

CHE STATEMENT

For immediate release:

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Council on Higher Education Statement on the passing of Professor Sibusiso Bengu

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) records its sadness on hearing of the passing of Professor Bengu and extends its sincere condolences to Prof Bengu's family, friends and colleagues.

Professor Bengu is recognised for the sterling contribution that he has made to the development of a democratic South Africa, and to its education sector in particular, through various roles that he has played, as a teacher, a university academic and administrator, a Minister of Education and an Ambassador. In 1991, he became the first black vice-chancellor of the University of Fort Hare, which was an important milestone in the transformation of the institution.

During his tenure as the first Minister of Education in democratic South Africa, important strides were made to establish one unified education system, and to put in place the legislation and plans that would guide and enable its continued development. In the higher education system, he was instrumental in establishing the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) whose report in 1996 informed the development of the first main post-apartheid higher education policy document, namely the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997). This was followed by the enactment of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 to provide an enabling legal framework for the transformation of higher education in the country.

The CHE was also formally established under his leadership.

His immense contribution to higher education is recognised by, among other things, the renaming of what was previously known as the Historically Disadvantaged Institutions Development Grant to be the Sibusiso Bengu Development Programme.

It is incumbent on us to reclaim the strong foundations that were put in place by visionaries such as Professor Bengu, and to also make our contribution to building an education system that effectively serves the needs of all South Africa's people.

May Professor Bengu rest in peace.



Dr Whitfield Green

Chief Executive Officer - Designated Spokesperson

Further queries can be directed to:

Mr Ntokozo Bhengu

Manager - Communications & Stakeholder Relations Manager

Bhengu.N@che.ac.za

Tel: 012 349 3885

Mobile phone: 083 319 4172