

## Media Advisory

### Unisa and Times Higher Education (THE) to host impact forum that will explore ways to enhance quality education in Africa

**Approved for Public Release**

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Africa is on track to surpass Asia as the continent which is home to the greatest number of young people. However, higher education in Africa is hindered by a chronic lack of investment, an unsustainable policy environment, competition from outside Africa for academic talent, international conflicts and a colonial legacy that has created multiple socio-economic challenges that higher education must respond to.

These are some of the issues that will occupy centre-stage at the Times Higher Education Impact Forum to be hosted jointly by the University of South Africa (Unisa) and Times Higher Education (THE) at the Unisa main campus in Pretoria next week. The forum will be held under the theme “Developing and enhancing quality education in Africa, which is based premised on the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on quality education.

Amongst the more than 30 leaders from the higher education sector who will be speaking at the event will be the Principal and Vice Chancellor of Unisa, Professor Puleng LenkaBula, Mr Martin Oosthuizen, the Executive Director of the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARU) as well as former South African Statistician-General and Director of the Economic Modelling Academy, Dr Pali Lehohla.

There will also be four panel discussions that will debate issues such as student support, community engagement, technology and untapping the continent’s huge potential as it is set to overtake Asia with more young people by the middle of this century.

The forum will also explore the following questions in depth:



- How higher education can meet the needs of learners from diverse communities, without discrimination.
- What higher education in Africa will look like by the middle of the century.
- What is needed to deliver quality teaching and learning in higher education in Africa.
- Collaborations with other sectors, including technology, Artificial Intelligence and business

**Tristan Horlick, THE’s regional manager – Africa, said:**

*“Our University Impact Forum, taking place in partnership with Unisa in South Africa, will focus on the opportunities and challenges higher education faces in Africa over the coming decades. The great speakers will ensure fascinating, lively and hugely important discussions about developing higher education in Africa; thus ensuring that this event is one not to miss.”*

*“As a leading Comprehensive Open Distance Education (CODEL) institution, Unisa is honored to partner with the Times Higher Education (THE) as we explore lasting solutions to the challenges facing higher education in Africa and globally, as well as co-construct a future higher education milieu that we all envisage”. it is a particularly singular honour to host the forum in the year that Unisa celebrates its 150th anniversary”* said **Puleng LenkaBula, the Principal and Vice Chancellor of Unisa.**

The University Impact Forum is taking place three months after the release of THE’s Impact Rankings 2023 which assesses universities against the UN’s 17 SDGs. This year, two universities in Africa ranked first in individual SDGs. The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology came first for its contribution to SDG 4 (quality education), and the University of Johannesburg was placed first for their work in areas related to SDG 1 (no poverty).

The forum includes a masterclass examining THE’s Impact Rankings metrics and methodology with a focus on university performance for SDG1 – no poverty; SD4 – quality education; SDG 8 – decent work and economic growth and SDG 10 – reduced inequalities.

The media is invited to attend and cover the event. The details are as follows:

Date : Thursday,21 September 2023

Time : 09:00

Venue: Senate Hall, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela Building, Unisa Main Campus, Preller Street, Muckleneuck, Pretoria, 0002

**–Ends–**

Notes to editors.



1. THE is the trusted global data partner for higher education. Drawing on five decades of expertise in the sector, millions of individual data points and with more unique institutions participating in our flagship university rankings than any other, we offer deeper and richer insight into university performance than anyone else. From powerful data-driven insights and strategic consultancy support to agenda-setting events and hiring solutions, our products and services enable everyone in higher education to make smarter, more informed decisions. For more information, visit Times Higher Education or find us on Twitter: @timeshighered @THEworldunirank
2. Unisa, founded in 1873, offers internationally accredited qualifications, world class research and aims to provide answers to Africa's educational and developmental problems. It is the largest university in South Africa, and Africa, with nearly 400,000 students from more than 100 countries. The University Impact Forum is a part of Unisa's 150th anniversary programme.

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