



Dr Marinkie Madiope
Principal of the South Campus (UFS)

Abstract:

The Africa we want: ‘Embedding Nutrition within the COVID-19 Response and Recovery’ within higher education – Dr Marinkie Madiope

Dumelang! Sanibonani! Hello! Jambo! Welkom, Le Amohetswi, Niamukelekile, you are all most welcome as we celebrate the 49th Africa Day!

“In the framework of the long-term vision encapsulated in Agenda 2063, aspiration one underlines the importance of nutrition for the ‘Africa We Want’, with the goal of ‘African people have a high standard of living, quality of life, sound health and well-being’ and goal 3 of ‘citizens are healthy and well nourished, and enjoying a life expectancy of above 75 years.’”(<https://au.int/en/theme/2022/year-nutrition>)

Today, as we are gathered together in harmony, celebrating our diversity, we focus our festivities on recognising the value and importance of nutrition on our continent; I would thus like to dub today’s Africa Day the day of Reading, Eating, and Living Well. My prayer for us, our families, and our continent is that we experience prosperity, abundance, and the grace of our merciful Creator.

As academics and students, we have the privilege of not only fully indulging our senses in their desires and appetites, but we also have the latitude and means to improve and expand our tastes. This is mostly the case because we are healthy and well fed. Our mental states are always a reflection of our physical and nutritional states of well-being. For this wonderful reality, we ought not only be grateful, but also take the stance of paying forward the providence we have been blessed with.

As we place the emphasis on nutrition on this auspicious day – celebrating our continent – I believe it is imperative that we foster ways to inculcate this very important biological need into our methods of disseminating and creating education. Our continent is one suffering terribly from the scourges of both malnutrition and strained delivery of basic education. How revolutionary would it be if we could



simultaneously eradicate these vices by formulating policies, mechanisms, and vehicles that would enable us to feed, heal, and teach our people?

It is incumbent on us as thought leaders to take the lead in this significant enterprise.

Here on the UFS South Campus, we will be embarking on various initiatives through our Women's Forum to further this vital cause of meeting the most basic needs of those closest to us. Celebrate with us and commit to our endeavour by offering your services, skills, as well as time. Together, we will create a bright, happy, and healthy future for Africa.

As I close, I am reminded of the beginning of the 'I am an African' speech by former president Thabo Mbeki whenever someone asks the question – 'What does it mean to be African?'

"I am an African. I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land."