



## **STATEMENT SATURDAY 18 MARCH 2017**

### **HIGHER EDUCATION NATIONAL CONVENTION POSTPONED**

*Johannesburg:* The National Education Crisis Forum has taken a decision to postpone the Higher Education National Convention, held at the Eskom Academy of Learning in Midrand. The Conveners will meet to determine the next steps going forward. Although the vast majority of the participants were willing to continue in the spirit of open and honest dialogue, the convention had to be adjourned for considerations of safety of delegates. This was due to the disruption by a small group of delegates leading to the departure of vice chancellors and the Minister of Higher Education, Blade Nzimande who was not allowed to speak.

Justice Moseneke, flanked by all his co-conveners, addressed the remaining delegates calling off the session. “We had convened to listen to each other and to have a full, complete festival of ideas around the issues that you have raised and the struggles you have fought, can no longer be meaningfully held,” said Justice Moseneke. The Conveners agreed to meet at a later stage to determine how the dialogue in finding solutions to the national education crisis will continue. Justice Moseneke committed all conveners and stakeholders to a process of ongoing dialogue.

“We have a long difficult struggle ahead of us. It is not yet *uhuru*, and we cannot do it in a disorganized fashion. It must be within the parametres of discipline, of vision, and of a desire to change without shutting down,” he said. Justice Moseneke said dialogue remains a solution and tool they as conveners will continue to use to search for lasting solutions to the current impasse. He urged all stakeholders to be patient and tolerant, and warned that no meaningful engagement on education can take place without all stakeholders, including government, fully participating.

The convention which was set to take place over two days brought together stakeholders from higher education, government, parents, civil society, the diplomatic corps and student formations from across the country, to engage on numerous propositions towards free education and a peaceful resolve to the current higher education crisis.

The highly anticipated convention was also supported in kind by business, who donated most of the services and facilities as their contribution towards the search for the solution. While Justice Moseneke thanked the business community and the diplomatic corps for their continued support, he expressed his disappointment at the abrupt ending of the convention thus not achieving the desired outcomes.

**ENDS**

**EDITORS NOTES:**

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