

The 7th annual World Aids Day Gala Concert
Cape Town International Conference Centre, 1 December 2011

**Welcoming address by Professor H Russel Botman,
Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Stellenbosch University**

- *Dankie, Soli. Good evening, molweni, goeienaand dames en here.*
- *Dis fantasties om almal van julle hier te sien.* Let me single out a few guests:
 - Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu
 - *Mnr David de Waal, konsul-generaal van Nederland*
 - Ms Erica Barks-Ruggles, Consul General of the USA; and
 - Dr Joey Cupido, a Deputy Director General with our partner, the Department of Health of the Provincial Government of the Western Cape
- Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Stellenbosch University, let me welcome you all to an event that has become a highlight on the annual calendar, the World Aids Day Gala Concert hosted by our Africa Centre for HIV/Aids Management
- The Centre runs the largest programme of its kind in the world. Prof Jan du Toit and his colleagues have so far trained more than 3 500 postgraduate students, who in their daily line of work spread the prevention message to an estimated 25 million people.
- The Centre forms part of Stellenbosch University's HOPE Project, which is our campaign to make a difference to people's lives through the pursuit of excellence and relevance.
- One of the themes we have distilled from the UN's Millennium Development Goals is to promote human dignity and health, which is where our contribution to the fight against HIV/Aids fits in.
- Now, in May this year, we hosted a panel discussion for the 1st meeting of the UNAIDS High-Level Commission on HIV Prevention
- The theme was: "Using Social Media & Mobile Technology for HIV Prevention", which is very important, because young people are the ones we need to mobilise if we want to stop the HIV epidemic.
- On Tuesday, the health minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi announced that the national HIV prevalence rate is still around 30%.

- The good news is that this figure seems to have stabilised. But the bad news is that it is still way too high.
- Of particular concern is that the fact that the HIV trend in the age group 15 to 24 years is NOT showing a significant decline.
- So, let me call on all of you, ladies and gentlemen, to become social activists in the HIV prevention cause.
- Get on your cellphones and laptops and iPads; get on Facebook and Twitter and MXit and spread the triple message:
 - Get tested
 - Examine your behaviour; and
 - Get treatment
- If we all do that, we stand a good chance of “GETTING TO ZERO”, which is the World Aids Day theme for 2011.
- Thanks for listening. Welcome again, and enjoy the evening.