**Vice-Chancellor’s message: Lunch - Official Launch of the UNESCO Chair on Multimodal learning and Open Educational Resources at the NWU – 15 April 2023**

***PROTOCOL LIST:***

Ndebele Kingdom, under the leadership of King Makhosonke (His Majesty Chief - Mr H Mabena, Headman - Mr Mabena, Headman – Mr P Ntuli, Chairperson - Mr L Mnyakeni and Deputy Secretary – Mr W Thubana

Mrs. Palesa Tyobeka – Chairperson Education Sector Committee of the SA Commission for UNESCO and other officials from UNESCO

Mr. Carlton Mukwevho – Secretary-General of the SA National Commission for UNESCO

Prof Mbangiseni Nepfumbada – Commissioner of the South African National Commission (SANATCOM) for UNESCO

Dr Cornelius Ruiters – the CEO of Lepelle Northern Water

Executive and Senior Management members of the university, Deanery from all faculties and staff

Colleagues from the Department of Basic Education and Department Higher Education and Training

**Our guest of Honour** - Prof Dorothy Laubscher who is an Associate Professor of Mathematics in the Faculty of Education and the UNESCO Chair on Multimodal Learning and Open Resources and her husband

Ms Bernadine Clark and her husband Dr Kennet Clark, from the United States of America, who are visiting fellows in the school of language education, at the faculty of Education

Esteemed guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

As we raise our glasses to commemorate this significant occasion, I would like to echo the sentiments expressed by Mrs. Palesa Tyobeka and colleagues during this morning's engagement. It is indeed uncommon for chairs of this nature to be renewed, which serves as compelling evidence of our institution's dedication to academic excellence, forward-thinking approaches, and active involvement in making a meaningful impact in education and our communities.

It is imperative that we redouble our efforts to prioritise Africa, aligning ourselves with national, regional, and international imperatives such as the South African National Development Plan of 2030, African Union Agenda of 2063, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We bear the responsibility of fostering a resilient continent. I want to reaffirm that the North-West University remains committed to supporting projects and programmes that align with the key priorities outlined by our UNESCO colleagues. This includes, but is not limited to, strengthening education systems for sustainable development in Africa. We achieve this through initiatives such as the training of teachers offered by our Faculty of Education and our Distance Learning programmes, as well as contributing to the national department's efforts to improve policies that support educators.

The enhancement of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges is of paramount importance. The escalating demand for higher education necessitates our collective support for TVET colleges to grant prospective students access to quality education. We must also nurture science and innovation, particularly in the STEM fields, while ensuring that we provide support for both girls and boys within the education system. Our Unit for Environmental Sciences and Management, specifically the Centre for Disaster Management, has the potential to make a significant difference and collaborate with UNESCO in its efforts.

Our university serves as a microcosm of society, embracing diversity in all our endeavors. The remarks made by Chair Ndebele Kingdom, Mr Mnyakeni resonate deeply with our institution's commitment, demonstrated through various culture-related activities and programmes within our Student Life and at the Centre of Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

In conclusion, it is heartening to know that we are among the sixteen UNESCO Chairs in South Africa. This remarkable achievement will be treasured as we continue our journey to support Prof Laubscher and our Faculty of Education. May this moment stand as a testament to the promising future that lies ahead for Prof. Dorothy, her loved ones, and colleagues. Let us rejoice in her accomplishments and extend our heartfelt congratulations on this well-deserved recognition. Cheers to Prof. Dorothy Laubscher and her exceptional support system, whose unwavering support has played an instrumental role in their shared success!

Wishing you abundant blessings, Professor.

Enkosi

Thank you

Baie Dankie

Kealeboga