

**Dr. Daniel Matjila, CEO of the Public Investment Corporation's acceptance speech
for Onkgopotse Tiro Excellence Awards, 11 November 2016, Gallagher Estate.**

The Chairman of the Council,
Mr. Vice-Chancellor,
Members of the University Council,
Members of the Senate and Heads of Departments,
Members of the Student Representative Council,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,
All protocol observed

Let me express my sincere gratitude to the trustees of the University of Limpopo Student Trust Fund for their decision to award the prestigious Onkgopotse Tiro Excellence Award to me.

I have no doubt in my mind that there are many worthy South Africans who could have been chosen for this award. For this reason, I feel humbled! This is, for me, a great honor. A great honor for the Company that I lead, the Public Investment Corporation.

Above all, this award is like a refreshing station along the long, meandering road towards excellence and purpose. I do not, for a moment, think that I have arrived at excellence.

Like Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President and Prime Minister of United Arab Emirates, I believe: *"The race for excellence has no finish line."*

When I was informed of the Trustees' decision to honour me, I immediately called into remembrance the years I spent at the great UNIN. I had gone there as a young lecturer, but at the time of my departure I had grown much more intellectually. Time will not permit to recount my experiences, suffice to say that it was at Turfloop where I learnt a great deal about governance. All I can say is that when I left the University, I was more wiser – both politically, socially and economically. This awareness came about from stories that were told of great men and women that were once students at Turf, one of whom was Onkgopotse Abram Ramothibidi Tiro.

The giant after whom this prestigious award is named was a man like many of us, a mortal being just like all seated here. For it was during his 1972 Turfloop Testimony that he said he would *"try as much as possible to say nothing else but the truth"* and that to him "truth" means "practical reality."

We, too, need to tell the truth and reflect on practical reality. There are urgent matters that need to be addressed in this country – politically, socially and economically. These matters are known, they have become topics on radio stations, social media, dinner tables and indeed in shebeens. These are issues of Inequality, high unemployment rate including youth unemployment, low economic growth, state capture and #FeesMustFall. I think all of these problems are a result of poor governance.

I lead an investment organisation that manages R1, 8trillion of government employees and workers hard earned money. This places a lot of responsibility on us. The key driver of our success has been Good Governance. It has sustained the achievement of our mandate of creating sustainable wealth for our stakeholders.

We have developed an effective investment strategy that focuses on generating sustainable risk-adjusted returns. We take risk that yields commensurate returns. We prefer companies that practice high standards of corporate governance, companies that have made socio-economic transformation an important component of their strategies, companies that manages Environmental resources to ensure their long-term sustainability. Our investment strategy has resulted in our portfolio delivering more than 13% compound annual growth rate over the past 10 years. Through our investment, we create Jobs, we keep the lights on, we build roads, we feed the nation, we drive entrepreneurship, we teach the nation, and we contribute towards healthy nation. We champion the implementation of our National Development Plan.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this University has taught me Governance through interaction with great people such as: Professors Maja, Molefe, Mokgalong, Prof Shakes Mashiane, Kgati, James Siweya, Morwamoche Ntwampe and my great friend Bethuel Ramadisha. It was during our 10'oclock tea breaks that we had extensive discussions on governance. Looking back, I realise that as I drank that tea, I was simultaneously drinking from the fountain of Wisdom.

Another person that had a great influence on me was the late Professor Dippenaar the theologian. At Graduation Ceremonies, he would lead prayers in Xitsonga. I can recall his plea to God: *“Xikwembu Xa hina, hi kombela u Nyika matimba yo dyondzisa vana va hina kuhanya hi ndlela ya ntiyiso.”* Dear Lord give power to teach our children good behavior. He was praying for good governance.

I have carried these experiences with me everywhere I have worked, including now at the PIC. It is now part of my fiber. I have taken Tiro's advice that: *“It is better to die for an idea that will live than to live for an idea that will die”*

As I travel the world, I observe that at the centre of most corporate failures, government failures and collapse of great institutions, is lack of or weak corporate governance. I believe that entrenched corporate governance can assist organisations and this country to move in the right direction. For this reason, we have made it our concern to preach corporate governance wherever we invest, whenever we have a chance to speak and wherever we find ourselves. Our attitude is simple: Practice Good Governance or face our indignation. It is that simple!

If given the opportunity to recommend a “game changer” course to the University; I'd absolutely recommend that it considers developing a course that will teach principles of Governance, Socio-Economic Transformation and Environmental management and make it compulsory course to all students.

We need to work closely with the University to develop a curricula that will give our children more opportunities. Who knows; the Future PIC CEO could be a product of this very University and also win this award one day, this will be a measure of success and effectiveness of our education.

At PIC, we are committed to offering graduates opportunities in the asset management industry directly and through our service providers.

If we are to bring about real transformation, we will need to change the way we educate and train people. From their tender age, we will have to teach our children to think like entrepreneurs – not as employees. It is essential for our universities, such as University of Limpopo to play a role in entrenching the spirit of entrepreneurship. If Universities do that, we will achieve two critical objectives: **produce entrepreneurs** and **create jobs**.

The year 2015 will go down in history as a year second only to 1976 in the way students have shown their muscle in trying to alter the direction of the wheel of history. All of us **MUST** be prepared to roll up our sleeves, to find sustainable solutions to this crisis – The future of our Country is now in our hands.

Let me not talk too much about the shortfalls we are facing in our Country – there are a lot of good things to reflect on and a lot of good things to come. Let us pray for those who are working tirelessly to ensure that South Africa is not downgraded and those that are working hard to grow the economy.

It gives me great pleasure to accept this award; I am completely humbled. I bow down with gratitude and thank this University for the recognition. The University that has given me Wisdom and most importantly a beautiful wife and beautiful children.

GOD BLESS SOUTH AFRICA!!!

PULA! PULA! PULA!!!