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### **Statement by Umlambo Foundation CEO, Gcina Hlophe**

Former President Mbeki, President De Klerk, President Motlanthe, Umntwana waka Phindangene iNkosi Mangosuthu Buthelezi, eminent persons, colleagues from the Foundations, ladies and gentlemen. All protocol observed.

I am pleased to stand before you to represent Umlambo Foundation and to put it on record that we are one of the founding members of the National Foundations Dialogue Initiative, thus we are fully endorsing the initiative. We were part of this initiative from the conceptualization stage, simple because we viewed the initiative as going to be uniting in our diversity. We had all come to a common understanding that our people deserve to be afforded the opportunity to have their voices heard, properly documented and then their respective concerns addressed adequately.

We acknowledge the fact that our people had already started talking among themselves. However, when it was addressed in our first seating as NFDI, a general consensus was reached that we all need to strive towards creating a more conducive environment for all our people to engage in meaningful dialogue initiatives. We are of the view that this is going to enable people across all spectrum of society to engage in dialogues in such a way that will make them feel to be part and parcel of our constitutional democracy. This is exactly the reason why our Patron, Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is fully supporting the initiative. NFDI is thus not viewed as an end by itself, in the case of inaugural session we are having today, but as a means of getting to the vast majority of our people out there in the provinces, districts and wards in order to address the issues that the people raise.

We need to have these sessions properly documented, as former President Mbeki stated earlier. There need to be proper documents on the issues highlighted by the people in order to ensure that this process contribute a great deal towards positively shaping history for our country. Considering some lessons learnt and parallels drawn from the Kempton Park talks in the 1990s through CODESA initiative, National Foundations Dialogue Initiative stand to reach out to an even broader civil society. It is through that particular kind of understanding that a Foundation whose focus area has always been making positive difference and bringing lasting solutions to challenges facing education in our country decided to participate in the NFDI.

While Umlambo Foundation views education is key in addressing the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and equality; NFDI is considered as best positioned to assist us in enhancing this vision.

Directors: Mr FJG Antonie, Mr XM Boqwana, Ms NMJ Canca \*Chairperson, Mr HJ Gerwel, Mr LG Hlophe, Mr JS Seroke, Ms Razaan Bailey, Dr Theunis Eloff

Registration Number: 2015/332300/08

Therefore, through NFDI we are not to limit our interaction with the communities through our education and leadership development programs for our schools only. In this regard, we view all participating Foundations as naturally concerned. They are catalyst for a wider convocation that involves other organizations.

With our slogan being 'the vision to win against poverty through education', Umlambo Foundation views its participation to the NFDI as geared towards attainment of this vision. It is in this light that NFDI is viewed as a vehicle to afford South Africans in ensuring that they arrive at their aspired future that the current generation as well as the future generations will be proud of. Be it, in terms of their interaction and/or contribution into the economic sector that will make them to be proudly South Africans.

In conclusion, Umlambo Foundation strongly believes that these sessions starting today will be organized in a concerted manner and thus allow people to speak out freely. We also believe that the dialogue is not going to be an end by itself but a means to arriving at a particular destination that all South Africans will be proud of. The one of a functional state where there is shared leadership between government and the people.

I thank you.

1 The National Foundations Dialogues Initiative (NFDI) is a programme of the following Foundations acting together: The Albert Luthuli Foundation, the Robert Sobukwe Trust, the Helen Suzman Foundation, the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, the FW de Klerk Foundation, the Thabo Mbeki Foundation, Umlambo Foundation, and the Jakes Gerwel Foundation.