



University of Venda  
Creating Future Leaders

# UNIVEN Weekly e-Newsletter



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## Motadi's Unopposed Election Elevates UNIVEN's Voice in National Higher Education



*Mr Sylvester Motadi, President of the University of Venda Convocation*

The University of Venda proudly celebrates a moment of distinction following the election of Sylvester Masa Motadi, President of the University of Venda Convocation, as Deputy President of the Association of University Convocations. His election took place during the inaugural conference of the Association, hosted at Sol Plaatje University on 07 March 2026, where he was elected unopposed by representatives of university convocations from across South Africa.

As President of Convocation at the University

of Venda, Mr. Motadi represents a vibrant community of graduates whose achievements and leadership continue to reflect the institution's enduring values. His election is not merely a personal milestone but a recognition of the intellectual tradition, ethical leadership, and public service that define the University of Venda and its alumni community. Through their work across society, UNIVEN graduates carry forward the ideals of knowledge, responsibility, and transformative leadership cultivated within the university's halls.

At a time when South African universities are called upon to strengthen and re-engineer the Post-School Education and Training system, the presence of the University of Venda leadership within the national convocation structure affirms the institution's growing influence in shaping the future of higher education. The election signals the importance of the collective voice, experience, and vision of the University

of Venda community in advancing a higher education system that is responsive, inclusive, and transformative.

The University of Venda warmly congratulates Mr. Motadi and celebrates this moment as a shared achievement for its graduates, whose commitment continues to elevate the institution's legacy both nationally and beyond.



Left photo: Minister of Higher Education and Training, Honourable Buti Manamela, with Mr Sylvester Motadi, Right photo: Chairperson of Portfolio Committee on Higher Education in Parliament, Honourable Tebogo Letsie, with Mr Sylvester Motadi

## University of Venda and African Technology Forum Forge Strategic Partnership to Advance AI and Digital Innovation in Africa

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) has taken a significant step toward strengthening Africa's digital future by signing a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Technology Forum (ATF) on Friday, 06 March 2026. The ceremony, held at the university's Council Chambers in Thohoyandou, marked the beginning of a five-year strategic partnership aimed at advancing artificial intelligence (AI), digital innovation, research, and technology-driven talent development across the continent.

The collaboration establishes a structured framework for long-term cooperation between the two institutions, with a shared vision to equip students with future-ready digital skills while strengthening research capacity and innovation ecosystems within higher education. Through the partnership, several ATF initiatives, including the ATF AI School, the ATF AI Challenge, and other emerging programmes, will be implemented in collaboration with UNIVEN to create opportunities for students to gain practical exposure to cutting-edge technologies.



*L-R: Ms Ntsoaki Mohapi and Prof Bernard Nthambeleni*

Delivering keynote remarks, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda, Bernard Nthambeleni, described the MoU as strategically aligned with the university's recently launched Strategy 2026–2030, which prioritises biodiversity, entrepreneurship, and innovation. He highlighted UNIVEN's position as a comprehensive university that bridges traditional academic scholarship with applied research and innovation.

Prof Nthambeleni stressed that the partnership must deliver measurable outcomes and tangible impact. He emphasised that the university's leadership, including executive deans, directors, and the deputy vice-chancellor, has been mobilised to ensure the successful

implementation of the initiatives arising from the agreement. The collaboration, he noted, will empower students from all faculties to engage meaningfully with emerging technologies and contribute to solving real-world challenges.

Speaking on behalf of ATF, South Africa Country Lead, Ms Ntsoaki Mohapi, congratulated both institutions on formalising the partnership and underscored the importance of action-driven collaboration between universities and technology organisations. She highlighted that the initiative would help advance AI capabilities, foster local innovation, and support the development of research prototypes and practical solutions with real impact across African communities.

Reaffirming ATF's vision, Ms Mohapi emphasised that the organisation is committed to ensuring that no student is left behind in the global AI revolution. She praised the University of Venda for its openness to innovation and expressed confidence that the partnership would ensure that African students actively participate in shaping the future of artificial intelligence and digital transformation.

Chief Financial Officer, Mrs Mavis Madzhie described the agreement as a powerful demonstration of collective commitment to collaboration, innovation, and talent development across Africa. She emphasised that the partnership would provide students with opportunities to engage in meaningful learning experiences beyond the classroom while strengthening the university's role in shaping the continent's technological future.

Academic leaders at UNIVEN welcomed the partnership as a catalyst for interdisciplinary innovation. Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture, Prof Natasha Potgieter, expressed excitement about hosting an ATF Student Chapter at the university. She noted that the initiative would empower students across all faculties with AI skills, mentorship from global experts, and

hands-on innovation opportunities in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and education. Prof Potgieter added that establishing a joint steering committee would further strengthen collaboration and expand the programme's reach.

Echoing this sentiment, Acting Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, Prof Tawanda Runhare, emphasised the potential of the partnership to integrate science, technology, and indigenous knowledge systems. He noted that the initiative presents a unique opportunity to ensure that technological innovation is rooted in African contexts and responsive to societal needs.

Closing the ceremony, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Fulufhelo Netswera, delivered a vote of thanks, acknowledging the contributions of all partners and stakeholders who made the collaboration possible. He emphasised that the true success of the MoU will lie in translating the agreement into concrete programmes and initiatives that promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and technology-driven opportunities for students, researchers, and the broader university community.



The signing of the MoU marks an important milestone in UNIVEN's digital transformation journey and reinforces its commitment to positioning the institution as a catalyst for innovation and inclusive technological advancement in Africa. By combining academic

expertise with technology-focused initiatives, the partnership between UNIVEN and ATF is expected to play a meaningful role in nurturing the next generation of African innovators and digital leaders.



**If you spot anything out of the ordinary on campus - contact the University Hotline by calling toll free number 0800 212 755 or email: [univenhotline@tip-offs.com](mailto:univenhotline@tip-offs.com)**

**Improper conduct includes the following...**

- 1. Financial misconduct,**
- 2. Misuse or misappropriation of University assets,**
- 3. Health and safety risks,**
- 4. Plagiarism,**
- 5. Fraud and corruption.**

# NEW VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

## VISION AND MISSION

*"Vision is the art of seeing the invisible"*  
~ Jonathan Swift

Our vision defines what we want to become by 2040. It is an aspirational description of what we would like to achieve in the long term.



### VISION

A University leading in engaged scholarship



### MISSION

The University of Venda produces graduates who are locally relevant and globally competitive

## INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

The University of Venda is guided by a set of core institutional values that shape its culture, inform decision-making, and underpin the university's strategic priorities. These values include:

 <p><b>EXCELLENCE</b></p> <p>Striving for the highest standards in teaching, research, and service</p>	 <p><b>INTEGRITY</b></p> <p>Acting with honesty, ethics, and transparency in all we do</p>	 <p><b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b></p> <p>Taking responsibility for our actions and delivering on our commitments</p>	 <p><b>DIVERSITY</b></p> <p>Embracing and promoting inclusivity, equity, and different perspectives</p>	 <p><b>RESPECT</b></p> <p>Valuing the dignity and contributions of every individual</p>
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## POSITIONING STATEMENT

Positioning the University of Venda for Relevance, Excellence and Impact