



Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor

09 August 2020

To our valued female Unisa students

Despite the sentiment held by many that days such as Women's Day have lost much of their meaning and intention, it remains vital that we have at least one day of the year which we dedicate to celebration and introspection around the contribution and role of women in our country, our society and of course, our University.

Now more than ever before, when the lockdown has proven to all who have eyes to see and ears to hear, that women in our country remain under siege on so many fronts - desperately vulnerable yet cripplingly responsible for the wellbeing of so many – we all have a duty and a responsibility to pause and reflect on what we can do as individuals and a collective, to change this situation.

It is in fact painful to realise that the agenda and the bravery of the women in 1956, who rose up and marched for their rights as citizens and for equality as women, has changed so little on so many fronts. Structural and policy changes have in fact, not contributed to the kind of genuine freedom and transformation that was envisaged.

Today we celebrate those women who started the struggle so many decades ago, and those who continue those struggles today under extremely difficult and challenging circumstances. I would suggest that our freedom as a nation and as individuals remains incomplete until our mothers, wives, and sisters are truly free of the burdens and challenges that impede their full flourishing as human beings and as equals.

To our Unisa female students, at Unisa you are a clear majority in the student body. In our view this speaks very clearly to your commitment to growth and transformation (your own and that of your families), to your appreciation of the role of education in that process and to your dedication and diligence in achieving your goals. We are so very proud of that.

On behalf of our Council, staff, our stakeholders and your fellow students, I am honoured to wish you a happy Women's Day and a peaceful and productive Women's Month. At Unisa we are committed to achieving and practicing gender equality, in all respects.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MS Makhanya', is positioned above the printed name.

Prof MS Makhanya
Principal and Vice Chancellor