

Minister's Foreword



By **Dr Naledi Pandor**, Minister of Higher Education and Training February 2018 - May 2019; currently Minister of International Relations and Cooperation.

I congratulated IEASA on their 10th anniversary for their work on the internationalisation of education and the promotion of South African Higher Education to the international community. Over a decade later, congratulations are due again to IEASA on having grown in its work, in which it has become a significant voice in representing South Africa internationally.

An important aspect of my department's mandate is to support the development of a strong public Higher Education system in South Africa. This it seeks to do through a range of steering mechanisms which include policy, planning and funding.

Five of the fastest growing economies in the world are in Africa.

Two important frameworks to be released by my department, during the course of the year are the *Policy Framework on Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa* and the *National Plan for Post School Education and Training*. I am hopeful that these initiatives will have a positive impact on our universities and our Post School Education and Training.

Many of our universities actively collaborate internationally; sometimes through individual scholars but often as part of regionally or nationally driven initiatives. These collaborations ensure that South Africa is a player in the increasingly important multi and inter disciplinary global research and innovation ecosystems. Our institutions and academics are able to lead some niches; and derive benefit from collaboration with research strengths in other countries.

The majority of international students coming to South Africa hail from other African countries and bring with them the rich and profoundly diverse cultural and intellectual heritage of the continent. Moreover, five of the fastest growing economies in the world are in Africa. Both for our own benefit and that of the continent, there are compelling reasons for our Higher Education system, to actively interact with academics, students and institutions on the continent.

The personal growth of students through international exposure and experience is well known. The opportunities to learn and to live with contemporaries from other parts of the continent and the world is an unqualified catalyst to a broader understanding of the social, cultural, economic and political realities of the peoples of other countries. This can only enrich the educational experience of the students and at the same time, build a network of graduates with a continental and global commitment to peaceful and just development. These are important aspects of a fulfilling and enriched international student experience in South Africa. This implies that a deliberate effort and commitment is made to ensure that our international partners, students and staff are made to feel welcome, and that our institutions are able to offer pleasant living and study and/or work environments. The desired outcome is that our international scholars are proud of their association with South African Higher Education and are ambassadors for the system once they leave South Africa.

The implementation of the National Plan for Post School Education and Training should lead to a diverse institutional landscape comprising strong, focussed and sustainable institutions. The inclusion of international engagement in our institutions will support the desired high quality undergraduate education; the engagement in research and scholarship; and socially engaged and responsible citizenship, while recognising the discernible identity of each institution.

The effective implementation of the two important policy frameworks mentioned above will build a world class, internationally competitive and locally responsive university system in South Africa.

I encourage IEASA to continue its significant contribution to the quality of Higher Education.