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## **UCT to introduce Swahili from 2023**

Swahili will be taught as an elective language course at the University of Cape Town (UCT) from 2023, with the aim of launching it as a major subject in 2028. Vice-Chancellor Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng made the announcement in her opening address at UCT's Africa Month panel discussion recently, discussing the role of language and music in liberating and integrating Africa.

Swahili will be offered through the School of Languages and Literatures in the Faculty of Humanities, in partnership with the Institute for KiSwahili Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam. Professor Aldin Mutembei, the Julius Nyerere Chair of KiSwahili Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam, was also among the panellists.

Adding to the announcement, UCT Dean of Humanities Professor Shose Kessi said there are also plans to introduce a Swahili studies research programme at postgraduate level.

"However, we are still in the process of finalising our plans and agreement with the Institute of KiSwahili Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam."

### **Working language in Africa**

The announcement is significant, as Africa Day this year also celebrated the 20th anniversary of the African Union (AU). Earlier this year, at its heads of state meeting, the AU adopted Swahili as an official working language for the continent.

In her address, Phakeng said, "For centuries, South Africa has welcomed different European languages. It is about time that we do the same for the languages of our continent. Becoming fluent in Swahili is one way to reclaim our identity as Africans."

*Story by: Helen Swingler, UCT News*

***ENDS***

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