

## **MUT hosts the 2<sup>nd</sup> National conference on Human Settlements**

Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) is honoured to host the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Conference on Human Settlements which will take place at the Elangeni/Maharani Hotel from 5-6 October.

MUT is the second University to sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the National Department of Human Settlements. The partnership with MUT is part of a coherent and rigorous five pillar Professionalisation strategy by DHS which is also designed to elevate the stature and standing of MUT in the research community. It aims to draw in an appropriate configuration of partners, agencies, government departments and private sector actors such that a new resource is created; one that is focused on technology and innovation and adds a new dimension to Human Settlement's value chain. As such the conference is also a culmination of collaborative work between NDHS, KZN DHS, eThekweni Municipality, MUT and NHBRC.

Minister Lindiwe Sisulu of DHS, said *the* Conference theme for 2017 is "*Human Settlements Development and Technological Innovations*. This theme is timely and seeks to solicit participation of researchers, practitioners and academics among others, to share their ideas, experiences and findings with this community of practice. In this way, knowledge sharing on broad human settlements development and particularly technology and innovation issues serves as the main thematic area for the 2017 conference."

MUT has recently appointed a Research Chair in Human Settlement, Professor Babatunde Agbola, a seasoned academic to head the portfolio. Prof Agbola received his PhD in 1983 from the University of Pennsylvania, USA. He has been a lecturer at Nigeria's Premier University, the University of Ibadan, Nigeria since then. Prof Agbola has been a visiting lecturer at a number of universities, in both Africa and the US. Both the Department of Human Settlements and NHBRC validated Agbola's credentials and agreed that he was recruited after MUT had failed to get a candidate with relevant credentials.

Agbola, whose actual position is Research Chair/Professor in Human Settlement, said his role was to "design and develop course materials for the Post-Graduate Diploma in Human Settlement and offer Master's Degree Programmes, also in Human Settlement. I am also able to conceptualise and implement a multi-disciplinary research agenda relevant to Human Settlement Development and Management, and seek means to professionalise the human settlement sector." He added that he intended to turn the programme into a Department of Human Settlement, and eventually into a Faculty of Environmental Design and Management

where all aspects of the building and allied building environment courses will be taught. As Prof Agbola puts it, this latest move is going to make MUT a University of first choice.

Such an addition will give MUT staff with PhDs all the more reasons for staying as it will give them a chance to supervise post-grad students. It is also an indication of how seriously MUT and the government view the issue of human accommodation.

For more information on the conference speakers, please contact, [Hlophe@mut.ac.za](mailto:Hlophe@mut.ac.za)

Notes for the Editors:

- a. Bio for Prof Agbola
- b. Conference programme