GOVERNMENT NOTICE

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

MINISTERIAL ADVISORY PANEL ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

I, Bonginkosi Emmanuel Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training, in accordance with Treasury Regulation 20, published in GN No. 225 of Government Gazette No. 27388 of 15 March 2005 [issued in terms of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No 1 of 1999], hereby establish an advisory panel on the development of African languages in higher education.

Dr BE Nzimande, MP

Minister of Higher Education and Training

Date:

Ministry of Higher Education and Training

Terms of Reference for the Advisory Panel on the Development of African Languages in Higher Education

Background

The development of African languages in education is mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Section 6 (2) of the Constitution states that in, "recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages." Furthermore, Section 29 (2) of the Bill of Rights states that "Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable".

The Higher Education Act of 1997 [Section 21 (2)] provides for the Minister to determine language policy for higher education in the country. It provides that, subject to the development of policy by the Minister, the councils of public higher education institutions, with the concurrence of their senates, must determine the language policy of a higher education institution and must publish and make such policy available on request.

The Department of Education developed and promulgated in 2002 the *Language Policy for Higher Education*. The policy seeks to promote multilingualism in institutional policies and practices. It provides for "the simultaneous development of multilingualism environment in

which all languages are developed as academic and/or scientific languages while at the same time ensuring that the existing languages of instruction do not serve as a barrier to access and success." The policy notes that "the role of language and access to language skills is critical to ensure the right of individuals to realise their full potential to participate in and contribute to the social, cultural, intellectual, economic and political life of South African society".

The report of the Ministerial Committee appointed to investigate the development of Indigenous African Languages as Mediums of Instruction in Higher Education (Ndebele Committee) published in 2005 recommended that African languages be developed into languages of learning and teaching in tertiary institutions. It provided a framework through which institutional language policies could be developed, particularly on the development of African languages.

Furthermore, the development of African languages at universities features strongly in the *2008 Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions.* The Report notes the continuation of challenges faced by students who are not English first language-speakers at universities. It also indicates that the implementation approach to the parallel-medium language policies that are in place in a number of historically Afrikaans medium institutions discriminated against black students". Thus, the Committee recommends that the Minister initiates a broad review of obstacles facing the implementation of effective language policies and practices in higher education institutions, including a study of the application of equitable language policies found in countries with more or less similar social differences to those of South Africa.

In 2010, the Department of Higher Education and Training convened a roundtable discussion on the development of African Languages. The aim of the meeting was to provide a space for focused discussion on the state of African languages in higher education, and in particular, to come up with a clear set of recommendations on how to strengthen African languages at universities.

Establishment of an Advisory Panel

- A Ministerial Advisory Panel on the Development of African Languages is hereby established to advise the Minister on the development of African languages as languages of scholarship at the institutions of higher learning in South Africa.

- The Minister shall determine the chairperson and appoint members to the Panel.

- The Department shall provide secretarial support to the Panel.

- The duration of the Panel shall end with the submission of its final report to the Minister.

Purpose

The main purpose of the Advisory Panel is to advise the Minister of Higher Education and Training on the development of African languages as languages of scholarship at institutions of higher learning in South Africa. In carrying out its mandate, the Panel must assess existing national and institutional policies, their implementation and barriers that hinder the development of African languages in the higher education system and to advise the Minister in this regard. Where necessary, the Panel must engage other Ministerial Committees and task teams, as well as initiatives undertaken by other government institutions such as the

Departments of Arts and Culture and Basic Education, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) as well as the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) and any other relevant organisation.

Specific Terms of Reference

The Panel,

- must undertake literature review on the development of African languages in South Africa with particular focus on higher education institutions. This review must include proposals on African languages and other relevant parts contained in the draft Charter for Humanities and Social Sciences.

- must review the existing Language Policy for Higher Education, and its implementation, particularly in relation to the development of African languages at South African universities and recommend how it can be improved.

- must study the report of the Ministerial Steering Committee appointed to investigate the development of indigenous African languages as mediums of instruction in higher education and advise where necessary.

- must review all the universities' institutional policies and the extent to which they are being implemented, especially with regard to the development of African languages, and recommend on how they can be improved either collectively as groups or individually.

- must undertake a holistic audit of initiatives undertaken by our universities relating to teaching, research, development and good practices in the promotion of African languages in particular and multilingualism in general.

- must conduct an investigation of obstacles presented by the current structure and operations of the publishing industry in development and usage of African languages and suggest possible ways on how this area can be improved.

- must recommend on how African Languages departments at the universities can be strengthened. The recommendation must consider various types of interventions that can be made in this regard.

- must advise the Minister on infrastructural, human and funding resources required for the development and promotion of African languages in the South African higher education system. Such advice should consider the use of ICT to strengthen African languages in higher education.

- must interact with the work of the Ministerial Task Team on the Review of the Funding Formula for universities as well as the Green Paper development process, which are both underway, in order to ensure that these processes have adequately addressed the development of teaching, research and general development of African languages. This interaction must consider the mainstreaming of African languages in budgets and academic activities on our universities.

- must forge linkages with other relevant bodies and institutions that may enhance prospects for the realisation of objective of development of African languages in our university system.

- can include, with explanation, any other matters it considers crucial for the determination of the above-stated purpose.

- must provide quarterly progress reports, and at the conclusion of its work, provide the Minister with a final report outlining concrete actions that need to be taken to ensure the development of African languages at universities. The final report is to be submitted to the Minister in July 2013.

Members of the Ministerial Advisory Panel are:

- Prof Pitika Ntuli (Chairperson)
- Dr Lepono Boshego
- Dr Willem Botha
- Prof Nompumelelo Jafta
- Ms Jenny Kinnear
- Ms Sponono Mahlangu
- Prof Langalibalele Mathenjwa
- Ms Christina Mayevu
- Mr Mpume Mbatha
- Dr Sibiswa Mdaka
- Ms Engeline Netshiheni
- Prof Zilibele Mtumane
- Ms Joyce Sukumane
- Ms Matodzi Raphalalani