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## **Professor Sibongile Muthwa Assumes Chairpersonship of Universities SA**

Professor Sibongile Muthwa, Vice-Chancellor and Principal at Nelson Mandela University, took up the reins as Universities South Africa Chairperson from 1 January, 2020. In this role, Professor Muthwa leads USAf in its engagement of government and business stakeholders as well as the academic and research communities for operational success, advancement and sustainability of the university sector, and also for the sector's quest to support South Africa's national development. Her appointment comes at a time when USAf is being repositioned as a relevant and responsive organisation, fully engaged with its various publics, locally and internationally.

Professor Ahmed Bawa, USAf's CEO, describes Professor Muthwa as a highly respected leader and an outstanding social scientist who brings vast international and national experience to USAf's Chairpersonship. "USAf will heavily draw upon Professor Muthwa's expertise in leading the only university in the world that is named after Nelson Mandela, South Africa's political icon. USAf will also tap into Professor Muthwa's experience as a mentor to young women -- as the university system continues to tackle the deep gender imbalances that characterise it."

Professor Muthwa holds a PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, an MSc in Development Policy and Planning from London School of Economics and Political Science, a BA (SW) Honours from the University of the Witwatersrand and BA in Social Work from the University of Fort Hare.

Prior to becoming the USAf Chairperson, Professor Muthwa was the Chair of USAf's Funding Strategy Group – one of five key strategy groups that determine and drive USAf's agenda for the advancement and sustainability of public universities. All of these groups are chaired by sitting vice-chancellors.

Professor Muthwa has built an illustrious career in both South Africa and the United Kingdom where she has worked in development and public sector institutions and academia. Before her appointment as Vice-Chancellor of Nelson Mandela University, she was the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Institutional Support at the same institution from 2010 to 2017. She served as Director-General of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government from 2004 to 2010.

She prides herself for being committed to "contributing to changing the trajectory of every young person whose life I have the privilege to touch."

Professor Muthwa succeeds Professor Thandwa Mthembu, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the Durban University of Technology, who was at the USAf helm for the past two years.

USAf therefore extends its deep gratitude to the outgoing Chairperson, Professor Mthembu, and a heartfelt welcome to Professor Muthwa. “We are confident that under her stewardship USAf will rise to even greater heights during her two-year term,” Professor Bawa concludes.

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