**EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA (EASA) Chairperson’s report 2023 by Elize du Plessis**

It was a privilege to serve as the Chairperson of EASA during the 2023 term. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the organization and its mission. The dedicated work of the Executive Committee has resulted in fostering stronger connections and meaningful engagements between education and communities.

In November, I represented EASA at the World Education Research Association (WERA) conference in Singapore and attended the council meeting. Over the past few years, EASA has successfully strengthened its position as an educational association in South Africa and established networks with international peers conducting research in the field. Education faces various challenges, and the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and tools such as ChatGPT adds a layer of complexity. EASA’s primary focus remains on providing a secure platform for scholars in Education to present their research and receive constructive feedback while building networks for collaborative work to advance Education in our country.

The Association's continued growth and success can be recognized to the firm commitment of the Executive Committee, who have consistently worked hard across various portfolios. We are thrilled to welcome Dr Fumane Khanare as the incoming Chair, responsible for our Special Interest Groups (SIGs), and we anticipate fruitful collaborations and partnerships emerging from the SIGs. Our international presence is upheld through our membership in the World Education Research Association (WERA), with Prof. Ruth Mampane representing EASA on the WERA Council. While still on WERA, Prof Liesel Ebersohn is now the President of the association. We want to congratulate her and wish her well. A special acknowledgement goes to Prof. Johnnie Hay, our secretary, who serves as the cornerstone of the committee. We also commend Prof. Ronel Ferreira and her team for maintaining the high standing of our internationally accredited South African Journal of Education (SAJE) as a leading journal in Education research in Africa. Prof. Raj Mestry, our Treasurer, has consistently managed the association's finances exceptionally well. We also want to thank Prof. Candice Livingston, Dr. Tony Mpisi, and Dr. Eugene Machimana as additional members of the EASA Executive Committee. Despite relocating to Canada, Dr. Sameera Essop continues to oversee Internationalization and Postgraduate Student Development, with the support of Prof. Funke Omidire, our outgoing Chairperson.

We want to thank our host, namely the University of Johannesburg for hosting this years’ conference. We extend our thanks to Prof. Maximus Sefotho, the conference chairperson, and his team for their hardworking efforts in organizing and coordinating the conference, with support from Narina Basson and Marian Louw from Event Behella as conference organisers. We anticipate engaging presentations, networking opportunities, and meaningful interactions. We are looking forward to presentations by Umalusi, SAQA, Science Communication in Education, Centres of hearing, visual and neurodiversity, disability and many more.

Notably, the recipients of EASA awards will receive their physical awards during the award ceremony at the gala event.

On behalf of the Executive Committee may you thrive both professionally and personally in the year to come.