



**COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

**COLLOQUIUM ON 10 YEARS OF  
DEMOCRACY AND HIGHER  
EDUCATION CHANGE**

**Chairperson's Welcome**

**Glenburn Lodge  
Muldersdrift**

**10 November 2004**

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Honourable Minister of Education, Mrs. Naledi Pandor  
General Secretary of the Association of African Universities, Prof. Aki Sawyerr  
Members of the Council on Higher Education and the Higher Education Quality Committee  
Chairperson, members and CEO of the Committee of Technikon Principals  
Chairperson, members and CEO of the South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association  
Director General and officials of the national Department of Education and other government departments  
Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors and higher education senior leaders  
Representatives of student, labour and other higher education stakeholder organisations  
Dignitaries and distinguished guests from the various embassies and international development agencies  
International guests from Pakistan and the United Kingdom  
Members of the media  
Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen

I am Saki Macozoma, Chairperson of the Council on Higher Education (CHE). On behalf of the CHE, the Committee of Technikon Principals and the South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association, a warm welcome to this national colloquium on *Ten Years of Democracy and Higher Education Change*.

As you are aware, the CHE annually convenes a one-day consultative conference of key higher education stakeholders to discuss developments in South African higher education and identify the key challenges and critical issues that confront us.

Since this year is special in that we commemorate the tenth anniversary of our democracy, we have in association with SAUVCA and CTP organised this more extensive national colloquium as a mechanism for critical reflection by key social actors on a decade of policy making and implementation towards the goal of transforming South African higher education.

A confluence of conditions - ten years of democracy, the commitment of government to a 'people's contract', and a new Minister of Education - provide the ideal occasion for this collective reflection on higher education change, on its value, conceptual and policy underpinnings, and on its implementation dynamics, and to ask, both

- Where is South African higher education today?
- What is to be done in relation to the values, principles, ideals and goals that are meant to define higher education transformation in South Africa?

More specifically, the colloquium is an opportunity for key social actors to

1. Critically analyse the higher education transformation process and its current outcomes in the context of the political and economic changes undergone by South Africa since 1994
2. Celebrate whatever progress and achievements have been registered
3. Critically identify and discuss national and institutional weaknesses and shortcomings, and issues and trends of concern, and the reasons for these
4. Define our ongoing systemic, institutional and research and development challenges, cognisant of constraints but also opportunities and possibilities
5. Lay the bases for a new consensus on the goals and trajectories of higher education transformation.

The programme for the next two days has been designed to be both backward and forward-looking. It deliberately focuses on a limited number of important cross cutting themes that were identified in consultation with a number of key higher education actors. The programme cannot and does not seek to cover every important issue and topic, or those which are the object of discussions in other forums.

Many of these important issues and topics are covered by a comprehensive CHE ten-year review of higher education that will be released on 22 November 2004. Titled *South African Higher Education in the First Decade of Democracy*, the publication describes and analyses contemporary conditions within South African HE, as well as changes that have occurred during the past decade with reference to what was inherited in 1994. Details of the publication are in a publicity sheet in your conference bag.

I am keen that the colloquium should be characterised by critical (and thoughtful) intellectual engagement on the nature and trajectory of change over the past ten years, and that there is open, robust and animated discussion that illuminates achievements, but equally paradoxes, ambiguities and tensions in the higher education transformation process. I am also keen that the space of the next two days is used to advance propositions and proposals that could facilitate the effective pursuit of the higher education transformation agenda

To the extent that we can agree on achievements, shortcomings and weaknesses, and critical issues and key challenges, this will facilitate possible initiatives on the part of key actors. However, it is not essential that the colloquium arrives at decisions or resolutions or even produces consensus on any issues. A report on the colloquium that crystallizes the key areas of debate, consensus and differences has been commissioned. This will be circulated to all participants and can enter into intellectual and organisational thinking and initiatives as participants see fit.

In closing, my thanks to all of you who have made the effort and time to be with us this evening at this opening of the colloquium. Following the addresses of Prof. Sawyerr and the Minister of Education and dinner, you are invited to relax and take in the magical music of the Music Academy of Gauteng Jazz Ensemble. I promise you are in for a treat by these talented musicians.

To those who will be with us for the next two days, the colloquium's success hinges on your participation and I look forward to your critical contributions and to productive engagement and discussion.