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UCT Vice-Chancellor elected to head the International Alliance of Research Universities

University of Cape Town (UCT) Vice-Chancellor Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng has been elected Chair of the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU).

IARU is a network of 11 international research-intensive universities from nine countries across the globe. Established in 2006, the IARU members are the Australian National University, ETH Zurich, National University of Singapore, Peking University, University of California, Berkeley, University of Cambridge, UCT, University of Copenhagen, University of Oxford, the University of Tokyo and Yale University.

Phakeng was elected at the recent IARU Presidents' Meeting, which took at Cambridge University. She will take over from Professor Stephen J. Toope, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. Her two-year term will be from 2023 to 2025, during which the IARU Secretariat will be located at UCT.

Phakeng's election means that, for the first time in the history of IARU, the organisation will be led by an African.

"Higher education has a critical role to play in this time of global inequality, rising nationalism and the planetary threat of climate change," said Phakeng. "UCT values deeply the close relationships within the alliance that generate the trust and insights to play a part in tackling these challenges together."

Commenting on the election, Toope said: "I am delighted that Mamokgethi Phakeng will serve as the next Chair of IARU. Our world is facing extraordinary challenges, and universities have a key role to play in sustaining and strengthening the global connections necessary to meet the moment. Since joining in 2016, UCT has made a significant contribution to all aspects of the alliance. Professor Phakeng will provide inspiring leadership and help members continue their joint efforts to secure a more equitable, sustainable future."

IARU is distinctive for its global reach across a relatively small membership, which allows unprecedented peer-to-peer networking and sharing. Its activities range widely from working groups focused on vital aspects of running a leading research university – including

equal opportunities, cybersecurity, libraries and open access – to tackling global challenges such as sustainable solutions to climate change. It also offers opportunities for students to attend joint courses and internships.

The 11 IARU members share similar values, a [global vision](#) and a commitment to educating future world leaders. Central to these values is the importance of academic diversity and international collaboration as reflected in [IARU's principles](#).

For further information, please contact globalengagement@uct.ac.za or visit [IARU's website](#).

ENDS

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