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HESA PRESS RELEASE ON THE STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS

Press Release: 3 June 2009

It is a historic moment in the contemporary history of South Africa and indeed a watershed moment for President Zuma as he delivered his maiden State of the Nation Address in Parliament on this day.

HESA welcomes the call for partnership that the President is calling for and therefore bringing to the table the best to be offered by all. This partnership calls for all institutions of state and social agencies such as HESA to take responsibility for our democracy, including the responsibility associated with the important transformational work related to our society.

Higher education leadership welcomes the injunction to, “...*improve the access to higher education of children from poor families and ensure a sustainable funding structure for universities.*” HESA is working closely with partners in government and society towards tangible results in this area. It is important that access be coupled with success and it is in this context that HESA has strengthened the National Information Service for Higher Education to focus on making available information to help learners make decisions about university study. HESA is also working closely with the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, the state agency mandated to provide financial assistance to students from poor households. Additionally, HESA is developing sustainable funding models through its Funding Strategy Group which would be presented to government as a proposal from the sector.

Graduate unemployment has been a challenge to the country as a whole. It is important to HESA that universities not only produce graduates for the sake of knowledge, but that the South African university graduate also possess relevant and necessary skills that make them ready for the world of work. HESA therefore welcomes the merger of the Umsobomvu Youth Fund and the National Youth Commission to form the National Youth Development Agency. Sourcing the capacity of both entities will provide for better alignment of services aimed at young people.

HESA shares the vision for South Africa as articulated by the President. This is a vision “...*of an inclusive society, a South Africa that belongs to all, a nation united in its diversity, a people working together for the greater good of all.*”

HESA looks forward to working with this government in achieving the greater good for all South Africans.

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END.

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