

**Opmerkings deur Prof H Russel Botman,
rektor en viserektor van die Universiteit Stellenbosch, ter geleentheid
van die ondertekening van 'n memorandum van verstandhouding tussen
die Drakensteinse Munisipaliteit en die Universiteit Stellenbosch
te Paarl op 26 Januarie 2011**

Thank you, chairperson. Good afternoon, everyone. Molweni. Goeie middag.

Agbare:

- Mev Charmaine Manuel, Burgermeester van die Drakensteinse Munisipaliteit, en haar span:
 - Raadslede
 - dr Pravine Naidoo, Uitvoerende Direkteur: Strategiese Dienste; en
 - ander senior amptenare van die Drakensteinse Munisipaliteit
- Van die US:
 - prof Julian Smith, die Universiteit Stellenbosch se Viserektor: Gemeenskapsinteraksie en Personeel;
 - dr Jerome Slamet, Senior Direkteur: Gemeenskapsinteraksie; en
 - mnr Mohamed Shaik, Senior Direkteur: Kommunikasie en Skakeling.]

Dankie vir die geleentheid om 'n paar woorde te sê. Dis vir my 'n voorreg om u toe te spreek op hierdie geskiedkundige dag.

Today's agreement takes each of our strengths and combines them into a single strategy for success in the drive to improve the lives of people. Saam kan ons meer vermag as op ons eie, en dit is wat hierdie ooreenkoms so belangrik maak – dit vestig 'n vennootskap vir vooruitgang.

What is it that each of us do best?

As an institution of higher learning, Stellenbosch University is primarily concerned with knowledge – the discovery of new knowledge through scientific research, sharing that knowledge with our students and the rest of humanity, and applying our findings to the benefit of the community.

As a local authority, Drakenstein Municipality's main business is service delivery – providing – housing, water, electricity, roads, business opportunities and so forth to its residents.

What this agreement does, is to get us to work together with a common goal in mind: making the world a better place for the people of Paarl, Wellington, Saron, Gouda and Simondium, as well as everyone attached to and served by Stellenbosch University. This makes a lot of sense, because your slogan as a municipality is "Working together to create a place of opportunity" and our slogan as a university is to be "Your knowledge partner".

Wat is die uitdagings wat ons wil takel? Soos weerspieël in die ooreenkoms, is daar ernstige sosio-ekonomiese probleme in hierdie omgewing. Daar is 'n tekort aan infrastruktuur, ons beleef omgewingsprobleme en daar is 'n groot welvaartgaping tussen ryk en arm. Daar is ook nog verdeeldheid tussen bruin en swart en wit.

Wat is dit wat die Universiteit Stellenbosch kan bied? Ons volg die wetenskaplike model, die eksperimentele metode, die soeke na antwoorde in 'n laboratorium.

Die heel beste laboratorium is jou gemeenskap, die omgewing rondom jou, die mense wie se lief en leed jy deel. En as jy die soort universiteit is wat omgee vir die gemeenskap, dan is hierdie soort samewerking met die verkose owerheid wat vir dienslewering aan die bevolking verantwoordelik is die regte ding om te doen.

At Stellenbosch University, we take the challenge of relevance seriously. We don't want to be ivory tower academics. It is this challenge that inspired us to come up with the HOPE Project.

We looked at international and national development agendas, such as the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and our government's Medium-term Strategic Framework (MTSF). And we distilled five themes to guide our activities, namely (1) the eradication of poverty and related conditions, and the promotion of (2) human dignity and health, (3) democracy and human rights, (4) peace and security, as well as (5) a sustainable environment and a competitive industry.

To give effect to these goals, our 10 faculties have developed 22 academic initiatives. These range from an interdisciplinary food security initiative and a programme to use the legal system to achieve social justice, to centres for dispute settlement, HIV/Aids management, agribusiness leadership development and sustainability. It also includes a new rural clinical school to train more doctors for neglected areas and a water institute that has come up with an incredible invention – the “teabag” water filter.

Met hierdie ooreenkoms verbind die Universiteit Stellenbosch hom tot noue samewerking met die Drakensteinse Munisipaliteit om die gemeenskaplike uitdagings wat ons in die gesig staar, aan te spreek. Ons navorsers en dosente en studente en gaan met jul raadslede en bestuurders en amptenare en werkers hande vat en saam na oplossings soek. Die munisipaliteit het groot ervaring en kundigheid opgebou, en dit is iets wat ons akademiese werk kan verryk.

Ons visie vir ons streek en sy dorpe, vir ons provinsie en land, ons vasteland en wêreld is 'n toekoms sonder armoede, waar die menswaardigheid van alle mense beskerm word, waar ons maatskaplike en ekologiese stelsels gesond is, en waar vrede, veiligheid en demokrasie beskerm word. In Drakenstein het ons 'n vennoot wat hierdie visie deel. Vandag se ooreenkoms stel ons in staat om saam ons *toekomsvisie werklikheid te maak vir al ons mense.*

In aid of rural development, Stellenbosch has a similar memorandum of understanding in place with Stellenbosch Municipality, which covers Stellenbosch, Pniel and Franschhoek.

The University is also collaborating with the Western Cape Provincial Government, and with local authorities and structures in other towns in our region, such as Worcester, Ceres, Robertson, Caledon, Hermanus and Swellendam.

My congratulations to everyone who worked on the nuts and bolts of today's agreement. Ladies and gentlemen, may the partnership between Drakenstein Municipality and Stellenbosch University go from strength to strength – to the benefit of all the people and communities we serve.