

**Keynote Address delivered at the occasion of the Inauguration of the Vice Chancellor of Mpumalanga University on 29 May 2015**

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Programme Director; Professor Shongwe

The Honourable Minister of State Security; Mr DM Mahlobo

The Honourable Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training; Mr Mduduzi Manana

Member of the Executive Council MEC Vusi Shongwe

Chairperson of the Council; Dr Madoda Mabunda

Chairperson of Higher Education South Africa, Prof. Adam Habib

Vice- Chancellor of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Prof. Derrick Swartz

Member of the Senate and our daughter Dr. Tsakani Ngomane

Chairperson of the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union; Mr. Sithembiso Mbuyane

Deputy President of the Student Representative Council; Mr Christopher Maladzi

Deputy Vice – Chancellor: Planning and Institutional Support, Prof Richmond Howard

Dean of Students, Dr Paul Maminza

Acting Executive Director; Human Resource Mr. Leonard Mavuso

The Registrar; Mr. Sello Legodi

Distinguished Guest

Ladies and Gentlemen,

## **Sanibonani**

I take this opportunity on behalf of the leadership of the province under the capable stewardship of the Premier, Honourable DD Mabuza and the people of the Place of the Rising Sun (Mpumalanga Province) to express our profound gratitude for the opportunity you have granted me to address this august gathering.

To our distinguished guests we request that you should feel at home for you are at the hospitality of a reservoir of energy and the confluence of light.

The East has always been renowned to be the source of wisdom, where prowess converges as it is stated in the Holy Books that the wise men came from the East (Mpumalanga).

This must give you comfort because the Mpumalanga Province is where the birth right of outstanding personalities are concealed.

The first Accounting Officer of this Country, Dr Cassius Lubisi, the Queen of Gospel Music, Rebecca Malope, Ms World Ms Rolene Strauss , Ray Phiri, Hugh Masekela, Nothembi Mkhwebane, Pretty Mhlongo, Donny, Afro-traction, the 2013 Mnet Idols finalist, Musa and Brendan, the National Coach of Amabhokobhoko Heyneke Meyer, the 2015 World Ruby Sevens Player of the Year, Mr. Werner Kok, the World acclaimed Soloists, Ms Pretty Yende and Given Mabena, the 2015 SAMA Awards Winner who won the best Rap Album of the year and the best collaboration affectionately known as KO, welcome and promise unprecedented cordiality to Professor Thoko Mayekiso and her team.

The only girl from the African Continent, Ms Nompumelelo Sihlangu who will be contesting for World Miss Fashion TV that is going to be held on the 14 June 2015 said I should express her greetings to you.

The second to none scenic beauty of our panorama precinct, the Shangaan Cultural Village, the Three Rondavels, Mac –Mac falls, the Gods Window, the Pot holes, Makhonjwa and Lebombo Mountains, the Olifant river, Crocodile river and Blyde River Canyon, the Kruger National Park which harbours the big five and the Sudwala Caves which are regarded as the oldest known caves in the world, equally admire you for arriving in our area of influence .

The Daisy which is the flower that only grows in Barberton and the Botanical Gardens blossom today for this occasion guarantees a brighter tomorrow for the province.

The five million citizens from the **18** local municipalities, three municipal districts namely Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande and Nkangala are hopeful of a total emancipation now that you have graced this land.

The energy and mining institutions around Emalahleni and Steve Tshwete local Municipality, SASOL, Eskom, Barberton Mines and the financial sector are with us as we are rolling the red carpet for you.

The plus One million learners from Grade R to 12, the 2014 overall grade 12 best learner Ms Madri Wiid, **32 000** educators, the Principal of the 2014 overall best school, Hoërskool Nelspruit, Dr Louise Swanepoël also convey their appreciation to you.

The **1 757** public schools, **18** Special Schools which are managed in **68** circuits that are falling under four districts are grateful that the future of this country and province is guaranteed.

The First Black African to summit the highest mountain on earth Mount Everest, Mr. Sibusiso Vilane and the CEO of Imbumba Foundation who for the past three years reached the peak of the highest mountain in Africa, the Kilimanjaro Mountain in order to raise proceeds to promote his Caring4Girls programme, Mr. Richard Mabaso equally pays homage to you Professor Mayekiso.

All our struggle heroes and heroines who sacrificed their lives and are in the company of the late “Lion of the East”, Comrade. Gert Sibande and the First National President of the Congress of the South African Students (COSAS) the late Comrade Ephraim Mogale are smiling from the grave and it is like I hear them saluting you with the, “ ***Each One Teach One***” slogan. They celebrate the arrival of “our daughter” who will lead from the front towards the attainment of the ideal of the Freedom Charter published **60** years ago stating that:

***“The doors of learning and culture shall be opened to all from Cape to Cairo”.***

Amakhosi Onke Omdabu, Ingwenyama Makhosoke II, Ingwenyama Mabhoko, Inkosi Mnisi, whose programmes are promoted under the umbrella of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders guided by Inkosi Mokoena equally appreciate your presence in the place of the rising sun. Basho ngazwilinye bathi Bayede Ntokazi yakwethu.

The Provincial Chairperson of the Moral Regeneration Movement, Reverend MM Nthali and all Religious leaders of our land are praying that our God should shower you with all wisdom to assist in the prosperity and a better life and future for the people of Mpumalanga.

Tomorrow and tomorrow, the calls of appreciation will be transmitted in all our media platforms; Ikwewezi, Ligwalagwala, Rise FM and our Community Radio Stations.

The custodians of the fourth state will be putting pen to paper equally crafting positive messages in the Mpumalanga newspapers, National and international Newspapers including the Social media confirming that Umbutho wabantu kept its promise as usual.

Programme Director, the coming to fruition of the University of Mpumalanga confirms our resolve to free this country and our continent from abject poverty, ignorance, backwardness, inequality and joblessness by providing quality education, skilling and training.

It provides practical testimony that there is nothing that cannot be achieved when the people work side by side focusing on a shared vision and a common goal.

It opens a new dawn for Mpumalanga and SADC Countries, Mozambique and Swaziland in particular, an era that is predicted in the Provincial Growth Path.

In His State of the Province Address, the Honourable Premier, Mr DD Mabuza stated that our agenda for a radical socio- economic transformation must be anchored on an education system that delivers quality outcomes.

He further said:

*“Our future is in the hands of our children and their needs and aspirations are uppermost on our agenda. Our investment in education remains a critical lever for self-empowerment and social progress.”*

It is based on this context that, we, the people of Mpumalanga appreciate this university because we are aware that it will ensure a fostering of an institutional culture and also help to improve our ways of doing things .

We share a view that education extends well beyond acquiring skills, into acquiring values, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to nation-building, social cohesion and reconciliation.

The Education Sector has the responsibility to ensure that the young people make a positive difference to their own lives and the lives of all, whom they live, work and learn with.

The **830** students who have been enrolled in the University of Mpumalanga from their current four delivery sites, i.e. the Main Campus in Mbombela local Municipality, Siyabuswa Campus, MRTT and Marapyane Agricultural College must be assured that their welfare and aspirations will at all times be considered.

The University's comprehensive nature will assist it to diversify in offering qualifications that contributes to the economic growth and development of the province and the country in general.

I visited the University on Monday, 11 May 2015 and I was fascinated by the visionary and exemplary leadership qualities that Professor Mayekiso displayed. She was more than ready to confront challenges head on and to instil a new working culture within the institution.

I saw in her, an African Woman who is highly dedicated, focused and willing to go an extra mile with her team to make this Institution, the University of Mpumalanga, work for the people of this country and the African continent.

We are proud to grace the occasion of your inauguration and we wish to make a public pledge that the province will assist in whatever way possible to create an enabling environment for your task to be attained with ease.

Deputy Minister, Honourable Manana please convey our sincere appreciation to the entire staff of the Department of Higher Education and Training under the stewardship of the Minister, Honourable Blade Nzimande for the outstanding work done.

We also thank the President of the Country, His Excellency Mr. Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma for the foresight he provided leading to what we are celebrating today.

I wish to conclude by reading the last two stanzas of the African Union Anthem:

*Let us all unite and toil together  
To give the best we have to Africa  
The cradle of mankind and fount of culture  
Our pride and hope at break of dawn*

*O Sons and Daughters of Africa  
Flesh of the Sun and Flesh of the Sky  
Let us make Africa the Tree of Life.*

Today we are hoisting the African Flag high and collectively we confirm that indeed, it feels good to be an African.

**Nginyabonga.**