**REMARKS BY DIRECTOR-GENERAL CASSIUS LUBISI ON RECEIPT OF THE UNISA OUTSTANDING ALUMNUS AWARD ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

**GALLAGHER CONVENTION CENTRE, JOHANNESBURG**

**1 NOVEMBER 2018**

Programme Director, Dr Somadoda Fikeni,

Your Excellency, Thabo Mbeki, Chancellor of the University of South Africa,

Prof Mandla Makhanya, Principal and Vice Chancellor,

Esteemed recipients of awards,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to accept the Outstanding Alumnus Award on behalf of President Cyril Ramaphosa.

President Ramaphosa has asked me to convey his deep appreciation to the University of South Africa for bestowing on him this honour.

He has also asked me to convey his apologies for not being able to attend the Chancellor’s Calabash Awards due to commitments elsewhere in the country.

These awards are a welcome intiative to draw attention to those in society who have not only excelled in their fields, but who are also using their talents and capabilities for the betterment of society.

These awards reinforce our collective determination to build a society founded on principles of solidarity and service.

It is a society that places the progress and well-being of all its people above the pursuit of narrow personal interest.

It prioritises the needs of the poor and the marginalised, it protects the vulnerable and works to correct the injustices of the past.

It is a society that is the antithesis of the apartheid and colonial states from which we have emerged.

It is a society that challenges the narrow nationalism, chauvinism and intolerance that is emerging in several parts of the world.

The ethos that is represented in the awards requires that we work with greater focus and determination to change the conditions in which the majority of South Africans live.

It requires that we mobilise the resources of our institutions of higher learning to confront the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment, and that we produce graduates with both the skills and the desire to build a growing, inclusive and sustainable economy.

This means that, as a society, we must value knowledge, embrace learning and prize excellence.

For many years, UNISA has been instrumental in building such a society.

It is a remarkable institution, not only for the size, diversity and extent of its student population, but also for the quality and relevance of its scholarship.

This is a university that is forging a new path in a rapidly-changing world; that has ambitions not merely to adjust to the times, but to play a meaningful role in shaping a future of progress, development and prosperity for all.

When looking for potential recipients of the Outstanding Alumnus Award, this university is not short of candidates.

I am certain that in the years ahead, the task of the award selection committee will become even more difficult as Unisa graduates swell the ranks of those who are building a brighter future for all South Africans.

Allow me, once again, to express the President’s appreciation for this award and wish everyone a most enjoyable evening.

I thank you.