

Prof Marwala appointed as Rector of UN University

University of Johannesburg's vice-chancellor and principal, Professor Tshildzi Marwala, has been appointed as the seventh Rector of the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo, Japan.



Professor Tshildzi Marwala

The decision follows consultations with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Audrey Azoulay and with her concurrence, United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres.

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation Minister, Dr Naledi Pandor, said she does not doubt that he will do South Africa and the African continent proud by leading the UNU to greater heights.

“I wish Professor Marwala well as the incoming Rector of the United Nations University. I have the utmost confidence that through his leadership, the university will further contribute through collaborative research and education to efforts to resolve the pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare that are the concern of the United Nations, its peoples and the Member States,” Minister Pandor said.

The UNU is a global think tank and postgraduate teaching organisation headquartered in Japan.

The mission of the UNU is to contribute, through collaborative research and education, to efforts to resolve the pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare that are the concern of the UN, its peoples and the Member States.

Marwala will succeed Professor David M Malone of Canada, who has served since 2013.

Previously, he was the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Internationalisation, a position he held since 2013. He has also served as the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment from 2009 to 2013.

Between 2003 and 2008, the Professor was a visiting scholar at Harvard University, the University of California at Berkeley, Wolfson College of the University of Cambridge and Nanjing Tech University.

He holds a doctorate specialising in Artificial Intelligence and Engineering from the University of Cambridge, a Master of Mechanical Engineering from the University of Pretoria and a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering (magna cum laude) from Case Western Reserve University. He is a registered professional engineer, Fellow of The World Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Science of South Africa, the African Academy of Sciences and the South African Academy of Engineering.

Marwala is also a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a Senior Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering and a distinguished member of the Association for Computing Machinery.

The Chair of the University of Johannesburg (UJ) Council, Mike Teke, has also wished Marwala well.

Congratulating Marwala on his appointment, Teke said: "On behalf of UJ, we are proud of Prof Marwala for taking the reins of leadership as the first African to assume the role. A university is predicated on the various components that come together to make it work and we have the right systems and staff in place to ensure that this is a seamless transition. We congratulate Prof Marwala on this outstanding achievement, and we are proud that one of our own has attained such an honour."

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