



PROF MS MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE CHANCELLOR

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

WELCOME: SOMALIA AMBASSADORIAL VISIT

VIP LOUNGE, MUCKLENEUK CAMPUS

21 FEBRUARY 2019

- His Excellency the Honourable Minister Abdulahi Goda Barre, Minister of Education, Culture and Higher Education, Federal Republic of Somalia
- His Excellency Ambassador Jamal Mohamed Barrow, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Somalia to South Africa
- Prof Thenjiwe Meyiwa, Vice-Principal, Research, PG Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation
- Professor Veronica McKay, Acting Vice-Principal: Teaching, Learning, Community Engagement and Student Support

- Esteemed members of the Somalia delegation
- Members of Unisa's delegation
- Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

A warm welcome to you all and to the University of South Africa. We are delighted and excited to be taking our agreement, which had its genesis back in March 2017, to the next level.

We have gratifying evidence of progress on the part of Government in the recognition of Somalia as a Sovereign State, a draft agreement for establishing diplomatic relations, and perhaps more seminal to our purposes as a university, the exploration of ways to assist in capacity building activities for key Somali ministries which includes among others, assistance in the areas of Governance, Peace-building, Constitution building and Capacitating the judiciary. Unisa is ready to assist and collaborate with the Government and people of Somalia, and more pertinently, in the capacity building for civil servants and diplomats and the MDEA Programme.

This programme then, is 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 in all of these areas 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. It is an urgent imperative. At 18 years, ours is the continent with the youngest median age on the planet. What earth will our youth inherit? What is our legacy to them?

So today's engagement 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, engagements 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 engagement 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, 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 engagement with our continental brothers and sisters, we will not only benefit, but we will also learn from our engagements and advance that transformation.

I have no doubt that this engagement will be of mutual benefit, and I am hopeful- and confident - that the relationship that we are forging today will grow and develop to the continued benefit of our respective countries in the months and years ahead.

Thank you!