

UDSM takes Kiswahili to South Africa's University of Cape Town

By UDSM Staff Writer,

The University of Dar es Salaam will start teaching Kiswahili language as an elective course at the University of Cape Town (UCT) from 2023, as the latter aims to launch it as a major subject in 2028.

The move was announced recently by the UCT Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng, in her opening address at the UCT's Africa Month panel discussion which debated the role of language and music in liberating and integrating Africa.

According to the information circulated thereafter by the UCT communication and marketing department, Kiswahili language will be offered through the UCT School of Languages and Literatures in the Faculty of Humanities, in partnership with the Institute for Kiswahili Studies (IKS) at the University of Dar es Salaam.

Professor Aldin Mutembei, the Julius Nyerere Chair of Kiswahili Studies and one of the renowned Kiswahili gurus at IKS, was also among the panellists.

In addition to Prof. Phakeng's announcement, the UCT Dean of Humanities Professor Shose Kessi said there were also plans to introduce Swahili studies research programme for postgraduate students.

"However, we are still in the process of finalising our plans and agreement with the Institute of Kiswahili Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam", said Prof. Kessi.

This announcement is significant, especially in these times as Africa Day this year also celebrated the 20th anniversary of the African Union (AU), and that earlier this year, at its heads of state meeting, the AU adopted Kiswahili as an official working language of the continent.

The IKS Director, Prof. Shani Omari Mchepange, is very glad about this announcement and says the Institute is well prepared for the partnership with UCT because it has a capacity which, over the years "has prepared students in undergraduate and postgraduate levels to become professionals in various areas in linguistics, literature and publishing in Kiswahili".

She further explains that IKS prepares professionals who can promote and develop the teaching of Kiswahili as a discipline and as a foreign language. Through its research centres, IKS teaches Kiswahili for foreigners, and provides translations services and publications including general and specific discipline dictionaries.

"IKS also prepares translators and interpreters as well as language and literature experts who are very useful in this era of promoting African languages. In fact this move is UDSM endeavour in promoting Kiswahili", said Prof. Mchepange.