

Media Advisory

Unisa to host symposium to reflect on advances made in the implementation of its Catalytic Niche Areas (CNAs)

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The University of South Africa (Unisa), through its Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation Portfolio, will host its third Catalytic Niche Area (CNA) Research Symposium from 29 to 31 July 2026.

Unisa Principal and Vice-Chancellor, **Professor Puleng LenkaBula** and the DSTI/NRF SARCHI Chair in Biomedical Engineering and Innovation, **Professor Sudesh Sivarasu** will be the keynote speakers at the symposium.

The symposium will bring together distinguished academics, eminent researchers, industry leaders, government representatives, policymakers and civil society stakeholders to reflect on advances made in Unisa's ten Catalytic Niche Areas and to identify future research priorities and collaborative opportunities.

It is designed as a platform for discussion and debate between academia and industry on research needs within the catalytic niche areas. It seeks to give practical expression to Unisa's commitment to impactful research, innovation, African scholarship, translational research and knowledge exchange; as well as strengthen collaboration between academia, industry, government and civil society while contributing solutions to key national and continental challenges.

Building on the foundations laid in the 2024 and 2025 symposia, the 2026 symposium will seek to achieve the following objectives, amongst others:

- To provide strategic scholarly leadership in the institutional response to national challenges.
- To provide a platform for a conversation between academia, industry, government and civil society.
- To ensure that CNA knowledge creation is responsive to the needs of stakeholders beyond academia, such as those located in industry, civil society, government and policy formulation think tanks.
- To stimulate globally recognised excellence in CNA research.



- To ensure the footprint of Unisa and its Africanisation agenda in CNA scholarship.
- To advance knowledge creation and application in the CNAs.
- To provide direction on the national needs of the CNAs.
- To ensure sustainability in CNA engagements via capacity development and skills transfer in emerging academics and postgraduate students.

Members of the media are invited to attend and cover the symposium as follows:

Date : 29 – 31 July 2026
Time : See Attached Programme
Venues : Unisa Muckleneuk Campus (Pretoria) and Unisa Science Campus (Florida, Johannesburg)

Proceedings can also be followed virtually on the following links:

- Muckleneuk Campus: <https://youtube.com/live/b8xBpk4sIJs?feature=share>
- Science Campus: <https://youtube.com/live/AAmxiFLduVw?feature=share>

Ends/.

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