

**Opening Remarks – Oldenburg University, 25 year partnership celebration**

**Oldenburg, Germany**

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**Prof. Sibongile Muthwa**

*Vice-Chancellor*

*Nelson Mandela University*

President of Oldenburg University, Prof Dr Ralph Bruder

His Excellency the Mayor of Oldenburg, Mr Krogmann

Vice-President Prof Karsten Speck

Vice-President Prof Christiane Thiel

I also recognise the team that is accompanying me, Dr Thandi Mgwebi, DVC: RII; Dr Muki Moeng, DVC: Learning and Teaching; Dean of Humanities, Prof Pam Maseko, and all the academics and students

Thanks President Bruder for lifting up the name of our namesake Nelson Mandela. This is not a name that we quite own, but it is an identity that we walk into.

**Introduction**

1. We thank you President and team for the opportunity of this return invitation to further celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the partnership between Nelson Mandela University and the University of Oldenburg.
2. We are also here to recommit to deepening the existing relations through the signing of the partnership roadmap – a five-year partnership implementation plan to focus Mandela University and Oldenburg University’s activities for the next five years.

**Recognition**

3. The anniversary celebration provides an opportunity to recognise the many individuals who have played a key role in laying the foundation for the partnership. From Nelson Mandela University, Dr Nico Jooste, the former Senior Director for International Education,

and Prof Janina Wozniak deserve a particular mention for their sterling work in the early years of the partnership.

4. It is also important to recognise the many funding agencies that availed resources for the implementation of the partnership activities. Special thanks to the Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture, whose representatives are present, for financially assisting the Faculties of Education from both universities. The German Academic Exchange Services (DAAD) also receives special thanks for funding partnership activities between Mandela and Oldenburg for the last 20 years or so.
5. Recognition also, particularly, goes to academics and students without whose dedication and work, no partnership would have been sustained or sustainable.
6. Of course we would be remiss not to recognise the efforts of colleagues from the International Offices of both our universities who have tirelessly worked to make the hosting of this special occasion a success.

### **On the partnership between Mandela and Oldenburg Universities**

7. No one would have imagined during the signing of the first partnership agreement 25 years ago how this partnership would pan out. Many universities in South Africa then, fresh from the apartheid dispensation, were all figuring out what could be the best strategies to entrench a global reputation, in line with their plans and ambitions.
8. Great integrity and careful nurturing of mutual and interdependent intentions that went into cementing the partnership, stand as a touchstone and great example of how such partnership can either fizzle out, or endure for a long time.
9. Today, we will be signing the partnership roadmap – a strategic implementation plan for the partnership in the next 5 years.

### **Partnership Roadmap**

10. In signing the roadmap framework, we are making a commitment to focus the implementation of our partnership activities, as outlined. Of course the scope of activities in the partnership roadmap is not exhaustive, and we believe, leave sufficient and ample room for the partnership to grow from strength to strength, and adapt according to the demands and directions of our respective institutions.
11. As Nelson Mandela University we remain deeply committed to the partnership and will do our part to advance this partnership in material and substantive ways, while we fully importance of mobilising resources in implementing the partnership roadmap.

President, we thank you sincerely for this partnership.

For us any university would not have fulfilled its purpose if it fails to improve the human condition and advance the expansion of fundamental universal freedoms, through knowledge, science and innovation, and person-to-person contact

I thank you.