

Virtual Event on the proposed Collaboration between South African Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the United States of America (USA HBCUs)

13 September 2023

Theme: Africa's Sixth Region: Building Educational, Financial, and Development Partnerships to Promote 2030 SDGs & AU Agenda 2063

Date and Time: Wednesday, 13 September 2023, **10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon EST** (16:00 – 18:00 South African time).

Hosting Institutions: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) South Africa Country Office, UNDP- Africa Sustainable Finance Hub, UNDP Bureau for Africa, Office of HBCU Development and International Cooperation (OHBCUD, Inc), Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and the Department of Higher Education and Training

Participants: Senior African leaders, prominent scholars, educational and development practitioners, development partners and civil society representatives will be invited to participate virtually.

Background and Context:

Africa is a development paradox. It remains a continent that is rich in minerals, natural resources and enormous human potential but also home to 33 of the world's 46 Least Development Countries and two-thirds of its extremely poor population. Many obstacles still hinder the adequate and timely implementation of UN Agenda 2030 and AU Agenda 2063. Thus, the effective amelioration of this paradox remains compromised.

It is within this context that on 2 May 2023, Dr. Blade Nzimande, South Africa's Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, and his visiting team met with leadership from UNDP Africa and OHBCUD, Inc at United Nations Headquarters, NYC. A mutually agreed upon outcome of this historic meeting was an agreement to conduct a joint side event at the margins of the 78th Session of UNGA 2023. While people of African descent live in many countries, the African-American diaspora is uniquely positioned to help unlock the continent's educational, financial, and economic potential.

Such an event is envisioned as a practical way and means of first identifying, showcasing and further institutionalizing sample partnerships built around already existing projects and programs that exist under the direction of the Minister's good Office. Areas of actual or potential collaboration between DHET, DSI South Africa's Historically Disadvantaged Institution (HDIs), Universities South Africa (USAf), UNDP Africa, African Union, and HBCUs can be strategically identified and explored.

These further enhanced pilot projects and programs could help address the immediate needs of South Africa and the HBCU community in the USA. Additionally, such evidence driven baseline information might be used to help guide and enhance similar partnerships with other universities, and civil society entities, throughout the entire Southern African Development Community (SADC), and similar development regions in Africa. Thus, results generated from such focused collaboration can be showcased, upscaled and provide natural synergy and harmonization with the ongoing implementation of 2030 SDGs and AU 2063 objectives.

HBCUs are strategically positioned to work with South Africa's DHET, UNDP Africa, the African Union, and African countries to unlock the continent's intelligence development code, facilitate regional integration, improve agricultural productivity and food sovereignty, and make the most out of education in African institutions. In short, Africa's Sixth Region can display an increasingly dynamic and pragmatic framework.

Event Objectives:

This event aims to convene, systemize and scale-up ongoing alliances among HBCUs, UNDP Africa and South Africa's Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (DHET). Additionally, Member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union, people of African descent, the private sector, and civil society can be invited to virtually engage and help create new opportunities for leveraging HBCUs partnership with South Africa's Ministry of Higher Education to accelerate Africa's development.

Specifically, it will:

- I. Identify, review and assess progress to date of current projects and programs conducted by South Africa's Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation in partnership with HBCUs, including the International Distance Learning Initiative (IDLI);
- II. Showcase the most productive partnership projects and programs with the intent to upscale their operations, publicize the results, secure additional support for project expansion and/or replication, and provide progress reports at subsequent annual UNGA events ;
- III. Identify 2-3 high priority areas of needed partnership between South Africa's Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs) and HBCUs, which are also in harmony with 2030 SDGs and AU Agenda 2063 (e.g. agriculture, health, education, etc);
- IV. With technical guidance and expertise provided by UNDP Africa and others, identify and highlight sound practices regarding innovative financing mechanisms, policies and operational practices which can be harnessed to support and sustain the DHET/HDI and HBCU partnership projects and programs; and
- V. Establish and maintain ongoing working partnerships and support of UN Member States, educational institutions serving predominantly persons of African descent, UNDP Africa and the Finance Sector Hub, South Africa's Ministry of Higher Education, development finance institutions, private sector, NGOs/CSOs and cognate organizations.

Participants:

- UNDP Africa Administrator and Support Staff
- Representatives, South African Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation
- Representatives from HDIs and Universities of Technology (UOTs)
- Board Members, Office of HBCU Development & International Cooperation
- HBCU Presidents & Deans
- Leadership of the National HBCU Business Deans Roundtable
- NGOs/CSOs, Experts on Finance, HBCU Agribusiness, and Trade