



MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR

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Chancellor*

In 2010, a process took place at Stellenbosch University (SU) which was similar to that at the United Nations in 2000; granted, on a considerably smaller scale, but likewise based on the realisation that multilevel collaboration, partnerships and the effective sharing of resources could be used to achieve joint objectives – in the service of society.

In September 2000, 189 government leaders gathered at the United Nations committed themselves to the Millennium Declaration to build a more secure, more prosperous and more just world. Eight measurable objectives – the Millennium Development Goals – were drawn up for realisation by 2015.

In its *A Strategic Framework for the turn of the century and beyond of 2000* and its *Vision 2012* SU declared its desire to be an active role player in society. Since Prof Russel Botman's assumption of office as Rector and Vice-Chancellor, this endeavour has been further motivated by the requirement that SU's teaching and learning, research and community interaction should be relevant to the South African and African contexts. As he put it: create hope by harnessing science to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing our country.

In support of the international development goals the University, taking into account its proven expertise, formulated its own development themes as follows: eradicating poverty and related conditions; promoting human dignity and health; promoting democracy and human rights; promoting peace and security; and promoting a sustainable environment and a competitive industry. Stellenbosch University has the academic and research expertise to make a significant contribution in these areas and thereby to create hope for all the people of our country and continent.

With these chosen development themes as the binding thread joining the many initiatives, the University's HOPE Project gained shape. Through the many academic and research initiatives on which we report elsewhere in this report, SU is working at finding sustainable, scientific solutions for problems such as famine,

gender inequality, autocratic governments, political and social intolerance, the death rate among women and children, HIV/ Aids and other diseases, the scarcity of water, environmental challenges, alternative energy sources and the development of the youth, as well as solutions for the utilisation of resources.

A daring and ambitious undertaking for a university, to be sure; but what other option is there if we are serious about leaving a better world for future generations? I make bold to say that most of the issues highlighted by the United Nations Development Programme have their origins in inadequate literacy and inadequate training – inadequacies that feed the vicious cycle of poverty, disease, intolerance, economically inert human resources, and other such conditions.

Among the items on the list of science-based initiatives that will provide the momentum for the achievement of the goals of the HOPE Project are the following:

- *programmes to improve school teaching in science and mathematics;*
- *technology that is used to improve the performance of rural schools and enable postgraduate students to work while they study;*
- *improved rural health care and the training of more health care practitioners;*
- *the training and development of a new generation of academics;*
- *the establishment of better governance practices to counteract corruption;*
- *the use of traditional African conflict resolution methods to prevent political conflict and litigation;*
- *land reform and the training of emerging farmers; and*
- *academic support to students to promote successful study.*

The points of contact with the international and national goals are obvious, and in the spirit of cooperation, partnerships and a shared vision, it is important that government, philanthropic foundations with an interest in Africa, the business sector and alumni should support the University in its endeavour to be a builder of hope on our continent.