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## **Message of Congratulations**

By

**AU Commission Chairperson,  
HE Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma**

To

**The Centenary Celebrations of the  
University of Fort Hare**

**20 May 2016**

**Alice, South Africa**

Programme Directors,  
Excellency Honourable President of the Republic of South Africa  
President JG Zuma;  
Excellency Honourable President of the Republic of Zimbabwe RG  
Mugabe;  
Excellencies Ministers in the Cabinet of the Republic of South  
Africa and beyond;  
University of Fort Hare Chancellor Makhenkesi Stofile, Principal  
and Vice Chancellor Dr Mvuyo Tom; Members of the University  
Council, Senate and Academic Staff;  
Premier P Masualle and other Provincial and Local leaders of the  
Eastern Cape;  
President and members of the SRC, the Student body and Alumni;  
Members of the community of Alice;  
Esteemed Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen  
Fellow Africans;

I am greatly honoured to represent the African Union at this centenary celebration. Since its birth in 1916, the University of Fort Hare remains at the forefront of our Pan African ideals and the quest to secure a better life for our people.

In this regard, Fort Hare has so far produced a number of African heads of state and governments: Sir Seretse Khama of Botswana, Interim President Yusuf Lule of Uganda, Former Prime Minister Ntsu Mokehle of Lesotho, President Nelson Mandela of South Africa, President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

The canvass of the university's history is also intertwined by portraits of other Pan African giants such as Prof ZK Mathews,

Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, Oliver Tambo, Govan Mbeki, Duma Nokwe, Gertrude Ntlabathi, Phyllis Ntantala, Can Themba, Chris Hani, Steve Biko, Samuel Pararinyatwa, Tiny Malangana, Munyua Waiyaki, Orton Chirwa and Denis Brutus (to name but a few).

## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

This commemorative event occurs at a time when our glorious continent finds itself in a fast-changing world. In these changing times, empires and dominant forces of yester year are obliged to share the global commons as new strategic alliances such as the G20 and BRICS, and regional bodies such as ASEAN and CARICOM gain traction.

These times also illuminate Africa's paradox, a continent of plenty - human resources, minerals, oil and gas, forests, lake and rivers, arable land, oceans and seas - yet its people and countries are amongst the poorest in the world.

To address its paradox, Africa has developed *Agenda 2063*. As a 50-year vision for the Africa we Want, Agenda 2063 rededicates us to the Pan African Vision of "*an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena.*"

Agenda 2063 demands that we all put Africa and her people first:

- By investing in health, nutrition, education, skills, sciences, technology, engineering, mathematics, in research and innovation so that our youth, our men and women drive development, renewal and growth;
- Building modern infrastructure (transport, energy, ICT, etc) so that we connect and power our countries, industries, cities and rural areas;
- Revolutionise agriculture and agro-processing so that we eliminate hunger and feed the world;

- Industrialise, build the African green and blue economies so that we create economic opportunities, jobs and shared prosperity for current and future generations; and
- Empower women and girls, so that we use all our talent.

Our 50-year Agenda gives us the scope to be ambitious about the Africa we want, to be realistic about the Africa we have and to be systematic, deliberate and unflinching about the path towards Africa's renaissance.

Fort Hare must therefore continue to define its role within this agenda, and to produce the ideas and knowledge, the innovators, entrepreneurs, professionals and leaders that will drive this agenda.

Given its illustrious history, Fort Hare and other academic institutions have a critical role to play towards the realisation of our aspirations and ambitious agenda.

During the ZK Mathews lecture in February 2015, the Vice Chancellor commented that: *"the university is better known to be the 'crucible of Africa' and has produced what we call today heroes of the struggle for liberation movements across the African continent"*.

Indeed universities, their academics and student movements were part of the building blocks of the Pan African movement for liberation, self-determination, solidarity and self-reliance, and in the newly independent states, and inspired the formation of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963.

Over the next fifty years, the universities, these crucibles contributed to the body of knowledge on African development, economics, law, archaeology, sciences, architecture, culture, agriculture and history. They were also sometimes ostracised for speaking out against the demons of tribalism, war, ethnicity, rent-seeking, dictatorships, and structural adjustment programmes, and

when they argued for endogenous African paths of development that moves away from dependency and placed the African people at the centre.

True to this crucible nature, and building on the foundations of the Universities of Timbuktu, Al-Karaouine and Al-Azhar, Fort Hare and the other great Pan African universities that followed such as the Universities of Makerere, Cheik Ante Diop, Ibadan, Addis Ababa, Cairo, Dar es Salaam and many others, were part of the epicentres of change on all fronts of human endeavour.

This role continues to be absolutely necessary, as we transform Africa and build what Professor Calestous Juma calls 'learning economies' and societies.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The learning economies and societies so critical to Africa's transformation will not happen unless we have the skills and right mind-set to make it happen. The study by the African Capacity Building Foundation shows that continent-wide we have a shortfall of over 4 million engineers, technicians and artisans, and over 1 million shortfall in agricultural scientists, and economists, which are so necessary to implement Agenda 2063 priorities.

Our higher education has grown at over 16% per year over the last two decades, but we still have less than 20% of young African men and women with access to higher and further education. It is only once higher education enrolment reaches massification (over 25%) that we can talk about societies striving towards inclusiveness and equity. With less than 20% enrolment in higher education, we are simply reproducing the elite. What compounds this problem, is that over 90% of students enrolled in African universities are in still in the social sciences. The skills shortage and mismatch therefore not only have an impact on growth and development, but also on equity and inclusiveness.

As we therefore look ahead towards our mission for the next fifty years, we expect, indeed we demand, that these crucibles of Africa - our universities - take their rightful place in the African renaissance and transformation.

And, speaking to the students and young people gathered here and elsewhere, let me remind you of the ANC Youth League slogan: *That the youth must learn*, and of the words of Moses Kotane: *that the future belongs to you, and it will be what you make of it.*

Students are known for pushing the boundaries in the struggles of the people and in the furtherance of their own demands. This is what we expect from students. However, with this also come responsibilities, which must be done in a constructive manner.

We indeed have high expectations that you will bring to bear your youthful energies, daring, innovation and creativity to help us transform the Africa we have, into the Africa we want.

As the young Sobukwe, a product of Fort Hare said:

*“You have seen by now what education means to us: the identification of ourselves with the masses. Education to us means service to Africa. You have a mission we all have a mission... we must be the embodiment of our people’s aspirations.”*

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

Fort Hare has been called a *barometer of African thought*. We are encouraged that the institution has not waited for the centenary to craft for itself Vision 2030, building on the gains of its glorious past and drawing lessons from its challenges. It appropriately locates the university in the national and continental development discourses.

It is also important that the vision does not only address the macro level issues, but also addresses the challenges confronting its students and its immediate communities.

On behalf of the African Union, we wish you a happy first centenary. May you flourish over the next centuries, as a leading light of the African Century.

I thank you

**Asante Sane!!!**