



The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor

PROF MS MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE CHANCELLOR

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF H.E. THABO MBEKI

AT THE 5TH THABO MBEKI FOUNDATION AFRICA DAY LECTURE

PRESENTED BY H.E. SALIM AHMED SALIM

ZK MATHEWS GREAT HALL

23 MAY 2014

Distinguished guests ladies and gentlemen

Introduction

Once more the University of South Africa and the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute (TMALI) are reaping benefits of our

strategic decision to partner with The Thabo Mbeki Foundation, in hosting the Thabo Mbeki Africa Day Lecture.

It is a great honour and privilege to extend a warm African welcome to all of you as our honoured guest on the occasion of the 5th Thabo Mbeki Foundation Africa Day Lecture. I would like to note, with much appreciation, all the dignitaries and diplomats in our midst. The warmth I extend to you will make you forget, for one moment, that we are now entering the winter season in the southern hemisphere.

A special welcome to the patron of The Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute, his Excellency, Dr Thabo Mbeki, who, in a true sense, has become part of the Unisa family. That you always make time to be with us in this institution on occasions like this despite your heavy international, continental and national commitments has a profound significance to our hearts and minds.

Mindful of the fact that our keynote speaker and special guest, his Excellency, Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, is to be introduced, I extend to you, son of Africa, an African Ubuntu welcome to South Africa and Unisa. We are truly honoured by the presence of a great African leader of your international stature. As I would say in kiSwahili – “Karibu!” In your presence we can feel the reverberating spirit of

your comrade and a great African statesman, the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.

51 Years ago the African Continent embarked on a journey of uniting the people of the continent and breaking the yoke of colonialism. 51 years later the African Continent, having achieved the historic mission of decolonization, is at a crossroads - characterized by a paradox: Africa faces great potential for economic prosperity, but also the serious threat of political and social instability in various parts of the continent. In other words, the 51st celebration of Africa Day for our beloved continent, comes at a time of unprecedented levels of economic growth and maturing political systems, but also of ongoing challenges and threats.

It is against this background that our quest for the African Renaissance, and endeavors to make real the promise of claiming the 21st Century as an African century, has to be contextualized. The topic of today's main address, *"Defining a leadership paradigm for a new Africa"*, is most appropriate, more so, given that the African Union has just launched the drafting of Agenda 2063.

The Political

While it is important to note and deal with threats to Africa's development, such as terrorism, especially from groups like Boko Haram, Al-Shabab, and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb who thrive

and prey on the most vulnerable among us, it is even more crucial to remind the world that Africa has changed and is changing for the better.

The African Governance Report II (AGR 2) states that markers of political maturity such as elections have come to be accepted and respected by both opposition and incumbent political parties throughout the continent. AGR 2 explains that *“in the decade 1996–2006, 44 elections were conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa...from 2005 to 2007, 26 presidential and 28 parliamentary elections were held on the continent.”* This year alone will see about twenty elections taking place – citizens from South Africa, Malawi, Algeria and Tunisia (amongst others) are welcoming new democratic governments and leaders.

Again, while it is important to note the positive strides made by institutions like the African Union (AU) and mechanisms like the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), it is important to acknowledge that more political work needs to be done in the Great Lakes region, Sudan and northern Africa to ensure that citizens in those parts of our continent truly come to enjoy Africa’s new narrative. A politically stable Africa will enable government leaders and citizens to focus their full attention on addressing problems like corruption and poor service delivery; challenges which are hampering the continent’s socio-economic development trajectory.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA), for instance, in its recent report, explains that corruption is costing the continent over \$148 million per annum. In addition to this, 50% of the tax revenue and 25% of continent's GDP illicitly exits the continent through corrupt practices. And, more worryingly for initiatives like intra-Africa trade and development, these corrupt practices are being perpetuated by Multi-National-Corporations.

The Economic

Therefore, while tremendous strides continue to be made in the arena of building peace and strengthening democratic processes and systems, it is important for African citizens, States and the AU, to work towards ensuring that the continent uses its current economic growth windfall to foster good governance models and ensure that the economic pie is shared by all Africans. As the World Bank (WB) recently reported, the good work that has been taking place, has seen the continent grow by over 5.2 percent in 2014, driven mainly by its natural resources, infrastructure programmes and local consumption levels.

However, while this economic growth is a positive development, the warnings from leading African scholars and activists are important to ponder. A number of African scholars and activists warn that the African continent's economic growth should not be solely based on

its mineral resources and that the middle class said to propel economic growth on the continent should be problematised.

Initiatives for development

Acknowledging the fact that economic growth on the continent is occurring, it is important to promote and advance plans and initiatives that will see the economic growth narrative impact as many Africans as possible. It is for this reason that all African citizens and continental institutions need to contribute towards the implementation of various Pan-African programmes and initiatives. In this context, one can refer to the recently launched African Union's *Agenda 2063*. This programme's fifty-year vision for the continent is clearly inspired by the economic and regional integration initiatives found in both the *Lagos Plan of Action (1980)* and the *Abuja Treaty (1991)*; shaped by the *New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad)*; and draws from other continent-wide initiatives such as African Development Bank's (*AFDB*) Africa50 Infrastructure Fund.

Future vision for Africa

The political and economic strides the continent has made, as briefly enumerated above, however, need to be accompanied by a uniting vision on how best to utilise Africa's natural resources and develop its human capital for the benefit of the continent as a whole. It is for this reason that African states and citizens need to utilise the African

Renaissance philosophy to ensure that important variables of development like Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and intra-trade and development are researched continentally and used to alleviate poverty and underdevelopment, as some scholars argue.

So, while the United Nations World Investment Report (2013) indicates that “FDI inflows to Africa grew to \$50 billion in 2012, a rise of 5 per cent over the previous year”, African governments and citizens need to interrogate whether this FDI is assisting their own individual needs in the areas of science education, agriculture, poverty eradication and other developmental programmes. The true marker of Africa’s development will be how we are able to implement a socioeconomic narrative that has the continent ending the 21st century as a success story.

As an African university, Unisa and the broader community of African scholars and public intellectuals, must define the role that we must play in advancing the African agenda of peace and prosperity, of innovation, and the restoration of African dignity. Forums like this one should challenge scholars and knowledge workers of all kinds to critically reflect on issues raised and seek ways of advancing the African agenda, as Africa’s destiny beckons us. We must always be reminded that a meaningful dialogue between ideas and reality, between theory and practice is at the core of human progress in any society.

I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing our deep appreciation for this event, which puts our university on the world map. Jean Massieu's famous proverb captures the essence of my gratitude, as he says, "**Gratitude is the Memory of the Heart.**"

With these few words, allow me to introduce H.E Dr Thabo Mbeki who will in turn introduce our Keynote Speaker, Dr Salim Ahmed Salim.

Dr Thabo Mbeki does not like lengthy introductions – Dr Thabo Mbeki says that long introductions often sound like an obituary. We also know that he often questions the notion of "Keynote Speaker". So, without delay, and given what I have just highlighted, let me welcome the former president of the Republic of South Africa, the relentless champion of the African Renaissance and now the Patron of the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute – one of our Unisa institutes, Dr Thabo Mbeki, to introduce Dr Salim Ahmed Salim.