

## STATEMENT ON THE UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG INCIDENT

Press Release: 12 January 2012

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Higher Education South Africa (HESA) notes with sadness the recent developments at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) relating to admission of first year students at the Bunting Road Campus. HESA deeply regrets the passing away of the mother of a prospective student and the injury of 20 others in the stampede. We send our heartfelt condolences to the family of the deceased and wish those who were injured a speedy recovery.

HESA welcomes the manner in which the University, and in particular the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ihron Rensburg, has handled the incident through his public response and statement issued. In order to learn from the UJ incident, HESA will examine the experiences of its 23 member institutions relating to admissions in 2012 with a view to analysing trends, distilling lessons and facilitating mechanisms through which promising practices could be shared across the university system.

However, the UJ incident should be understood in its proper historical context. There are too many eligible students for the available university places. This is largely due to the fact that there aren't sufficient post-school options available to school leavers eligible for further studies. Many such school leavers seek entry into public universities simply due to the limited opportunities available to them for other post-school options in our national education and training system. This growing demand has severely stretched the current capacities of our public universities.

Against this background, HESA pledges its support to any initiative aimed at providing a greater set of study opportunities for school leavers and is of the view that the number of school leavers that cannot be accommodated within the present public Higher Education Sector, point to the urgent need for the development of a coordinated, flexible and differentiated post-school education

and training system consisting of institutions such as teacher education colleges, FET colleges, agricultural colleges, nursing colleges and universities. We call upon all sectors of society, including government, business, universities, FET college sector, civil society organizations and communities to offer constructive solutions to the admission challenge which has now reached alarming proportions.

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*About Higher Education South Africa*

Higher Education South Africa (HESA) is the leadership body that represents the 23 public universities. Led by the Vice-Chancellors of our universities, HESA acts to support and advance the higher education sector in South Africa.

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