commitment to the sharing of resources and capacities towards research, governance and administrative improvement and excellence in our countries and on our Continent. This, in my view is a true expression of Ubuntu/Botho. It is the magic that happens when people work together with common purpose and for the common good.

In the context of today's collaboration, I think we can agree - with a great deal of pain - that the need to improve state capacity is paramount. We are living the results of failed or inadequate policy and practice and our mutual need to address these matters is urgent and imperative.

So today's signing ceremony is significant for three reasons. Firstly, it is a demonstration of the practical and pragmatic collaboration that is possible and that is not limited or confined to narrow sectoral

interests or boundaries, when there is a willingness to give genuine expression to our commitment - both national and continental - to our African renaissance. I say this because it is becoming clearer by the day that if we are to rise, we will need to harness and leverage every possible resource and capacity that we have as a collective, and be the architects of our own flourishing.

Second, MoUs such as this one speak to our mutual appreciation of, and deep commitment to, our citizens - and our determination to make a meaningful and measurable contribution to the change that we would like to see in their lives, and by extension, our societies and our Continent.

And third, UNISA's vision to be ***“The African University shaping futures in the service of humanity”*** reinforces this collaboration while it resonates with practical and symbolic meaning. UNISA is the largest university in Africa and in the Southern Hemisphere and it has a global footprint in terms of its student enrolment as an Open Distance Learning university as well as its international partnerships.

We have much to offer and yet, so much is yet to be done and achieved towards the attainment of that vision. We are a living and growing

institution that is deep in the throes of our own transformation. We believe that in every such collaboration we will not only benefit, but we will also learn from our engagement and the knowledge and expertise that is generated through the public lectures series; collaborative research, teaching and learning; community engagement development; seminars, workshop and training. We feel humbled and honoured to play our role in ESEPARC's development and we are honoured to be the future recipients of the collaborative developmental bounty that will undoubtedly result from this MoU.

I have no doubt that this collaboration will be of mutual benefit and that it has the potential to establish a model and a platform for further collaboration between Eswatini and this University. So, Dr Dlamini, over the longer term, and in line with UNISA's strategic commitment to increased stakeholder engagement, I would like us to think beyond today, to future collaborations from which we could possibly benefit. I am hopeful- and confident - that the relationship that we are formalising today will grow and develop to the continued benefit of our respective institutions in the months and years ahead.

Thank you