



## THE MAPUNGUBWE INSTITUTE (MISTRA) WELCOMES BACK DR YACOOB ABBA OMAR TO THE DIRECTOR OPERATIONS ROLE

**Johannesburg | Friday, 04 December 2020**

The **Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA)** Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Yacoob Abba Omar to the position of Director Operations (DO) effective, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Dr Abba Omar is replacing Dr Oscar van Heerden who has left MISTRA due to family commitments.

Abba brings a wealth of experience in this role, having been involved with MISTRA since its inception and previously served as DO from February 2013 to January 2016. He has been an active Fellow at MISTRA and has continued playing a supportive role in various MISTRA projects. He remains closely involved in the Indlulamithi South Africa Scenarios 2030 project, where MISTRA leads the research component.

Abba was until December 2020, Head of Strategy and Communications at the Banking Association South Africa (BASA). He has also served as South Africa's Ambassador to Oman from 2003 to 2008, United Arab Emirates from 2008 to December 2012, and as Deputy Director-General of GCIS. His first assignment in government was as head of Corporate Affairs at Armscor, in the Ministry of Defence. Before South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, Dr Omar served in the African National Congress in several capacities.

His PhD was on 'Sovereignty and National Identity in South Africa' through the University of the Witwatersrand.

As a BASA executive he served on the boards of the SADC Banking Association and chaired the board of the South African Banking Risk Information Centre (SABRIC). He serves, inter alia, on the board of Business Arts South Africa, Advisory Board of Afro Middle East Centre (AMEC) and the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) as board chairperson.

Joel Netshitenzhe, MISTRA Executive Director and Deputy Chairperson, welcomed Abba's return to the MISTRA family saying that "MISTRA is looking forward to have Dr Abba Omar back during such a critical period in South Africa's political economy. He brings various management experiences and intellectual resources pertaining to the huge challenges our country is facing, which will stand MISTRA in good stead."

Issued by the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA)

Media Enquiries:

Siphokazi Sigenu, Communications Officer, MISTRA | [siphokazis@mistra.org.za](mailto:siphokazis@mistra.org.za)  
| T. 011 518 0260 | C. 072 233 1341