

**Welcome and opening address at the 14th Highway Africa
Conference**

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Molweni, jambo, bonjour, born dia, good morning, all protocols observed

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to Rhodes University, to iRhini/Grahamstown, the Makana District, and the Eastern Cape; and to guests from other parts of Africa and the world, welcome also to South Africa!

The School of Journalism and Media Studies occupies pride of place at Rhodes University and on the African continent and we are honoured to once again host this 14th *Highway Africa* Conference.

This year we have the additional privilege of hosting the 2nd world conference on journalism education.

Over the years, the Highway Africa has become a key event of Rhodes University, and its Pan-African nature gels well with our aspiration to be an outstanding African university 'which proudly affirms its African identity', and is rooted in the aspirations, challenges and struggles of the continent.

For transport, logistic and costs reasons, compared to universities in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, Rhodes academics have to work hard to attract and host national and especially international conferences.

That we do so with considerable success, I believe, is testimony to the quality of the scholars to be found at Rhodes and the recognition that the University enjoys nationally and internationally.

Indeed, as a University we take pride in having among South African universities among the best pass and graduation rates and the best research output per academic staff member.

Some like to say that our successes have to do with the fact that there is very little to do in our small town. Hardly! - we like to think that it also has to do with the fact that at Rhodes we take knowledge and scholarship very seriously and work hard to create an

institutional culture that values knowledge and scholarship.

Through conferences such as the ones that you are attending, we look to forge mutually respectful and beneficial partnerships and networks with colleagues, universities and institutions that advance the frontiers of knowledge and education, and democracy and justice.