

# HE Ambassador Amina Salum Ali

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**T**he ongoing transformation of the African continent is being shaped and influenced from within. Education remains central to development, and opportunities are being fostered to ensure that the skills, drive and talent of our youth are utilised. In particular, we are working closely with national leaders to improve employment prospects and ensure that Africa retains its talent. For those countries still afflicted by conflict situations, the African Union continues to uphold its peace and security architecture and encourage dialogue towards unity. We are focused on African interests, whereby opportunity is available to all and Africa fulfils its potential as the world's next economic growth pole.

For this, we welcome partnerships with international investors. Countries across the continent are making headway in opening their economies and building free markets, and we have seen progress delivered through partnership programmes such as Trade Africa, launched by United States President Barack Obama in 2013. Under this initiative, resources are being mobilised to support increased trade and investment, and the private sector is working alongside policymakers to promote greater opportunities for business.

Earlier this year, the US signed an agreement with five countries in the East African Community trading bloc – Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda – which commits the African countries to reduce trade barriers. In return, they will receive greater technical assistance in exporting African products to the American market. Looking ahead, the trade initiative will be expanded to include other African countries, resulting in even greater trade growth than we have recently seen.

At the inaugural of the first ever US-Africa Leaders' Summit, held in August 2014 in Washington DC, President Barack Obama announced renewed commitment to his Power Africa initiative, in which we pursue additional power capacity and expand access to electricity. Building on the summit's success, this year's event will focus on investing in the next generation and focus on fostering dialogue on how best to create and unlock opportunities for Africa's youth. The 2014 Summit played host to the announcement of new deals, commitments and investments, and I am confident that this year will provide another exciting opportunity to take the US-Africa relationship to a higher level.

We are also dedicated to ensuring the participation of women in all sectors of the economy. In 2015, with the theme 'Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063', the focus continues to be placed on the critical role of women in society and how female economic empowerment contributes to broad-based growth and development, bringing benefits for all. In her recent statement in Kingston, Jamaica,

the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, HE Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma underscored AU's determination: "The focus on women and girls, their contribution and empowerment, is critical to the implementation of Agenda 2063."

In a globalising world, Africa will uphold the values of peace, unity, opportunity and equality. As we look to 2063, I hope that our continent will be characterised by integrated, prosperous and well-governed markets, and become a creative and dynamic force in the international arena. Africa is awash with opportunity, and I welcome partners and its friends to invest in the unique economies across our dynamic continent. ●

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# Fort Hare University: 100 years of excellence

The University Of Fort Hare (UFH) will celebrate its centenary in 2016. The year marks 100 years in pursuit of academic excellence and a century in search of African and global knowledge. The academic tradition, character and stature of the university have matured over this time.

The University of Fort Hare has a long tradition of excellence and achievement, of which it is justly proud. Most liberation struggle leaders and many of the current political leaders of South Africa and beyond were educated at UFH.

Many students are inspired and motivated by the university's superior reputation:

- it is a seedbed for African leadership and intelligentsia;
- it played a key role in the liberation struggles on the African continent;
- it is the first historically black institution in South Africa; and
- it is one of the first multicultural and multiracial institutions in Africa.

Known as the “crucible of African leadership” and the alma mater of anti-apartheid struggle figures such as the great Zachariah Keodirelang Matthews, Nelson Mandela, Robert Sobukwe, Oliver Tambo and Govan Mbeki, the University of Fort Hare continues to spawn leaders in every sector of society. Furthermore, it is



the only Southern African university to have produced five heads of states: Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Yusuf Lule of Uganda, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Ntsu Mokhehle of Lesotho and Sir Seretse Khama of Botswana.

## Innovation and enterprise

For many, UFH is where they experience their intellectual coming of age and where they transform from mere students to men and women of legend. UFH students learn:

- to open their minds and hearts to the plight of fellow Africans;
- that personal struggles are part of a larger struggle;
- it is a privilege to be educated; and
- they have a moral duty to give back.

Our student body has become the stuff of legends: five students became presidents of their countries; two of them won Nobel prizes, their thoughts and efforts led to the liberation of South Africa and many African States; and their beliefs became a worldwide symbol for interracial harmony, forgiveness and reconciliation

The centenary also presents the opportunity to launch new academic programmes, buildings and facilities etc, as UFH redefines itself in the 21st century as a truly world-class African university.

The centenary provides an opportunity to reflect on the enormous contribution the university has made in the fields of teaching and learning, research and community service, but also to focus on how this can be continued into the next century.

The university is already in the top six South African universities in terms of per capita research output. Innovation in various fields, including renewable energy, ICT, agriculture, African languages, ethnobotany and biochemistry, is contributing to new knowledge and students at various levels will share their innovations.

During the centenary, university stakeholders will attend various events and, in this way, staff and members of council, current and prospective students, their parents, alumni, governments and various state agencies, the local community, donors, representatives of foreign countries, the media, as well as academics from other local and international universities, research institutions and social partners, among others, will all have the opportunity to share in our celebrations, our history and our future.

Our overall goal is to initiate an awakening of the human spirit, as well as enable economic equity, social civility, political citizenship, environmental sustainability, social cohesion and nation building through rural development and celebration of our South African heritage.

## Looking towards the future

UFH has been shaped by Africa's past and is committed to the continent's future. It has positioned itself at the centre of the social, political, economic and cultural revolution that is unfolding in the region, both by stimulating it and responding to it. Its research agenda and academic curriculum will continue to adapt to the needs of society and the university will continue to engage with and partner with the wider community.

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