

**SPEECH BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, HONOURABLE
CHUPU MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE
SIGNING OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON
RESEARCH COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AND THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH AFRICA.**

07 May 2018

Programme Director, Prof Somadoda Fikeni;

Our host, the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of South Africa, Prof Mandla Makhanya;

Members of the Provincial Executive Council;

The Director General of our Province, Ntate Nape Nchabeleng;

The Regional Director of Unisa's North East Region, Prof Moloko Sepota;

All senior executives and academics of the University of South Africa;

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen:

Let me once again thank you Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Professor Makhanya for your focussed leadership which made this day a living reality.

We are particularly happy that the most senior leadership of the University has seen it necessary to descend to the province to be part of this historic ceremony which is aimed at cementing relations and cooperation between our government and the University.

I must confess that often when we speak about Universities in this province, the focus is always around and about both the University of Limpopo and the University of Venda.

There haven't been very intimate relations between our government and the University of South Africa. Today's ceremony is therefore a game-changer.

Today is about the birth of relations which are expected to endure for a very long time to come.

As the Provincial Government, we attach the greatest importance to the building cordial relations between government and academic institutions.

There is no doubt that this type of friendship will become beneficial to both us and government and to the University of South Africa as an academic institution.

Programme Director;

I do not think that any vocabulary would be sufficient enough to better express the significance of the work we have just concluded with the signing of this Memorandum of Understanding.

You would however remember that during the days of struggle, students activists had always made a call for the transformation of academic institutions from what they called 'Ivory Towers' into institutions of transformation.

I am convinced that the theme to today's ceremony breathe to that clarion call.

Our collective task is indeed to use collaborations of this nature in order to bridge the gap between the work done by our academic institutions and the work we do in government.

Our guiding philosophy should always be about a shared desire to use our knowledge and experiences to help better the lives of our people.

It is for this reason that this MOU cannot afford to become yet another document of mere symbolic significance – the aspirations of our people demand that we make this MOU a living document.

Colleagues,

As I have already said, today is indeed about a collaboration geared towards the realisation of socio-economic development in the Limpopo province.

The development envisaged in the letter and spirit of this MOU is the kind of development which would assist our government to confront the triple social challenges of poverty, inequality and joblessness.

Through the signing of this Memorandum of Understanding, the University of South Africa has accepted an important challenge to become a reliable partner of development to the people of Limpopo.

From today, henceforth, UNISA is no longer a 'distance' institution but a very close friend to our government and the people of Limpopo.

We are confident that this friendship with UNISA will go a long way in assisting us to achieve the development objectives captured in the Limpopo Development Plan.

Mr Vice-Chancellor, the Limpopo Development Plan is our localised version of the National Development Plan.

The LDP represents our government's effort to respond to the socio-economic challenges facing our province.

The LDP is a Plan premised on lessons learnt from previous strategies and plans. However, and most importantly, the LDP is a Plan informed by the prevailing socio-economic climate in the province.

The main essence of this Plan is to reduce poverty, fight unemployment and reduce the unacceptable levels of inequality. We aim to achieve this through sustainable economic development and transformation, social development and transformation.

This Plan represents a policy framework that articulates issues related to both economic growth and social development.

It represents strategic choices made with the aim of achieving the development objectives as outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP).

The LDP will therefore be focusing on Economic development and transformation, infrastructure development, building a developmental state, as well as fostering social cohesion and transformation.

With regard to economic development and transformation, we will be focusing on Mining, agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, empowering SMMEs and Cooperatives.

We will also be strengthening our support towards identified Growth Point areas.

This Plan will also guide us to ensure appropriate measures for fostering social cohesion towards building a cohesive society.

These are the tasks that we have set for ourselves to achieve in our pursuit to better the lives of our people.

There is no doubt that for us to achieve our set targets and goals, we will rely on the support and partnership from institutions such as UNISA.

Your well researched ideas must help us to move Limpopo forward.

We therefore, invite the University of South Africa to also partner with us in helping us to realise the aspirations contained in the LDP.

Programme Director;

Allow me to conclude my remarks by reiterating my conviction that this MOU will go a long way in helping to:

- Facilitate co-operation and collaboration between our Provincial Government and the University of South Africa, and
- Strengthening the skills of personnel working for our Provincial Government

Indeed, we have no doubt that working together with UNISA we will move Limpopo forward.

I thank you!