

CITATION: MAVUSO WALTER MSIMANG

Mavuso Walter Msimang was born in 1941 in Edendale, outside Pietermaritzburg. He matriculated at Inkamana High School, a Catholic school in Vryheid, KwaZulu-Natal, in 1960. In 1962, at the age of 20, he enrolled at the University of Fort Hare.

However, his time at Fort Hare was brief and in May 1963 after coming to the attention of the security police for staging a successful boycott of the "institutionalisation of apartheid" at the University, he was among six students whom the ANC leadership advised to leave the country. And so, his first year ended in exile.

While in exile, Msimang underwent military training and specialised in communication. After a brief spell in Tanzania, Msimang was sent to establish a radio communication set-up in Zambia. He subsequently became a leading member of the liberation struggle in 1969 he was appointed to serve as secretary to Oliver Tambo from 1969 to 1972, and later became the CEO of the Oliver and Adelaide Tambo Foundation. -

During his years in exile, Msimang worked for various international development agencies such as World University Service of Canada (WUSC) and CARE-CANADA. But ever aware of the need for both formal and professional skills, Msimang also studied biochemistry and entomology at the University of Zambia, and in 1976, he graduated with his Bachelor of Science; and later received a Master of Business Administration from the United States International University, California.

Msimang first became a UN volunteer attached to the World Food Programme (WFP) and was tasked with overseeing health and refugee programmes in Zambia, then worked for the World Food Programme from 1977 to 1984 in Zambia and, later, in Kenya. Based on his emergency food aid, water and health care logistics experience, Msimang was appointed country director in Kenya for Care International. Later, he was placed in charge of UNICEF's emergency programmes in Ethiopia.

On returning to South Africa in 1993, Msimang did not go the route of high-profile political office but focused, instead, on turning around ailing state entities - often away from a corrupt, exclusivist apartheid past, and into viable, professionally run, and inclusive, national assets. These roles, increasingly complex and challenging, included Chief Executive Officer, successively, of SATour (now SA Tourism), Tourism Kwa-Zulu Natal, SANParks and the State IT Agency (SITA). During his tenure as SITA Chief Executive Officer from late 2003 to 2007 he was responsible for overseeing government use of technology and restoring the confidence of both the government and the ICT industry. And it was in these roles that Msimang earned his wide recognition as a leader of change in South Africa.

Msimang progressed to a three-year stint as Director-General at the Department of Home Affairs (2007-2010). Here, he led the implementation of Princeton University as "instructive examples of successful civil service reform. In 2009, under his leadership, the Department of Home Affairs received first prize in the UN Economic Commission for Africa "Technology In Government Awards" for improved use of technology in the Public Service. He retired from the civil service in 2010.

Msimang currently serves on various of NGOs, civic society and environmental management boards, including WWF South Africa since February 2011. He has also chaired the board of Corruption Watch. He was one of the original founders of African Parks, a non-governmental organization focused on conservation, and as of 2021 is an Emeritus Board Member. He also served on selected corporate boards including Harmony Gold Mining, Investment Solutions, SekelaXabiso, an accounting firm, and others.

In 2018, his good works were recognised, and he received the WWF South Africa Living Planet Award. From September 2018 through 2019, he served on the Wits University council as Member appointed by the Minister of Higher Education and Training. Msimang was the recipient of an Honorary Doctorate of Public Administration from UNISA on 06 November 2020. In July 2023 he was elected unopposed as deputy president of the African National Congress Veterans' League.

Msimang remains outspoken on issues of public interest such as social injustice, corruption and maladministration. His entire life course has been shaped by resistance to apartheid, from his teenage years of activism and self-sacrifice in pursuit of genuinely noble ideals, in fighting for and

then building democracy, in serving with distinction and maintaining a sense of moral conscience as a public official. Latterly, he has sought to uphold his commitment to principles of good governance and ethics while reminding the nation of the contribution of the illustrious former leaders of the national liberation movement and the many ordinary people whose sacrifices made it possible for contemporary South Africans to live in a democracy.

The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg is proud to acknowledge Mr Msimang's remarkable, lifelong contribution of outstanding public service, his efforts to secure a lasting natural heritage for South Africa, and his work to advance ethical governance and leadership.

It is therefore befitting that the University of the Witwatersrand awards an Honorary Doctorate degree to Mavuso Walter Msimang.