



**26 November 2024**

## **Newly installed UCT VC to position university as a catalyst for change in Africa, while embracing African values**

"I look forward to the future as we journey together, as we consolidate the three missions of UCT, explore the fourth mission of UCT: positioning UCT as a catalyst for change in Africa.

"All this whilst we embrace our African values of ubuntu – "I am because you are", lift others as we rise and leave no one behind. And we do this with compassion. Remember, UCT is not just the bricks and mortar, it is also all of us – past, present and future generations."

These were the words of newly installed University of Cape Town (UCT) Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mosa Moshabela, as he delivered his installation speech at a ceremony held on Monday, 25 November 2024.

Professor Moshabela told the congregation at the iconic Sarah Baartman Hall that, among the many individuals he had engaged with was renowned UCT historian of UCT, Howard Phillips, whom he asked for a summary of UCT's journey over the last 100 years, since 1918. Phillips divided this into three stages:

- Before apartheid, when the university carried more of a teaching mission, during which phase Professor Moshabela surmised that values of excellence were adopted,
- After the advent of apartheid, the university added a research mission – it was during this time when academic freedom became a strong pillar of the university's value system, and
- From the 1980s, UCT added what can be considered more of a societal mission, driven mostly by transformation initiatives.

Professor Moshabela's message was about consolidating these three missions and exploring a fourth: positioning UCT as a catalyst for change in Africa, while embracing African values of ubuntu.

Professor Moshabela said: “We have inherited a wonderful institution, a legacy of decisions made 30 years ago, from which we are today benefitting. The question is, what legacy is our generation of leaders going to leave for the generation that will be standing here 30 years from now?”

“So, what decisions are we going to make today, to ensure they too inherit a great institution, one that will serve their needs then? Can we leave an inheritance for the next generation befitting of the privileges we are today enjoying because of the foresight of those who came before us? I believe they challenge us to exercise foresight in ways that will sustain UCT into the future.”

Four years ago this month, UCT announced Vision 2030, whose central mission is to unleash human potential to create a fair and just society. One of the three pillars of Vision 2030 is sustainability.

Professor Moshabela said he was honoured to be installed as UCT’s 11th vice-chancellor.

“When I say I am grateful, it comes from the bottom of my heart. I feel gratitude for so much that I cannot even begin to recount right this moment, except to say that I thank God for my life, my entire life, and this very moment in particular.

“Chancellor, when I say I am honoured, it’s because I can feel the weight of the gown and robes you placed on my shoulders, a measure of the trust and confidence bestowed upon me by the authority of your office, and a reminder of the responsibility I now have to shoulder, the responsibility that is the University of Cape Town, in all its entirety and glory, and all its people – every single one of them.”

- [Watch the address by Professor Moshabela.](#)

Describing the significance of the occasion, UCT Chair of Council Adv Norman Arendse said: “Today marks a truly momentous occasion in the history of UCT. It is not just another day at our great institution; it is a milestone that signals the beginning of a new chapter – one that holds the promise of growth, transformation and innovation.

He added: “This is a moment of great pride for UCT, and we are confident that his leadership will elevate this institution. The road ahead is one of great promise, and we have no doubt that, under his guidance, UCT will continue to shine as a beacon of excellence, innovation and positive change.”

- [Watch the address by Adv Arendse.](#)

UCT Chancellor, Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe expressed similar sentiment. “This occasion is one of celebration and renewal as we embark on a new chapter in UCT’s storied journey. It is an opportunity to reflect on our past, affirm our present, and embrace our future with

optimism and purpose. For over a century, we have stood firm in our commitment to academic distinction, breaking boundaries, and pushing the frontiers of knowledge.

“At the heart of all that we do lies our shared vision: to unleash human potential to create a fair and just society. This vision is not only a guiding light for our institution but also a call to action for everyone who is part of the UCT community. Today, we reaffirm this commitment as we welcome a leader who exemplifies these values.”

- [Watch the address by Dr Moloi Motsepe.](#)

Reflecting on his installation, Professor Moshabela said: “I am mindful that there are many others in this country, across the continent and the world, who are quite capable, who could be standing right here in front of you today. I am mindful that there are many young people who aspire to become vice-chancellors, and I encourage you all the youth of this country and continent, including those watching online, to continue to dream, strive and aspire, and hopefully, one day we may be honouring one of you right on this very platform.

“I am reminded of a young man by the name of Sinxolo Gcilitshana, an educator, who self-identified as the future VC of UCT. He is now late, passed on before his time, before he could realise his dream. So I do not, at all, take this moment for granted.”

- [Access a selection of images, as well as text versions of the speeches.](#)
- [Visit the 11th UCT Vice-Chancellor’s Installation Ceremony feature page.](#)

***ENDS***

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