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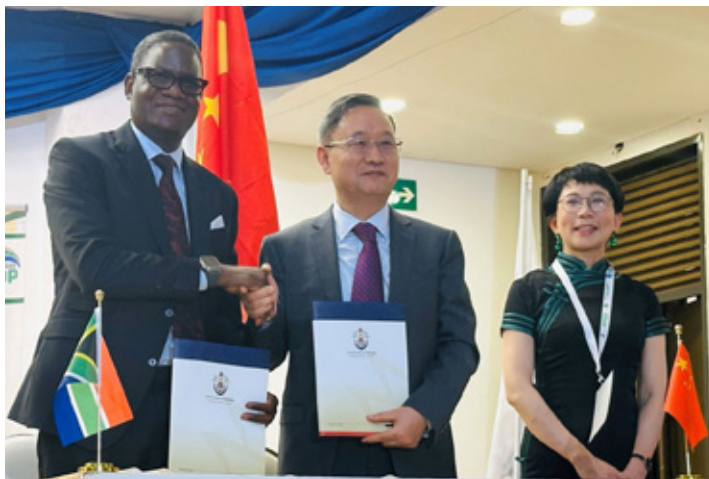
University of Venda Official



University of Venda

Creating future leaders

## The University of Venda is the second historically disadvantaged institution in South Africa to host the Green Technology Confucius Institute



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) and Hubei University of Technology (HBUT) launched the Green Technology Confucius Institute (GTICI) which is different from the others as it has the strong focus on green technologies which will provide an opportunity for South African students and academics to learn from one of the world's leading universities on best practices on green technological solutions in education. The launch took place at UNIVEN Auditorium on Tuesday, 05 December 2023.

In his welcoming remarks, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni mentioned that the Green Technology Confucius Institute launched, is a joint initiative that will be co-directed by the University of Venda and the Hubei University of Technology. He said the establishment of this joint Green Technology Confucius Institute at the University of Venda is a symbol of collaboration and mutual respect and stands as a bridge to connect our cultures and people.

Prof Nthambeleni said, "Our hope is that through this initiative we would be able to leverage on the strength of Hubei University of Technology's green technology standing and status in the world to create a path for our researchers and students to have access to international training around green industry talents that our country is in dire need of". He further highlighted that the institute will be a platform for dialogue, where ideas are exchanged, and partnerships are forged. "Our aim is to foster a deep understanding of the intricate relationship

between humanity and the environment, and to develop innovative solutions that promote ecological integrity."

He cited that the establishment of this joint Green Technology Confucius Institute at UNIVEN came at the opportune time just few months ago where SENATE has approved the establishment of the Centre of Excellence in Renewable Energy which should be coordinated within the Green Technology Confucius Institute. Furthermore, he articulated that the establishment of this joint Green Technology Confucius Institute together with the university partnership with the Central Energy Fund will improve our renewable energy strategy, research and development in student training, funding, and new areas of renewable energy research profoundly.

Prof Nthambeleni concluded by extending his gratitude to everyone who contributed to the establishment of this Institute.

**"Our aim is to foster a deep understanding of the intricate relationship between humanity and the environment, and to develop innovative solutions that promote ecological integrity."**



Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Dr Blade Nzimande sent a recorded congratulatory message to the University of Venda for their collaboration with Hubei University of Technology. The Minister indicated that currently there are 6 Confucius Institutes operating in the following South African universities, namely, Stellenbosch University, Rhodes University, University of Johannesburg, University of Cape Town, Durban University of Technology and the University of the Western Cape, hence UNIVEN is the 7th to host Confucius Institute in South Africa. The objectives of Confucius Institutes and classrooms are to promote the learning of Chinese language, culture, and medicine. However, The Confucius Institute at UNIVEN will be different from the others as it will focus on Green Technology.

The Minister said that Green Technology Confucius Institute is important as the world is faced with overwhelming challenges of climate change which are already harming human health through air pollution, diseases, extreme weather conditions, false displacement pressures on mental health and increased hunger and poverty, lack of nutrition in places where people cannot grow or find sufficient food. He further said "The establishment of this Confucius Institute will indeed benefit South Africa as it will provide training opportunities and new skills sets, that ordinarily will not be offered in the South African education and training system. I am confident that educational partnership between South African and China over the years will continue to improve the development of our post school education and training system."

The launch received recorded messages of support from His Excellency Ambassador Chen Xiaodong; Chinese Ambassador to South Africa; and Mr. Zhao Lingshan, The Secretary of Chinese International Education Foundation (CIEF), China; while Prof. Peng Yuyuan, Chair of the University Committee, HBUT presented his message to the audience at the event.

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# The University of Venda is the second historically disadvantaged institution in South Africa to host the Green Technology Confucius Institute continued...



her vote of thanks extended her gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of the event.

This was followed by a signing of Agreement between UNIVEN represented by Prof Nthambeleni and Prof Peng Yuyuan representing HBUT. The signing ceremony was facilitated by Adv Eric Nemukula, Director of UNIVEN Legal Services.

Later on the programme there were handover of books and Artworks. The programme ended by a ribbon cutting and plaque unveiling that took place at the University Art Gallery, led by UNIVEN Chancellor, Adv Mojanku Gumbi.

The Co-programme facilitators were Dr Takalani Dzaga, Director Marketing, Branding and Communication and Prof Grace Ge for Hubei University of Technology.



## The launch in pictures

There were also messages of support from Limpopo Provincial Government where Ms Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya, MEC of Education said Green Technology is definitely the future and the new way of life. The partnership will also benefit the learners in our schools. She further said it will enhance learners' knowledge on Green Technology.

Cllr Josephine Mukwehlo representing the Executive Mayor of Vhembe District

Municipality said, this collaboration will develop the community through job creation, it will also teach the community the Chinese culture. "This programme will take us to greater heights," she added.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof. Nosisi Feza in





# Alumnus of the University of Venda Promise Nyalungu is an active member of the Next Generation Leaders



Promise Nyalungu (left) and Prof Bernard Nthambeleni when receiving the Plaque

On Thursday, 07 December 2023, the Talloires Network of Engaged Universities coordinated from Tufts University in the USA in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, presented a plaque to the University of Venda (UNIVEN) Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni. This was in recognition of the support UNIVEN gives to the Next Generation Leaders initiative. Prof Nthambeleni received the plaque from Mr Promise Nyalungu, an alumnus of UNIVEN. He has been an active member of the Next Generation Leaders initiative since 2021.

The Talloires Network and Mastercard Foundation established the Next Generation Leaders programme to invest in the development of young leaders through providing resources and opportunities for university students to share strategies and ideas across geo-political boundaries, foster community development and civic engagement at their institutions, and advocate for higher education reform internationally. A diverse cohort of 36 university students in 18 countries constitutes the Next Generation Leaders. Worth noting is that as is the case with all members of this cohort, Mr Nyalungu was selected, through a highly competitive process, from a pool of 276 applicants from across the globe. His commitment to community development and civic engagement, and demonstrated impact stood out, leading to him being recruited.

Receiving the Plaque, Prof Nthambeleni expressed UNIVEN's gratitude. For him, this was a significant honour and recognition because it confirmed added weight to some of the efforts that the University is currently driving. He reinforced the view that over and above students qualifying and receiving their degrees, they must be trained to be change agents. This entails investing efforts and other resources in connecting with society and being able to facilitate tangible change. In this regard, Prof Nthambeleni commended the good work that Promise Nyalungu and his team was doing.

Continuing with his appreciative speech, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal revealed that the university was driving towards being entrepreneurial in teaching, characterised by students initiating business-oriented projects whilst still studying and taking them even further after graduation. He advised that students should not only absorb knowledge but rather become critical thinkers, applying

it to enhance the quality of life in society. Prof Nthambeleni further said, "we want our students to embrace this entrepreneurial mindset of making sure that they change the lives of people around them."

After the Vice-Chancellor and Principal's plaque acceptance speech, Mr Nyalungu shared his experience of involvement in the Next Generation Leaders initiative. He outlined how he became an integral feature of the filming industry, pointing out that the journey started when he arrived at UNIVEN. His passion for creative and performance arts took him on this path. Driven by his passion, Mr Nyalungu joined a dynamic group of young people that used to meet and practice at one of the corners of the sports hall. They held their drama rehearsals there. A year after he joined the group, he became the Director. Over time and because of its commitment, the group won various awards.

The work of the drama club earned Mr Nyalungu recognition beyond the university, leading to being involved in student exchange activities. This saw him travelling to Tanzania and Germany to display his skills and learn from others. His involvement

in the entrepreneurship development in higher education programme, which saw him winning the national student and entrepreneur of the year award in 2020. The latter was a significant milestone, which opened numerous doors for continuing to display social impact and other capacity enhancement opportunities.

Mr Nyalungu's involvement in various student entrepreneurial and social impact activities found him joining the Next Generation Leaders programme. This gave him an opportunity to present his work at the Talloires Network Leaders Conference, which Tufts and Harvard Universities in the USA co-hosted in 2021. In August 2023, Mr Nyalungu participated in the For Youth, By Youth gathering of Next Generation Leaders in Boston, Massachusetts. Through this initiative, he contributed to the development of a multi-year grant proposal submitted to the Mastercard Foundation, aiming to significantly expand the reach and impact of the programme. Concluding his narration of his experience, Mr Nyalungu encouraged other students to work hard and never stop dreaming big.

The Director of the Institute for Rural Development, Prof Joseph Francis, was requested to give some insights into how UNIVEN has been involved in Talloires Network programmes and initiatives. He revealed UNIVEN's association with the Talloires Network dates back to 2011 when a student-centred and driven initiative he led, namely Amplifying Community Voices, won third prize of the MacJanet Prize of Global Citizenship. Post-winning the award, he participated in various Talloires Network activities. Among these were being a member of international panels that adjudicated and recommended for approval projects submitted for consideration of award of the MacJanet Prize of Global Citizenship. Prof Francis also indicated that he participated, together with some UNIVEN students who were members of the Amplifying Community Voices initiative, in Talloires Network Leaders conferences. From 2015/2017, he was part of a team of seven universities from across the globe that were invited by the Talloires Network and the Kettering Foundation to author a book titled, *Regional Perspectives on Learning by Doing:*

*Stories from Engaged Universities around the World (Transformations in Higher Education).* Together with one of his PhD students (Ms Hlekani Kabiti), he jointly authored a chapter, titled *Amplifying Community Voices in South Africa: Nurturing Transformative Leaders through Dialogic Action.* This was the only chapter from universities in sub-Saharan Africa. Prof Lorlene Hoyt, the Executive Director of the Talloires Network, edited the book which was published by Michigan State University in 2017.

The association with the Talloires Network opened doors for Prof Francis's participation in the Kettering Foundation's programmes. This culminated in one PhD in Rural Development student, Ms Hlekani Kabiti, securing a six-months long all expenses paid for placement at the Kettering Foundation in Ohio State, USA.

Participating virtually in the plaque handing over ceremony, Prof Lorlene Hoyt presented what the Talloires Network of Engaged Universities stands for. She indicated that the Talloires Network of engaged universities is a global coalition that brings together 431 university Presidents, Vice-Chancellors and Rectors from 86 countries. These are working together with organisations such as the Mastercard Foundation and others to support young student leaders and university-community partnerships to ensure that research and teaching are designed and implemented such that they enhance education and solve community challenges.

Prof Hoyt said that UNIVEN had for long been a partner of the Talloires Network. She appreciated the immense lessons learnt through working with Prof Francis and some of his colleagues. Proceeding with her presentation, she revealed that Promise Nyalungu's application stood out among a global pool of young people. That is why he was recruited and had been working with the Talloires Network for about three years. Prof Hoyt said, "When we held the global leaders conference which Tufts and Harvard Universities hosted, Promise contributed immensely. That conference reached more than 1400 people in 53 countries throughout the world. This has continued to help add momentum to our movement and influence higher education policy around the world." Of particular significance was that Promise continues to contribute his ideas and talents in film making.

The UNIVEN Faculties were represented during the plaque handing over. During this ceremony, discussions relating to the nature and form of the MoU involving the Talloires Network, Mastercard Foundation and Next Generation Leaders programme were held.

Dr Segun Obadire, the Director of International Relations and Partnerships at UNIVEN, facilitated the proceedings/ deliberations.

**"we want our students to embrace this entrepreneurial mindset of making sure that they change the lives of people around them."**



UNIVEN Faculties Representatives

# Deputy Minister Dipuo Peters launches the University of Venda Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubation



The University of Venda (UNIVEN), in partnership with the Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda), an agency of the Department of Small Business Development officially launched the UNIVEN Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubation (UCFERI) on Tuesday, 14 November 2023. The Centre was launched by the Deputy Minister of Small Business Development, the honourable Ms Dipuo Peters. The event marks a significant step towards a continued effort in fostering entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic development in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province.



The Deputy Minister showed excitement to be part of this historic moment and congratulated the University for this creativity in creating a platform where entrepreneurs could be injected with the enthusiasm to be entrepreneurs who should not take entrepreneurship as a last resort. The launch of the UNIVEN Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubation (UCFERI) was an essential step towards increasing business development support to reach all entrepreneurs across the country. The Deputy Minister indicated that the UCfERI presents the University of Venda graduates with an exit strategy that would propel them into economic activity through entrepreneurship. Honourable Ms Peters said, "It is a clear mindset shift from producing job-seeking graduates towards enterprising and job-creating graduates".

She commended the University for identifying itself as a university at service. "This clearly shows that UNIVEN is unique and not a rural university, but a university based in the rural set up", she said.

"In addition, the launch of the UCfERI demonstrates the impact partnerships in the enterprise development sector can produce". She cautioned attendees that enterprise development is not only the responsibility of the Department of Small Business Development and its agencies, but a responsibility of all sectors of society, including institutions of higher learning with whom we have built strong partnerships through our incubation and accelerator programme.

The Deputy Minister alluded that this centre would play a significant role not only to the students, graduates, and staff members of the university but to the broader community across the Vhembe District. It is expected to drive economic growth and transformation in this district and Limpopo Province. She highlighted that this centre would provide much-needed business development and technical support to enable entrepreneurs to take advantage of existing economic opportunities.

UCFERI has been established as part of Seda's incubation footprint of over 110 incubators across the country, to serve the University and the community at large, drawing from the broader strategic thrust captured under the UNIVEN 2021-2025 Strategy and the UNIVEN Integrated Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Biodiversity Plan (UIEIBP).

She stated that the UCfERI, would assist the University to establish vital partnerships, fostering collaborations, and become part of the SMME ecosystem to accelerate the growth of start-ups and businesses owned by staff, students, and the wider local community. Moreover, the UCfERI would be dedicated to cultivating an entrepreneurial culture and empowering individuals and SMMEs with the knowledge and skills essential for success in an ever-evolving global economy.

**"It is a clear mindset shift from producing job-seeking graduates towards enterprising and job-creating graduates".**



The Deputy Vice Chancellor Corporate Services of the University of Venda, Dr Robert Martin said the University pride itself not to be a rural University, but a university based in a rural area. "We are excited that we want to show the world that a rural based university can assist its local entrepreneurs and the world at large. We are at the right place where great minds wish to be", said Dr Martin when welcoming the guests.



In his message of support, SEDA Senior Manager Incubation, Mr Billy Bokako applauded UNIVEN for keeping the promise of creating opportunities for upcoming entrepreneurs. "We are happy to witness UNIVEN coming to the party, contributing to the country's mission of creating jobs for all."



The Chairperson of the UCfERI, Ms Hwalani Mabaso shared success stories and celebrating milestones and impact of the centre. She pointed that the vision of the centre aspires to become a pioneering hub for entrepreneurship and innovation, propelling economic growth, fostering sustainable businesses, and nurturing a culture of entrepreneurship that resonates both locally and globally.



Other message of support came from the Director of Kevinot Farming, Ms Nonopa Tenza who is involved in farming in the eastern Cape Province. Ms Tenza said, "If education is not helping our communities, it should not exist". She encouraged the attendees to give back to their communities.

**"If education is not helping our communities, it should not exist".**



## Deputy Minister Dipuo Peters launches the University of Venda Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubation continued...



Mr Billy Bokako, Ms Shumani Nembudani, Ms Dipuo Peters and Dr Bernard Nthambeleni

In his closing remarks, UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni mentioned that the context for this Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubation arose from our guiding framework for transformative socio-economic impact and sustainable development which we refer to as the UNIVEN Integrated Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Biodiversity Plan. "This UNIVEN Integrated Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Biodiversity Plan is our visionary roadmap seeking to redefine our institution's role in the higher education landscape". The Vice Chancellor and

Principal continued to say that, at the heart of this plan lies our dedication to prepare our undergraduate and postgraduate students for a world that demands academic knowledge, essential business skills and a spirit of entrepreneurship.

He indicated that the country's economy is struggling, and we are facing a deep and serious economic crisis of our lifetime. Unemployment rate is the talk of the day in every corner of the country. Prof Nthambeleni further indicated that the country's productivity rate is low, and

exports have reached the bottom as the manufacturing industry has dwindled. He indicated that the solution to this country's economic challenges can only be found in nurturing an entrepreneurial culture, a spirit of selfreliance and meritocracy. "Our centre is designed to empower aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators to improve the situation in the country".

Prof Nthambeleni closed his remarks by mentioning that the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubation is a testament to our commitment to fostering a

culture of entrepreneurship and innovation. "We will provide aspiring entrepreneurs with the tools, mentorship, and access to networks that are crucial for turning their visions into reality. Our Rapid Incubation centre will be a hub of creativity and collaboration, where ideas will be nurtured, refined, and transformed into successful businesses. This centre is not just about business; it is about the people behind the ideas, individuals who are passionate, resilient, and ready to take risks. It is about the dreamers, the visionaries, and the doers who will shape the future."

## Season's Greetings from the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal



As we approach the end of another extraordinary year, it is with the greatest pleasure that I extend my warm season's greetings to all of you. It has been a year full of many accomplishments, and how we collectively handled challenges is an excellent measure of our strength and character.

Against all odds, together, we have faced and overcome obstacles and embraced new opportunities. Our collective efforts have produced groundbreaking research, innovative solutions and an unwavering commitment to the pursuit of knowledge.

Your commitment and hard work resulted in our institution being ranked among the top 11 from a group of 88 universities in Sub-Saharan Africa for access, impact, teaching skills, student engagement, and financial management. According to a Sunday Times survey, we have also been named as one of the coolest and most admired brands across 70 categories. I want to express my gratitude to our talented staff for their continued support, expertise and dedication to our shared vision of engaged scholarship.

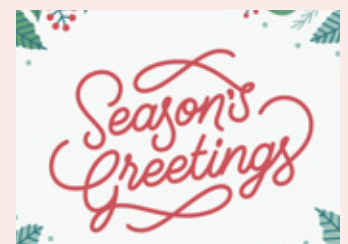
We will remember and acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our staff members who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the smooth functioning

of our university. From administrative support to maintenance and security, your dedication plays a vital role in creating a conducive environment for learning and growth.

As we approach the holiday season and the new year, let us reflect on our accomplishments, embrace new beginnings and look forward to the many exciting opportunities that lie ahead. Once again, I extend my warm season's greetings to you and your loved ones.

I wish you a joyous and peaceful holiday season.

Prof Bernard Nthambeleni Vice-Chancellor and Principal University of Venda  
08 December 2023





# End of year— time to reflect, review and celebrate



The Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni poses for a photo with Mrs Esther Mashavhanduna who served the University for 40 years.

The University bid farewell to 19 staff members who are going on retirement. He appreciated them for their dedication, loyalty and service to the university. Prof Nthambeleni promised that the University will stay in contact with them and would be interested in the progress they are going to make during their retirement.

In his end of year speech, he also recognised staff members who received awards for long service with the university. The categories for

the long service awards ranged from 10, 20, 30 and 40 years.

Amongst the retirees, was Mrs Esther Mashavhanduna who has been with the University for 40 years, Mr Alpheus Makhipha who has been with UNIVEN for 39 years, Mr Tshililo Matsego, 37 years and Mr Charlse Mulabo, 34 years.

On behalf of the university, he expressed sincere gratitude for all their hard work and resilience throughout the years, particularly

the 2023 academic year. "Your strength and commitment to UNIVEN gives us hope for a brighter future. It is a pleasure to bid you farewell on this day of happiness and celebration of our 2023 achievements".

There has never been a year like this one and this certainly provided an opportunity for reflection, celebration, and for looking forward.

On the same note, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal appreciated Mr Esrom Phungo who is leaving the university for another assignment out of the province. He thanked Mr Phungo for his immense contribution to the work of the university and also wished him the best in his future endeavours.

Prof Nthambeleni also shared the notable achievements that registered significant developments for UNIVEN to become a university of choice. These include that the University of Venda had been ranked among the Top 11 from a group of 88 universities in Sub-Saharan Africa universities by the 2023 Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings.

As far as the infrastructure is concerned, he showed an expansion of new infrastructure development on campus. He appreciated the support from the Department of Higher Education and Training that is making a meaningful contribution to the University academic projects.

In terms of empowerment, he said "The development and empowerment of women remains central to our agenda. In various faculties, Senior Management Committee, and Executive Management Committee our female colleagues are increasingly bracing themselves for previously male-dominated roles."

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal also reported about that the University appointed an external expert panel review to conduct

assessment of the current 2021-2025 Strategic Plan implementation. He stated that the recommendations from the panel are on the implementation phase taking into consideration the institutional audit report improvement plan. Prof Nthambeleni informed staff that in 2024, UNIVEN will embark on the development of the new Strategic Plan with the active engagements of internal and external stakeholders. "This new plan will be effective from 2026 to 2030 and will take account the deliverables of the UNIVEN Integrated Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Biodiversity Plan (UIEIBP)", he added.

As he concluded his message, he wished all the employees the very best festive season and looking forward to welcoming all staff back, refreshed for what will be an exciting new academic year, 2024.

"You helped to develop UNIVEN into what it is today," says the Director Human Resources, Mrs Uanda Ndou when acknowledging the retirees.

In response, retirees were represented by Ms Grace Badamarema (Service Staff), Mrs Esther Mashavhanduna (Administrative staff) and Prof Jan Crafford (Academic staff).

The Director Community Engagement, Prof Vhonani Netshandama welcomed the University staff as they were celebrating their success stories and achievements. She also acknowledged and appreciated the retirees and those who received long service awards.

The outgoing University Registrar, Adv Edward Lambani when proposing a vote of thanks, appreciated all the University staff for coming together to celebrate the developments and achievements of the University. He thanked the retirees for the outstanding work they have done for the University and also the long service awardees for their loyalty and commitment to the University.



Some of the retirees pose for a photo with the University Senior Managers



30 and 40 years - employees who served the university for 30 and 40 years pose for a photo with members of the senior management



20 years - employees who served the university for 20 years pose for a photo with members of the senior management



10 years - employees who served the university for 10 years pose for a photo with members of the senior management.



# UNIVEN Senior Managers tackle issues pertaining to risks of Artificial Intelligence and Environmental, Social and Governance



On 28 and 29 November 2023, the University of Venda Executive and Senior Management Committees converged at Palala Boutique Game Lodge and Spa in Groblersbrug to discuss issues pertaining to Artificial Intelligence and Environmental, Social and Governance. This was a profound Strategic Risk Workshop organised by the Internal Audit and Risk Directorate.

its impact in the Education Sector including the state of generating AI in 2023. He indicated that the education sector has been impacted more than any other sector by the Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). Mr Hawes encouraged people to understand technology and its opportunities that lie ahead.



In her opening and welcome, Director Internal Audit and Risk, Mrs Diana Makwarena said that the risk journey of the University of Venda has indeed advanced over the years and everything was made possible through teamwork. During this workshop, attendees will provide insights into the University Strategic Risk Register, both from the current risk perspective as well as identifying possible emerging areas of uncertainty. In her welcome, Mrs Makwarena also acknowledged the presence of the Chairperson of Risk Management Committee, Dr Nalini Maharaj.



Mr Hawes's presentation was followed by Dr Christopher Whittle's presentation that brought people to the world of Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) which is something developing or trending. Dr Whittle is from Universum Advisory. His presentation covered topics ranging from Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) which is a critical concept. Other topics included ESG Standards and Frameworks; International Financial Reporting Standards; Governance of AI; Risk Management Concepts overview and Risk Appetite and Tolerance overview.



Mr Quintin Hawes who is the PWC ED Technology Specialist delivered a presentation that covered topics ranging from risks of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and



The University Registrar, Dr Joel Baloyi presented a high-level reflection of day one of the workshop. Dr Baloyi cautioned the members to adjust themselves to remain relevant in terms of technology.



On the second day of the workshop, participants broke into groups and discussed the current strategic risk register and later gave feedback based on their group analysis. This session allowed all participants to give

their views on whether certain risks that were registered in the risk register should be removed from the risk register or remain there. Other risks were found to be issues and not risks anymore.



# DHET delegates visit UNIVEN as part of the 2023 site visit and to monitor progress on UCDP projects before the 2024-2026 cycle

On Thursday, 16 November 2023, delegates from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) visited the University of Venda (UNIVEN). This meeting was held at UNIVEN's Research Conference Centre as part of DHET's 2023 site visit. This visit was also to assess the progress in the implementation of the collaborative programmes especially programmes/projects that are under the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP)

In her remarks on the purpose of the visit, the Director for the University Capacity Development Directorate at the Department of Higher Education and Training, Ms Mandisa Cakwe mentioned that another reason for their visit was to check the state of readiness and to look at the progress made by the University before submission for 2024-2026 cycle. "We are here to assist you and we need to make sure that we use the funding efficiently." Ms Cakwe applauded the University for using money sparingly in this cycle. "We are happy that the University has come to a point where there is no need to justify the misuse of money. We have seen that the UNIVEN has made appointments that reduces workloads and makes the running of the university smooth. This will assist this University to achieve its goals," said Ms Cakwe.

Deputy Director at DHET, Mr Shiba Diketane spoke about the issue of budget cuts in terms of UCDP Grants. He said the budget cuts has implications; however, this will not affect the normal ways of doing things. Mr Diketane indicated that,

to address the institutional allocations, NGAP budgets will not be affected. He further explained the next cycle of the UCDP budget. "We need to strengthen entrepreneurship development in all institutions of higher learning; psychosocial support, especially gender-based violence; supporting students and staff with disabilities; curriculum change; including the articulation of the holistic senior and postgraduate support. We need to address these as part of the national response to our challenges." Mr Diketane expressed that these are part of the national collaborative projects or initiatives that are driven by the minister. "These collaborations include projects on historically disadvantaged institutions," he said.

Prof Lindiwe Mulaudzi and Prof Jabulani Maluleke presented the UNIVEN Capacity Development Institutional Plan 2024-2026 where they shared seven projects that are planned for the 2024-2026 period.

The delegation from DHET gave advises on how to run these projects successfully and effectively. They have also indicated that this is a preparation as we are about to enter in to the next UCDP Cycle. They advised universities to move more closer into partnerships if they want to achieve their intended goals.

UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni thanked DHET delegation for making time to visit UNIVEN and for assisting UNIVEN staff members to submit the UCDP plans in time.

## UNIVEN Senior Managers tackle issues pertaining to risks of Artificial Intelligence and Environmental, Social and Governance continued...



every staff member needs to position themselves in a way that will enable them to produce the University's intended results. Dr Baloyi further mentioned that what they have learned from this workshop will assist staff members when implementing the new University strategic plan and other University strategic documents.



Director Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation, Dr Mutshinyalo Ratombo later delivered a presentation on Institutional Targets at risk while the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, Prof Barwa Kanyane gave a reflection on the workshop outcome. Prof Kanyane told participants that there is a need for all staff members to hold each other accountable for what they are tasked or contracted to do. "We need to work together as a team in order to achieve our intended goals."



When proposing a vote of thanks, University Registrar, Dr Joel Baloyi mentioned that this workshop is one of the most important workshops in the University calendar because

The chairs of sessions of day one and two of the workshop were the Director of Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga and Director of Supply Chain Management and Expenditure, Ms Beauty Muthewana.

**"We need to work together as a team in order to achieve our intended goals."**



Participants of the DHET site visit



# The University of Venda and Mphaphuli Development Trust sign a Memorandum of Understanding

On the 6th of December 2023, representatives of villages under the Mphaphuli Dynasty and University of Venda (UNIVEN), witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between UNIVEN and the Mphaphuli Development Trust (MDT). This took place at the Mphaphuli Traditional Council Offices in Mbilwi village, Sibasa. Prof Bernard Nthambeleni, the UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal and Prof Desmond Musetsho, Chairperson of the MDT, signed the MoU. Adv Eric Nemukula, the UNIVEN Director of Legal Services, facilitated the signing ceremony.

This event solidified a partnership for citizen-driven community development across the Mphaphuli Dynasty's 76 constituent villages. Signing the agreement is a critical milestone because it will make it easier for the partners to share knowledge, experiences and resources to enhance socio-economic development. At the centre of this agreement will be co-designing solutions to societal challenges and co-creation of knowledge, underpinned by active involvement of children, youth, adults and local leadership institutions found in all the villages constituting the Mphaphuli community. Recognising the importance of education, skills and mentorship, the MDT looks forward to UNIVEN offering relevant need-based training to strengthen the capacities of citizens to self-drive development. Moreover, UNIVEN will provide leadership in community-based action research to accelerate improvement in citizens' quality of life. The MDT will help mobilize the Mphaphuli community for active involvement in its own development.

In his remarks, the UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Nthambeleni revealed that most people view universities as "big, towering institutions that are so divorced from the communities, divorced from people they are supposed to serve... that are just independent." He went on to point out that, "as the University of Venda staff and management, we believe that the role of the university is different because we do not exist to just conduct research but rather to carry out work that touches the lives of people - empowers communities and having impact in society".



Prof Bernard Nthambeleni, Thovhele Gole Mphaphuli and Prof Khangwelo Musetsho

He indicated that this was the reason the UNIVEN mission related to positioning the university such that it would be relevant and have impact in society.

Prof Nthambeleni argued that UNIVEN was on the right track. To amplify this view, he revealed that recently the university launched the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubation. Explaining the significance of this Centre, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, indicated that through this Centre, informal business people such as men and women operating on the streets of Thohoyandou and small medium microenterprises would be expected to benefit immensely.

Prof Nthambeleni noted that the University would only enhance its chances of success if it worked with the communities it served, highlighting that, "we are not just interested in signing this memorandum of understanding. Rather, we are more interested in the progress that must be made after signing this document." He concluded his address by expressing the University's commitment to making sure that the principles and terms of agreement of the memorandum are realised.

The Chairperson of the Mphaphuli Development Trust, Prof Khangwelo Musetsho stated that "This momentous day is not just a formal ceremony but a culmination of years of diligent discussions and shared visions.

It marks the beginning of an exciting, collaborative journey, intertwining the paths of the Mphaphuli Development Trust and the University of Venda. We are excited that our partnership is a testament to the university's commitment to engaged scholarship and its vital role in driving local and global impact, particularly in addressing the Sustainable Development Goals." Continuing with his address, Prof Musetsho drew the audience's attention to the key imperatives of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003, which places considerable responsibilities on the shoulders of Traditional Leaders. Among the key roles are land management, cultural preservation and practices, and environmental stewardship.

**"This momentous day is not just a formal ceremony but a culmination of years of diligent discussions and shared visions."**

Prof Musetsho highlighted that the MDT was already involved in numerous community-centric initiatives that are poised to benefit significantly from the collaboration and research expertise resident in the University. He said, "As we embark on this partnership, we recognise the uniqueness of our programmes and respectfully urge the University to ensure non-duplication in implementing similar projects with other local leadership institutions. Our community eagerly anticipates tangible outcomes from this memorandum, yearning for direct and positive impacts on their lives." He concluded by assuring both the local community and UNIVEN that the MDT was committed serving the people to the best of its ability.

In his words of appreciation, Thovhele Gole Mphaphuli expressed his gratitude and reaffirmed his commitment to this bilateral agreement. He said he was pleased for MDT and UNIVEN to have reached this important milestone, which made him look forward to hard work that would result in achievement of common shared objectives.

Thovhele Mphaphuli commended UNIVEN for being an institution committed to community engagement and social responsibility, working to address local and regional challenges through various outreach programmes. He went on to say that UNIVEN was also engaged in research activities across multiple fields, contributing to the body of knowledge in South Africa and beyond. He emphasised the need to fast track the development of action plans and their implementation.

Earlier in the day's proceedings, Advocate Matodzi Ratshimbilani outlined the purpose of the event as a time to confirm to the local community and beyond, the birth of the partnership. Soon after, Prof Joseph Francis who is the Director of the Institute for Rural Development, gave an overview of the genesis of the MoU, which culminated in the signing ceremony. He described the event as an incredibly significant milestone that put a seal to a series of prior engagements involving the two parties to the agreement.



Thovhele Gole Mphaphuli with some of his Traditional Leaders pose for a photo with UNIVEN Vice Chancellor and Principal (fourth from right).



## The University of Venda and Mphaphuli Development Trust sign a Memorandum of Understanding continued...

Proceeding with his talk, he said that he was overly excited because UNIVEN was proving to be a 'People's University.' Prof Francis said, "If what we do does not touch society positively or try to find solutions to the problems that society faces, we cannot claim to be a people's university. We are here to confirm that we are committing to what we put in the MoU that we co-generated through

a very rigorous, consultative process. As foot soldiers we will be expected to champion the fight against poverty and underdevelopment in the Mphaphuli community, which the MoU is all about." Prof Francis announced that one of the key deliverables of the MoU is a comprehensive Mphaphuli Development Plan, informed by what young and old people of all genders in each and every

village regard as the development they want to consume.

Giving a response after the MoU had been signed, Professor Vhonani Netshandama who is the UNIVEN Director of Community Engagement challenged all Traditional Leaders present to work together with the university to come up with plans that would make their projects unique and sustainable.

She encouraged that everyone should be involved in a project, for example, each village should have a village plan. In addition, she encouraged the Tshigombela women dance group to have a project to deal with gender-based violence and mental health, among others. Prof Netshandama also raised her concerns regarding the high anxiety levels of Grade 12 learners due to long periods of waiting for results. She indicated that the University was interested in Grade 12 learners because they should be exposed to tertiary education readiness and extra-curricula skills for the future programmes. In this regard, Prof Netshandama announced that the university was running a holiday programme that focuses on developing an entrepreneurial mindset. This, she emphasised, was an opportunity discovery process that makes the learners equipped to be excited about collaborative learning and frugal innovation. Selected high schools under the Mphaphuli dynasty will be expected to participate. She concluded by revealing that UNIVEN had donated some laptops to some communities under Traditional Authority to support this and other related projects.

Mr Maraganedzha, the Headman of Tshikhudini village welcomed the audience. Mr Tshabuse, a member of the Royal Council, delivered the vote of thanks, before proceedings of the signing ceremony ended.



Thovhele Gole Mphaphuli (middle) joins UNIVEN delegation led by Prof Bernard Nthambeleni



## ACERWC appoints Prof Ademola Jegede to serve as an External Expert on Children and Climate Change



The African Union (AU) Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) has appointed Professor Ademola Oluborode Jegede of the Ismail Mahomed Centre for Human and Peoples' Rights (IMCPhR), Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, University of Venda (UNIVEN) to serve as an external expert to its Working Group on Children and Climate Change with effect from November 2023 to October-2025.

The ACERWC is an AU Organ mandated to monitor the implementation of the African Children Charter and promote and protect children's rights in Africa. The ACERWC established the Working Group on Children and Climate Change during its 35th Ordinary Session in 2020 and further renewed the mandate of the Working Group during its 41st Ordinary Session held from 28 April to 06 May 2023.

The ACERWC established the Working Group due to the increasing concern of the impact of climate change on children

in Africa. While climate change has a devastating impact on all human beings, the ACERWC notes with concern that children, particularly those living in least developed and developing countries bear the most impacts. The ACERWC believes that the Working Group can allow it to closely assess and investigate the impact of climate change on children in Africa and provide guidance on rights-based response to the challenges posed by climate change on children's rights.

Professor Jegede is an NRF rated researcher with research expertise on the interface of climate change on rights of vulnerable populations. He has widely published on that theme and is expected to use his expertise when called upon to help fulfil the mandates of the ACERWC.

These include to provide support to the activities of the Working Group on Children and Climate Change; to assist the Working Group in facilitating the completion of the ongoing Continental Study on the Impacts

of Climate Change on the Rights of Children in Africa and disseminating its findings and recommendations; to assist the Working Group in developing a strategy to mitigate and adapt the impacts of climate change on the rights of children in Africa, as well as in its dissemination; to assist the Working Group in developing guidelines, policies and standards on matters related to the rights of children in the context of climate change; to undertake extensive research, gather information, and draw experiences from other mechanisms with a related mandate; and to assist the working group engage with governments of states in Africa with a view to establish laws, policies and strategies that protect the rights and welfare of children in the context of climate change, as well as in its efforts to mitigate and adapt to its impacts. The position is a non-remunerative appointment and resonates with the work of the UNIVEN Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, particularly the IMCPhR that he is leading.



# UNIVEN hosts the Vice-Chancellor Summer Golf Tournament to assist missing middle students



The University of Venda hosted the Vice Chancellor Summer Golf Tournament in Killarney Country Club, Johannesburg, on Friday, 24 November 2023, as part of the University's initiatives to raise funds to support the missing middle students. The Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni, marked the official tee-off at 10h30 flanked by high-ranking officials, including the Deputy Vice Chancellor Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning, Prof Eucebious Lekalakala-Mokgele, Chief Financial Officer, Mr Botwe Kraziya, and golfers.

Many golfers, donors, sponsors, alumni, and friends of the university united in their diversity, braced off the blistering heatwave to attend the tournament. It was a four-ball alliance tournament in which all sponsors were given an opportunity to play on the 18-hole golf course. The teams had different tee times, with the first team at 11h13, the last team at 12h43, and the tournament ended at 18h15.

The tournament brought together golfers from across the provinces of Limpopo and Gauteng in a manner similar to what former president Nelson Mandela once said: "Sports has the power to unite people in a way that little else does". Sport is, and will always be, a leader in creating opportunities. Hosting the tournament has also afforded the university an opportunity to deepen relationships with its alumni and business partner.

The tournament was followed by the gala dinner in which prizes for the best teams were awarded.



In his welcoming remarks during the dinner, UNIVEN Chief Financial Officer, Mr Botwe Kraziya implored and lobbied those in attendance to support students without NSFAS and any other form of funding to enable them to finish their studies.



Prof Nthambeleni, in his remarks, encouraged the business industry's extraordinary goodwill to support needy and academically deserving students. "Some of you have walked with the University of Venda for the last 41 years, and some have joined us along the way. We appreciate the loyalty and the relationships we have built over the years. The University is deeply grateful for the timely response and generous contributions, and we appeal to our alumni and corporate companies to continue to support us towards raising funds for the disadvantaged students."



The tournament captain, Mr Rally Razwinane spoke briefly about the type of play and announced the top ten four ball alliance teams that won. The Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof. Nthambeleni flanked by Dr Martin and Prof. Lekalakala-Mokgele, handed over awards to the winners. The champions of the 2023 Vice-Chancellor Summer Golf Tournament are a four-ball alliance team of Omar Hassan, Zubair Sader, Feroz Sabi and Harith Moerat, who won with 93 points.



Some golfers during registrations

**'Sports has the power to unite people in a way that little else does'.**



## UNIVEN hosts the Vice-Chancellor Summer Golf Tournament to assist missing middle students continued...



2nd Prize winners



On behalf of all sponsors, Ms Mpolokeng Botipe from Nedbank thanked the University for giving them an opportunity to be part of an impactful initiative. "We know it will benefit the students towards a great future. I firmly believe that after this day, many private companies will join hands to support the University's mission of changing the lives of financially needy students. A public and private sector partnership is a solution to changing students' lives." During the UNIVEN

Vice-Chancellor Summer Golf Tournament Prize Giving dinner, commitments were made by several participants including corporate companies to invest in the University.



The Chairperson of Council, Mr Juneas Lekgetha, thanked and appreciated the support from different sponsors for considering funding UNIVEN's needy students. He told golfers and sponsors that their contribution would go a long way because it intends to positively impact the lives of disadvantaged students.



Champs of the Tournament

**"We know it will benefit the students towards a great future. I firmly believe that after this day, many private companies will join hands to support the University's mission of changing the lives of financially needy students. A public and private sector partnership is a solution to changing students' lives."**

## UNIVEN officially welcomes the newly appointed University Registrar



On Friday, 17 November 2023, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) held the welcoming ceremony for the new University Registrar, Dr Joel Baloyi. This welcoming ceremony was held at the University's Senate Chambers. During this welcoming ceremony, the University Registrar, Dr Joel Baloyi was introduced to staff members in his division.

UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni mentioned that he saw a need to introduce Dr Baloyi to staff members in his division. Prof Nthambeleni presented the University operating model where he thanked Adv Lambani for his leadership and for his contribution that has assisted the University to be where it is today. He gave a brief background and context of UNIVEN Strategic Plan 2025 where he mentioned that UNIVEN should be productive, staff members should always work towards making impact in everything they do.

"This University must influence and be efficient to the surrounding communities. We must be known for something as a university. As a university, we need transformation as we are committed to excellence. We also need good governance because without good governance we will not achieve anything." Prof Nthambeleni told attendees that there

is a need to improve the brand image of this University because this affects students when they go out there to seek employment opportunities. "We also need to expand the influence of UNIVEN beyond Limpopo province," said Prof Nthambeleni

In his response, University Registrar, Dr Joel Baloyi thanked staff members for organising this welcoming meeting for him and mentioned that ever since he started working in his career history, something of this kind has never happened. Dr Baloyi said that he is aware that the graduates of this University are making impact in a wide range of sectors.

"This shows that you are making impact, contributing towards creating future leaders. You are contributing towards making the best out of someone's child. Whatever that you are doing, you are doing much more than those working for universities based in the urban areas." "Provide the support that we are required to do. We need to give students a memorable experience that will make them feel proud when they think about UNIVEN. We need to continue empowering our students and giving them the support that they deserve." Dr Baloyi concluded by mentioning that he is happy to be back at home where he will be contributing towards creating future leaders.



# Prof Tshilidzi Mulaudzi is the President of the Psychological Society of South Africa



The Acting Executive Dean of the University of Venda Faculty of Health Sciences, Prof Tshilidzi Mulaudzi, has been elected as the 2023-2024 Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) President. She was confirmed as the new PsySSA President during the congress which took place at Emperor's Palace in Johannesburg where over 700 participants attended this year's annual congress. The PsySSA Annual Congress is the highlight of the South African Scientific Psychological calendar, attracting academics and practitioners nationwide and abroad. PsySSA is the professional body representing Psychology professionals in South Africa which currently has over 1700 members.

In her acceptance speech, Prof Mulaudzi indicated that it is an honour for her to lead PsySSA as its President. Prof Mulaudzi acknowledged the effectiveness of the President-elect, President, and past President model, because it equips one with knowledge and skills to run the presidency, and it also offers support to the current president and President-elect. She congratulated the



Some of the PsySSA congress delegates with the President and President-elect

PsySSA President-Elect (Prof Jace Pillay) and appreciated the support that she was given by the outgoing President (Prof Floretta Boonzaier) and Previous President (Prof Shannaaz Suffla).

She said she was looking forward to working with the PsySSA Presidency, the Executive, the Council, and the entire PsySSA members. She acknowledged the support that she received from her employer, the University of Venda for allowing her to attend and participate in PsySSA activities. She also acknowledged staff from the

University's Centre for Higher Education, Teaching and Learning (CHETL), Human Resource Department, Department of

Psychology, and Student Affairs Department and some of the students who attended and presented research papers at this year's congress.

"I would not have done justice if I did not acknowledge the foundation that was laid by my former Psychology HoDs who are also PsySSA past Presidents (Prof Norman Duncan, 2008 - 2009 and Prof Tholene Sodi, 2017 - 2018). They encouraged me to attend and present papers during PsySSA congresses. Their continued support does not go unnoticed," she said.

The year 2024 will be an extremely busy year for PsySSA with many expectations from members and the public as PsySSA



will be celebrating its 30th anniversary in collaboration with Pan - African Psychology Union (PAPU) which will be celebrating its 10th anniversary. "PsySSA has a very efficient team led by the Executive Director, Dr Fatima Seedat. "I am greatly confident that the 30th anniversary celebration, in collaboration with PAPU, whose President, Prof Saths Cooper is also PsySSA's past President (1996 - 1999; 2006 - 2007) will be a success. The celebration will be showcased throughout the year with its peak during the congress which will take place on 08 - 10 October 2024 at The Emperor's Palace in Johannesburg," said Prof Mulaudzi.



Some of the UNIVEN staff members who attended the 2023 PsySSA Congress



# A sweet farewell from UNIVEN Council to Prof Crafford

On behalf of Council and the University community, the Chairperson of Council, Mr Juneas Lekgetha when delivering a farewell message said, they salute the outgoing Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Teaching and Learning, Prof Jan Crafford for the role he played to ensure that the UNIVEN produces high quality graduates that will become assets and not liabilities of the country. Mr Lekgetha indicated that Prof Crafford's name, sacrifice, loyalty, and his personality will remain ineradicable in their minds for years to come. Mr Lekgetha said "There is no doubt that because of your legacy, UNIVEN is well poised to take its next steps of success. We will cherish the time that we had together in Council". He said this during the Farewell function which was organised by the University of Venda Council in honour of Prof Crafford who served the University diligently. The event took place on Wednesday, 29 November 2023 at Palala Boutique Game Lodge and SPA, Globlersbrug in Limpopo.

throughput and graduation rate as well as conducive learning environment and today the University of Venda is an institution of higher learning which is admired for our academic excellence. We are now ranked among the top universities."



In an event that was attended by members of the Council, Executive and Senior Management Committee members as well as some members of administrative departments, the Deputy Chairperson of Council, Ms Nanduleni Makhari in her well wishes, applauded Prof Crafford for the role that he played during his stay at UNIVEN and the energy that made him to work until his retirement. Ms Makhari encouraged Prof Crafford to go and rest and use the remaining years to enjoy life. She said that he will be missed by all staff and students as well as those whom he interacted with in his life of service.



In his response, Prof Crafford appreciated Council for organising him such a sweet and splendid farewell. He thanked Council for trusting in him when they appointed him as an Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal in 2018 and extending his stay with six months.

**"There is no doubt that because of your legacy, UNIVEN is well poised to take its next steps of success. We will cherish the time that we had together in Council".**



The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza extended a warm welcome to all the members present. "We gathered here to bid farewell to our distinguished guest, Prof Jan Crafford. The University Council organised this event to express our gratitude to him and celebrate his remarkable legacy. She wished him all the best as he is going to start a new life."



The Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Dr Stephen Smith proposed a vote of thanks. He thanked Prof Crafford for the contributions that he made towards the development of the University. Dr Smith also thanked Prof Crafford's family for allowing him to serve the University.



The Chairperson of Council stated that "Through your efforts and leadership, we have witnessed exponential growth in



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**Dr Takalani Dzaga**  
Chief editor

**Ms Welheminah Mabogo**  
Coordinator

**Mr Peter Mashishi**  
Coordinator

**Ms Mushoni Mulaudzi**  
Preservation (Library)

**Send your contributions to:**

Welheminah Mabogo,  
Nendila Coordinator  
University of Venda,  
Private Bag x5050  
Thohoyandou, 0950

**Contact Details:**

Tel: 015 962 8525  
Fax: 015 962 8494

e-mail: [welheminah.mabogo@univen.ac.za](mailto:welheminah.mabogo@univen.ac.za)