



**HESA MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS: INSTALLATION OF DR SIZWE MABIZELA
AS VICE-CHANCELLOR OF RHODES UNIVERSITY, 27 FEBRUARY 2015**

Chancellor, Honourable Judge Lex Mpati;
Chairperson of Council, Mr Vuyo Kahla;
Members of Council;
Vice-Chancellor, Dr Sizwe Mabizela;
Members of Executive Management of Rhodes University;
Members of the Senate;
President of the SRC, Leaders of Organised Labour and Student Organisations;
Fellow Vice-Chancellors and their representatives;
Leaders of Government (Eastern Cape Provincial Government & Makana Local Municipality);
Leaders of Business, Industry and Community Organisations;
The University Community;
Distinguished guests; and
Ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of Higher Education South Africa (HESA), an association of universities which represents, and advocates for the interests of the 26 public Higher Education Institutions in our country, I wish to express my gratitude for the invitation to this important ceremony of inauguration and investiture of Dr Sizwe Mabizela as Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University. Similarly, I would like to extend a warm and personal welcome to Dr Sizwe Mabizela as one of the most recent Vice-Chancellors to join this association. We are indeed delighted to have you as a member of the HESA collective.

Given your university leadership experience, I am confident that you will make a contribution to our commitment as HESA, working with other stakeholders "... to create an environment in which universities can prosper and thrive in South Africa, thus enabling them to contribute efficiently and effectively to the social, economic and cultural development of our country".

As you know, the post-1994 era has presented our universities with immense opportunities to re-imagine their role in society. By the same token, the role of knowledge and scholarship is becoming the single most important differentiator between successful countries and those that are less successful. As we grapple with the challenge of (re)creating and (re)building responsive and relevant institutions, firmly anchored in the knowledge project, it is also true that our nation is facing a number of socio-economic challenges. Accordingly, society is pinning its hope on universities to address some of the intractable challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. Such an expectation reaffirms the correctness of our view that the well-being of our nation is inextricably linked to the health and performance of our universities as drivers of growth and national development. As you join HESA, we expect you to offer your views, insights and intellect on how best to both maximise opportunities and address challenges presented by democratisation; globalisation; the rise of knowledge economy; supra-statism; liberalisation and regulation and accountability.

We will draw on your experience to create optimum conditions for our university sector to flourish and continue to reproduce conditions for the sustenance of our universities. With your

support and active participation, we hope to provide universities with a Forum for discussing and exchanging ideas on matters of common interest.

Dr Mabizela, with your experience, I am confident that you will be able to inspire and lead this great institution to sustained success, in the knowledge that Rhodes University has been entrusted to your care and leadership. We pledge to work with you and Rhodes University as you set a new direction and tone for the university in the knowledge that many of the problems of individual universities can best be addressed once we have recognised their national commonality. As Ralph Dahrendorf, the German sociologist once put it “stagnant universities are expensive and ineffectual monuments to a *status quo* which is more likely to be a *status quo ante*, yesterday’s world preserved in aspic” (2000: 106)¹. As you put Rhodes University on a renewed path for the future, we wish you; your council management team; the entire university community success.

END

¹Dahrendorf R.(2000) *Universities after Communism. The Hannah Arendt Prize and the Reform of higher education in East Central Europe*. Hamburg, Körber-Stiftung, 176p.