

## **Outgoing President's Speech and Handover message**

### **Segametsi Molawa (LIASA President 2014- 16)**

All Protocol observed, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure, to be standing in front of you on this day, the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2016 exiting my portfolio of the President of LIASA for the past two years. Thank you for the privilege you gave me, by electing me in 2012 as President elect to assume my Presidency in 2014- till today. In the same breath, I congratulate Mr Mandla Ntombela who is succeeding me and wish him well in his new role of LIASA President. I wish him well in all his future endeavours.

I would like to thank the Executive committee of LIASA. They served at a high level of commitment. I saw them leaving their homes over long weekends at times taking their own leave days where it was not possible to receive days from the employer, to come to the meeting and attend to LIASA business. I saw them share their special skills in various ways, e.g today we have the LIASA website that was insourced as Ms Ina Smith focused on the technical part of designing it and pressurising all of us to source information within her tight timelines thus saving LIASA thousands of Rands. The Representative council was also confronted by the same challenges as they volunteered to serve. I would like to thank them for their unfailing support.

The LIASA National Office staff, LIASA Manager Ms Annamarie Goosen and the Membership Officer Mr Kagiso Ledwaba, keep up the good work. Your work demands a high level of integrity and competence as a variety of skills are expected by all of us in LIASA. Annamarie, you are a unique manager, I know you tried to draw lines for your job and later realised that it does not work. You passionately run from managerial to extreme operational duties. Keep it up! You serve too many people to make all of us happy, but continue to strive for serving with integrity. I hope all who serve in LIASA platforms are aware that LIASA cannot be led by an 8:00-5:00 bound programme. You need to share your own time, if you want to succeed in delivering on the mandate you have in any of the portfolios.

At this point, it is appropriate for me to single our former National Librarian and current president of AfLIA Mr John Tsebe who succeeded to convince me that it will be worth it to serve LIASA in the position of President after my long years of hard work, sacrifice and commitment serving in LIASA portfolios at branch and National level. At that time I had no aspiration to go higher in the echelons of LIASA leadership but complacent where I was as a member of the Executive team. Thank you sir! Let's also plant the seed among colleagues with potential in leadership and mentor them, it will bear fruits for LIASA and the LIS sector.

I have received the support of the immediate past and past presidents of LIASA. If I can start unpacking this one, we will never be out of this place. The constitution of LIASA is not having any organ called President's forum, but we have put it in place and it is a dynamic platform of people who are passionate about LIASA, are sacrificing their time and prepared to go an extra mile every time you engage them on any issues that crops up as you soldier

on in the LIASA leadership. Some standing responsibilities are already there for them. I will like to challenge them to move to a higher level of commitment that even involve their purse, to support LIASA. As we endeavour to expand the donor base and more secure level of contributions for LIASA, it has to start with us. We need to cater for all possible scenarios for the existence of LIASA, asking ourselves “what is going to happen to the Association the day no sponsor will manage to assist due to genuine economic challenges?” I am leaving all LIASA members with this question. The President forum is coming nowhere near interfering with the incoming president’s strategy towards achieving the LIASA mandate, but it is good to know that there are support systems to help when need arise.

Our current National Librarian’s support and pulling of strings from the various bodies she serves in, including the critical Council of Higher Education (CHE) for the benefit of LIASA is highly appreciated. When I approached most Directors, managers and heads of Libraries, I was able to receive immediate support, but what I didn’t succeed doing is to bring most of them back to active LIASA members as they cited their workloads as a challenging factor. Paying LIASA membership but being inactive is not an option if we plan to build a strong LIASA. I still believe that we will get back to the era when senior professionals are available to fully participate in LIASA like they do at SAOUG, SCECSAL, ALA and IFLA, just to mention a few.

Colleagues in special areas within the LIS sector were ever willing to carry out tasks when I requested. My special thanks and appreciation goes to Denise Nicholson from Wits, who handled quite a number of legislative issues, wrote statements and presented on behalf of LIASA on copyright issues. I managed to thank all of you on behalf of the EXCO and RepCo in the special roles that you handled to ensure that LIASA succeeds and grow. I also urge those hidden skills to come out and serve. “Together we are strong”! Just volunteer! If we assist in bringing solutions to issues that we seriously dislike in the running of LIASA, LIASA will be so much better. Pointing fingers has never yielded solutions.

LIASA members, there is no LIASA without you. One is only a leader when followers stand beside him/ her! that’s a quote by “Mark Brouwer” and Andrew Carnegie went further to say, (open quote) “No man will make a great leader, who wants to do it all by himself to get all the credit for doing it”(close quote). All these are simply saying, leaders and members, we need each other, and we all have a special role to play, for the success and development of our Association.

I hope the progress report we led yesterday in the AGM has succeeded to indicate to you the amount of work that has been done in our volunteer positions within LIASA. Having done much within the 2014-2016 term does not mean that there is no work for the incoming EXCO and RepCo. The to-do-bag just from the AGM is already full. I would like to urge you colleagues to avail yourselves when task teams and volunteers are called. It is noble to be a loyal member through service and steering LIASA in the right direction.

More has to be done and needs to be done to build worldwide, on the reputation, networks, systems and expertise in the LIS sector. LIASA has grown in membership and scope of responsibility with the new status of the Professional Body. Announcements about

the awarding of designations and registering of the second designation will be coming soon as time constraints at the AGM could not allow us to engage in these worthy developments.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my tenure as the President of LIASA 2014-2016. The level of exposure I received nationally, in the continent and internationally wouldn't be possible if I was not serving in this portfolio. My network grew so fast in various areas and stakeholders that the LIS deals with. I will continue to be a loyal member of LIASA, a mentor and give others an opportunity to grow like I received.

I have enjoyed the support of my husband Jacky, and our two daughters Palesa and Thoriso. They embraced LIASA in our family programme because they could not ignore my passion for the association. I would have failed if I overlook the support of my former CEO Prof. Olive Shisana, who was so excited when I was elected the President of LIASA and gave me all the support as LIASA's investment on me was also making me a better Director of Library and Information Services in the HSRC. My new CEO Prof. Crane Soudien was already enthusiastic to give support to the programmes I was involved in through LIASA as he saw the returns for the organisation. Special thanks goes to the two Deputy Directors from the LIS Directorate at the HSRC, Ms Salamina Molamu and Ms Laetitia Louw and the team, for their unfailing support during my term as President of LIASA. We shared the passion for LIASA and advocated for it at various platforms. I am 1month with my new employer UNISA, and thank my Executive Director Dr Buhle Mbambo-Thata for embracing me with my LIASA load getting ready for the 2016 conference.

- Let me thank the Professional conference Organisers- Scatterlings for their sterling job. The hiccups we experience here and there always receive your attention. What we were not aware of, colleagues will draw our attention to it for even a better 2017 conference.
- The Conference Programme Committee: Ujala Satgoor, Naomi Haasbroek, Ina Smith and Annamarie Goosen, I thank you for sharing your competencies and doing the best for LIASA
- I thank all the presenters of papers and those who participated in various ways in the programme
- The media and technical crew, thank you! Wonderful moment have been captured for preservation and future reference.
- The Local Organising Committee, thank you for going all out to make LIASA Conference 2016 a memorable one.
- Our sponsors have been so wonderful, their level of commitment has taught me a lot. Their plans to go to higher levels with us should not be aborted by our slow pace. I thank them for being there to ensure that LIASA succeed in delivering on their mandate of building a reading and well informed nation.
- Exhibitors, your commitment is much appreciated, we take your critiques with seriousness, your yearly concern of not getting decision makers visiting the stalls is noted and together we are going to improve a lot in the current state of affairs.
- Volunteers at the 2016 LIASA conference, you were the best. I am happy that IFLA happened in 2015 and pushed our bar in volunteering a bit higher. We should

sustaining the standards and can only go higher. Your certificates needs to be printed professionally, so you will receive them at a later date, after the conference.

- Once more delegates, you are the best, thanks for making LIASA conference 2016 a success, it wouldn't be what it was without you!

I like to congratulate all the colleagues who have availed themselves to serve in the LIASA branch and national committees for the term 2016- 2018. I pledge my support and wish you all the best. Remember the late former President Mandela's say "It always seems impossible until it's done".

To the incoming LIASA President Mr Mandla Ntombela, It is not easy to lead LIASA as it has grown bigger and complex, turning 20 and 21 years during your tuner. With the support of your executive committee, the Rep Council, National LIASA office relevant stakeholders and all supportive LIASA members, last but not list, your family. Endeavour to have no critical ball dropped. Above all, ensure that you thoroughly enjoy your term as President of LIASA.

I thank you All!