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**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

As Vice-Chairperson of Higher Education South Africa (HESA), the association which represents, and advocates for the interests of the 26 public Higher Education Institutions in our country, I bring you greetings on behalf of those universities collectively. We congratulate the new Vice-Chancellor, Dr Sizwe Mabizela, on being appointed to this office of this distinguished university, and congratulate Rhodes University on its fine choice of leader. I would like to extend a warm and personal welcome to Dr Sizwe Mabizela as the new Vice-Chancellor to the HESA community. We are indeed delighted to have you as a member of the HESA collective and look forward to your contribution at a national level to helping HESA, “… 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. The role of knowledge and scholarship is becoming perhaps the single most important differentiator between successful countries and those that are less successful. As we grapple with the challenge of creating and transmitting knowledge that is at once universal and globally competitive, it is also true that our nation is facing a number of socio-economic challenges which demand that our universities be responsive and relevant institutions. Universities must and do address some of the intractable challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, climate change, health and much more.

Dr Mabizela, with your intellect and experience, we are confident that you will be able to inspire and lead this great institution to sustained success. We pledge to work with and support 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]](#endnote-1). As you put Rhodes University on a renewed path for the future, we wish you; your management team, and the entire university community, success.

**END**

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