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UCT hosts celebrated academic Dr Ismail Serageldin

**Library of Alexandria (Bibliotheca Alexandrina) director to tour campus' historical
Egyptian Building and
Chancellor Oppenheimer Library before delivering lecture on 25 July**

Distinguished academic and sustainable development expert, Dr Ismail Serageldin, will deliver a Vice-Chancellor's Open Lecture on "Universities and the Unfolding Knowledge Revolution: Preparing for the 21st Century", at the University of Cape Town (UCT) on Monday, 25 July at 13h00.

The lecture is being held in association with the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

A prolific author, Dr Serageldin has published over 60 books and monographs and over 200 papers on a variety of topics, including architecture, biotechnology, rural and urban development, sustainability, and the value of science to society.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering from Cairo University and a Master's degree and a PhD from Harvard University. He has also received 29 honorary doctorates.

UCT Vice-Chancellor, Dr Max Price, said it was an honour to host someone of Dr Serageldin's calibre at UCT. "Dr. Serageldin is a world renowned polymath who possesses a deep and broad encyclopedic knowledge on many issues. He has been instrumental in shaping the Library of Alexandria into the amazing structure that it is today and we look forward to his talk."

Born in 1994 in Giza, Egypt, Dr Serageldin has the unique distinction of being the first scholar in over 1600 years to hold the titles of "Librarian of Alexandria", and "Director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA)". He also chairs the Boards of Directors for each of the BA's affiliated research institutes and museums.

Dr Serageldin voiced his support for the recent political uprisings in Egypt, saying the anger and demands for better living conditions and jobs was fully justified. He commended demonstrators for protecting public institutions during the uprisings, including the Library of

Alexandra, “a platform for democracy which has since its inception opened its doors to all Egyptians to participate in open dialogues about reform in relation to education, economy, journalism, political life, health care system and others”.

As founder and former Chairman of the Global Water Partnership (GWP), Dr Serageldin has strived to help countries in managing their water resources in a sustainable way. He has also served in a number of capacities at the World Bank, including as Vice President for Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development (1992-1998) and for Special Programs (1998-2000).

On his arrival in Cape Town, Dr Serageldin will visit Robben Island. He will then go on a tour of UCT the following day on 25 July before delivering his lecture. The tour will include a visit to the Egyptian Building, the oldest building in South Africa built for tertiary education, and the Chancellor Oppenheimer Library, where he will view the rare books collection (African Studies Library) and Bolus Herbarium, which comprises a collection of more than 350 000 plant specimens and priceless collection of books dating back to the 1600s.

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Background

- The Ancient **Library of Alexandria**, founded in 288 BC, was a unique achievement of the human intellect. It represented the zenith of learning for over six centuries, and remains to this day the inspiration for all scholars and scientists, even though it disappeared some 1600 years ago. The fabled library is now being revived in a dramatic structure by the Mediterranean in Alexandria, Egypt.
- The **Egyptian Building** dates from 1839 and is a national monument. Built in the Egyptian revival style, it forms part of a cluster of buildings at UCT’s downtown Hiddingh Campus which houses the university’s Art School. The complex forms the nucleus of the original historical campus of the South African College which later became UCT.

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