

## Media Advisory

### Gauteng Premier to deliver keynote address at Unisa's 25<sup>th</sup> International Mother Language Day celebration

Approved for public release

Date: Thursday, 20 February 2025

The Premier of Gauteng, The Honourable Panyaza Lesufi is scheduled to deliver the keynote address at the 25<sup>th</sup> International Mother Language Day celebratory event to be held at the University of South Africa (Unisa)'s Muckleneuk campus, Pretoria on Friday, 21 February 2025.

The event, hosted by Unisa's College of Human Sciences (CHS,) in collaboration with Puku Children's Literature Foundation, the Indigenous Languages Initiative for Advancement (ILIFA) and the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), will be held under the theme : ***"Language as an Economic Asset-Unlocking Growth Through Linguistics Diversity."***

There will also be a panel discussion by distinguished language experts, which will include Professor Pinkie Phaahla (Former Head of African Languages, Unisa), Mr. Lesley Musina (Social Commentator, Writer and Actor) and Mr. Mabutho Sithole (Language Activist, Indigenous Language Initiative for Advancement).

The International Mother Language Day is observed annually on 21 February and is part of a broader initiative to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by the people of the world. In alignment with the UNESCO theme for the year 2025, which focuses on multilingual education, we aim to encourage linguistic diversity and fuller awareness of cultural traditions in over 215 countries around the world.

Linguistic diversity is increasingly threatened as more and more languages disappear. In the next century, 50% of the world's current 7,000 languages will be extinct, unless we do something about it. Globally 40 percent of the population does not have access to an education in a language they speak or understand. Nevertheless, progress is being made in multilingual education with growing understanding of its importance, particularly in early schooling, and more commitment to its development in public life.

Unisa and its partners saw it fit that the day be observed to revitalize and preserve mother languages in South Africa and to engage as South Africans on what role higher education institutions can play in ensuring that indigenous languages are promoted.

Members of the media are invited to attend and cover the event as follows:

**Date** : Friday, 21 February 2025

**Venue** : Kgorong Function Hall, Kgorong Building, Unisa Muckleneuck Campus

**Time** : 09:00 to 13:00

**/Ends.**

ISSUED BY UNISA MEDIA AFFAIRS



For enquiries, please contact Senior Media Officers Tommy Huma on 072 218 6197 / 012 429 3981 / [humatm@unisa.ac.za](mailto:humatm@unisa.ac.za) OR Edgar Rathelele on 063 731 5456 / 012 429 3981 / [ratheme@unisa.ac.za](mailto:ratheme@unisa.ac.za)

