

MEDIA STATEMENT

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For Immediate use:

MINISTER NZIMANDE STATEMENT ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR MICHAEL CROSS

The Minister of Higher Education, Science and innovation, Dr Blade Nzimande has learnt with great shock and sadness of the passing away of Professor Michael Cross.

The South African education sector, and the higher education sector on our Continent, lost one of its most productive scholars and policy experts on Sunday, 6th June 2021.

Prof Cross, the founder and Director of the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies (AMCHES) at the University of Johannesburg, was not simply an astute scholar-practitioner. He also personified an intellectual humility and openness so crucial to the national university transformation and development project.

He was a good human being, generous in spirit, kind-hearted in relationships, and enabling in collaborations.

Previously attached to Wits University (1986-2012), and served in several initiatives, such as the Governance Task Team of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) and the Technical Committee on Norms and Standards for Educators.

He has been involved in reviews across the continent, including the Tertiary Education Linkages Project (TELP), Finnish Aid to Developing Countries (Finland, South Africa, Zambia, Mozambique, Bosnia, Bolivia and Nepal), Quality Assurance of Postgraduate Programmes in Tanzania and Mozambique, programmes of the Association for African Universities (AAU), and in the development of the Rwanda Higher Education Sector Strategic Plan (HESSP).

He was a visiting scholar at Johns Hopkins, Northwestern, Stanford, Stockholm and Jules-Vernes Universities.

Prof Cross received the first ADEA award (Association for Development of Education in Africa) in 2012 as the most Outstanding Mentor of Educational Researchers in Africa.

He is also a co-founder and co-editor of the book series on African Higher Education: Developments and Perspectives with Brill/Sense Publishers, and Higher Education Transformation with African Sun Media.

Prof Cross served the education sector in South Africa and Africa with critical commitment, and a palpable social justice politics. He played a key role in post-1994 education policy development in South Africa, which he regarded as his civic duty. Integrating his intellectual skills with programmatic interventions, he systematically worked towards the promotion of People's Education.

A researcher of note, he amassed an impressive publication record and he held first-rate post-graduate programmes together throughout his academic career.

His particular brand of professorship is scarce, and his drive to build education networks across our Continent should be taken further by those who worked in his slipstream.

Minister Nzimande extend its deepest condolences to his wife Albertina, his daughter Eunice, his son Michael, and Professor Cross's broader family.

The Minister also extend his heartfelt sympathies to the University of Johannesburg community, and Professor Cross's colleagues, students and friends across the globe.

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Issued by:
Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation
DST Building (53), CSIR Campus
Meiring Naude Road
Brummeria
Pretoria
Enquiries: Ishmael Mnisi 0660378859