



The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor

PROF MS MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE CHANCELLOR

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF H E PRESIDENT THABO MBEKI
(FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA)**

AT THE 6TH THABO MBEKI FOUNDATION AFRICA DAY LECTURE

PRESENTED BY H E DR MOHAMED EL BARADEI

"The Uprisings in North Africa and the Future of Africa"

ZK MATHEWS GREAT HALL

25 MAY 2014

Distinguished guests ladies and gentlemen

Once more the University of South Africa and the Thabo Mbeki Foundation are honoured to be hosting the 6th seminal *Thabo Mbeki*

Africa Day Lecture. This evening's lecture will add yet another layer to the critical conversations that we as Africans must have as we explore and confront our pasts in shaping our futures. Given this historical moment, defined by acute political and economic challenges as well as rising opportunities facing the African Continent, this lecture is timely as we seek interventions on these issues. The topic for this presentation will surely assist us in comprehending the meaning of complex geo-political dynamics of North Africa and its implications for the rest of the continent. The generation of an ongoing, unstoppable conversational momentum provides a necessary foundation for the "call to action" that began collaboratively, at Unisa six years ago, and it is perhaps fitting, six years on, to remind ourselves of the vision that induced us to embark on this inspiring journey. The calibre of global and continental icons that have been attracted by the Thabo Mbeki Foundation and Unisa is concrete proof of the strategic choice that the University made when it partnered with the TMF and established TMALI. The Africa focus of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation and TMALI find a natural and organic synergy with Unisa whose main strategic intent, as articulated in its vision statement, is to be "The African University shaping futures in the service of humanity."

The Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute has at its focus the training of Africans for the political, economic, social and cultural

renewal of the African Continent and its people, based in the first instance, on the all-Africa policies already agreed through the OAU and the AU. It is a vehicle to enable Africa to respond on time to new developments which impact on the Continent, which would also help to ensure that Africa's voice is heard in both the local and global contexts. Together with TMALI, the University of South Africa believes that as Africans we need to be confident about claiming our space and ascendancy in a global environment that is undergoing a fundamental re-orientation, and in which the voice of the marginalised is sounding ever louder. Together with TMALI, Unisa aims to make a direct and ongoing contribution to this country and this Continent's intelligentsia, to our thought leaders and to our leadership, and in so doing, to its socio-economic development.

We are proud and excited about making that contribution, and you will therefore appreciate it when I say that it is a great honour and privilege to extend a warm African welcome to all of you as our honoured guest on the occasion of the 6th Thabo Mbeki Foundation Africa Day Lecture. I would like to note, with much appreciation, all the dignitaries and diplomats in our midst. I trust that the warmth of the greeting which we at Unisa and Thabo Mbeki Foundation extend to you this evening will reassure you of our truly (South) African and African embrace, and will banish from your hearts and minds any pain that you may have experienced emanating from the recent acts

of xenophobia, which fly in the face of all which we in South Africa aspire to and hold dear. *You are all most welcome.*

A special welcome to the patron of The Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute, his Excellency, Mr Thabo Mbeki, who, in a very real sense, has become part of the Unisa family. That you always make time to be with us in this institution on occasions like this, despite your heavy international, continental and national commitments, is profoundly significant, speaking as it does to your love for, and dedication to, the people of this country and continent. Your presence is a fitting tribute too, to the rationale for the celebration of Africa Day; the celebration of *African unity*. Your dedication to the African cause beyond your years of the presidency is an indication of a deep conviction of the mission of the African Renaissance and endeavours to achieve the lofty goal of making the 21st century an African Century.

Mindful of the fact that our keynote speaker and special guest, his Excellency, Dr Mohammed El Baradei, is to be introduced, I extend to you a heartfelt African Ubuntu welcome to South Africa and the University of South Africa. We are honoured Sir, by the presence of an African leader and scholar of your international stature and repute, whose life and works are a symbol of hope to humanity.

Distinguished guests ladies and Gentlemen, at the Inaugural Annual Thabo Mbeki Lecture at the University of South Africa on 27 May 2010, former President of the Republic of South Africa, President Thabo Mbeki, addressed the provocative question posed by the World Bank in 2000 “*Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?*” Tonight we will be treated to another part of that conversation – particularly apposite in view of our celebration of Africa day today.

The 52nd celebration of Africa Day comes at a time of unprecedented flux in our continental socio-economic and political fortunes. Not only that, but one discerns very clearly in the global context, similar signs - portents perhaps – of a world on the cusp of a profound reorientation and reorganization along new lines. The extent of that transformational momentum varies greatly, but it cannot be ignored, because it is against this background that our quest for the African Renaissance, and endeavors to make real the promise of claiming the 21st Century as an African century, has to be contextualized.

The topic of today’s lecture on the theme “*The Uprisings in North Africa and the Future of Africa*” is most appropriate; more so, given that the African Union has just launched the drafting of Agenda 2063: *The future we want for Africa*. Under the banner of the African Unions Vision for “*An Integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena*”, agenda 2063 asserts:

Aiming to encourage discussion among all stakeholders, “Agenda 2063” is an approach to how the Continent should effectively learn from the lessons of the past, build on the progress now underway and strategically exploit all possible opportunities available in the short , medium and long term, so as to ensure positive socioeconomic transformation in the next 50 years.

Distinguished guests, you will agree that this evening, our respective agendas find both resonance and consonance. Tonight’s lecture will undoubtedly be a celebration of the intellectual and the political; an exposition on a region of our Continent which is so central to our own respective experiences and futures – *the Future We Want for Africa*.

With these few words, allow me to introduce HE Mr Thabo Mbeki who will in turn introduce our Keynote Speaker, his Excellency, Dr Mohamed El Baradei.

President Thabo Mbeki does not like lengthy introductions – he says that long introductions often sound like an obituary. That is what I said last year in my introduction. But I think that despite poet Andrew Marvel’s famed warning: “*But at my back I always hear Time’s winged chariot hurrying near,*” I would suggest Sir, that in the context of our proceeding this evening, we all momentarily imbibe your evocatively expressed concluding sentiments in your now

legendary expression of what it means to be an African, when, speaking at the adoption of The Republic of South Africa Constitution Bill on 8 May 1996, you concluded:

This thing that we have done today, in this small corner of a great continent that has contributed so decisively to the evolution of humanity says that Africa reaffirms that she is continuing her rise from the ashes.

*Whatever the setbacks of the moment, nothing can stop us now!
Whatever the difficulties, Africa shall be at peace!
However improbable it may sound to the sceptics, Africa will prosper!*

Distinguished guests ladies and gentlemen, with that exhortation in mind, I am honoured to welcome the former President of the Republic of South Africa, the relentless champion of the African Renaissance and now the Patron of the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute, President Thabo Mbeki, to introduce Dr Mohamed El Baradei.

I thank you