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Education system needs our help – UCT Chancellor

The Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, Mrs Graça Machel, has called on graduates in the School of Education, who were capped on Reconciliation Day, to address the many problems within the national education system and to help equip young people to prepare for the complex challenges of the 20th Century. She also called on graduates in the Social Development Department to help bridge the divisions in our society.

Mrs Machel's address to the UCT graduating class on the morning of 16 December 2014 was live-streamed. It is available for viewing on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2HxZFx1uLBo>.

Mrs Machel said: "We have schools where children are not learning. They come out without reading, without writing, without mastering the basics of numeracy. We have schools where violence among the pupils themselves is prevailing. We have schools where we are confronted with early pregnancy. We have schools where people do not respect their teachers. But also, teachers who are not coming to school. When they come, they don't teach the whole of the curriculum which has been prescribed. So we have a serious problem with our education system."

Mrs Machel said: "We have to reverse the situation. We need to plant the seeds which, maybe in 15, 20, 30 years' time, what we have to reap from our schools will be young people, brilliant young people, who have mastered clearly the knowledge which is expected to be our equality with other nations in the 21st Century. We are going to be a winning nation when from primary, secondary, technical, tertiary institutions we offer to our society young people who ... will be equipped to be productive within the demands of a very sophisticated society, a very complex society, which the 21st Century is offering."

Mrs Machel presided over three graduation ceremonies on 15 and 16 December 2014, involving a total of more than 1000 graduands. This week UCT will graduate more than 5,000 students in a total of 13 ceremonies. The ceremonies are live-streamed and can be viewed on www.uct.ac.za.

END

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