

CONGRATULATORY ADDRESS OF THE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA, THABO MBEKI, AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY:

**ZK MATHEWS HALL, MUCKLENEUK CAMPUS.
23 MARCH 2017.**

Professor Mandla Makhanya, Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of South Africa;

Deputy Chairperson of the University Council and Members of Council;

Members of UNISA's executive management and staff, the splendidly gowned academics who are seated with me on stage, who are here to support our graduates this evening;

Families, guardians and friends of our graduates tonight, and most importantly;

UNISA graduates:

Graduation ceremonies are a matter of great pride - for the graduates, their families, friends and guardians, and of course, for the University. There is something special about these ceremonies, that has as much to do with the personal achievement of an important academic milestone and goal, as it does with the ceremony itself. There is indeed a sense that this is one of those rare, defining moments when a truly joyful celebration is merited.

The brightly coloured robes of the academic procession, the red and black gowns and caps and the differently designed hoods of the graduates, the symbols like the ceremonial mace, and the formulaic ceremony and capping ritual, acknowledge and lend legitimacy to the individual effort, and the knowledge and skills that have been acquired over the period of study.

I am indeed honoured to stand here as we are about to conclude this important celebration of the achievements of the graduates before us, to congratulate you all on your well-earned and surely hard-won qualifications.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate this magnificent university that is UNISA for its sustained efforts to continue to produce the high-calibre graduates who are with us this evening.

Albert Einstein once said "The process of scientific discovery is, in effect, a continual flight from wonder."

Thus through the knowledge you have acquired, you have joined that empowering flight from wonder and further reduced the perimeters of the unknown by the new which some of our distinguished graduates have added to the totality of human knowledge.

Thus does society as a whole join us here today to celebrate your success since that achievement means that humanity has gained new capacities to help bring about progress and transformation for the greater good of all society.

Your welcome success has also confirmed that through you, its graduates, the University continues to take seriously its responsibility to “understand and appreciate the role that it needs to play in society.”

Dear Unisa graduates, you have joined the ranks of the brightest and best in South Africa, our Continent and the world. We - spouses, parents, families, academic, management and other staff and indeed the country, our Continent and beyond - extend our sincere and proud congratulations to you, and together say well done!

We hope that your success will foster in you the desire and confidence to say “I want more and I can achieve more!” – empowered both to help create a better world as well as attain personal progress.

To the families, friends and guardians who stood by our graduates and supported them in their studies, we congratulate you as well. Your support has contributed in a very tangible way to the valuable academic achievements we gathered to recognise and celebrate.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.