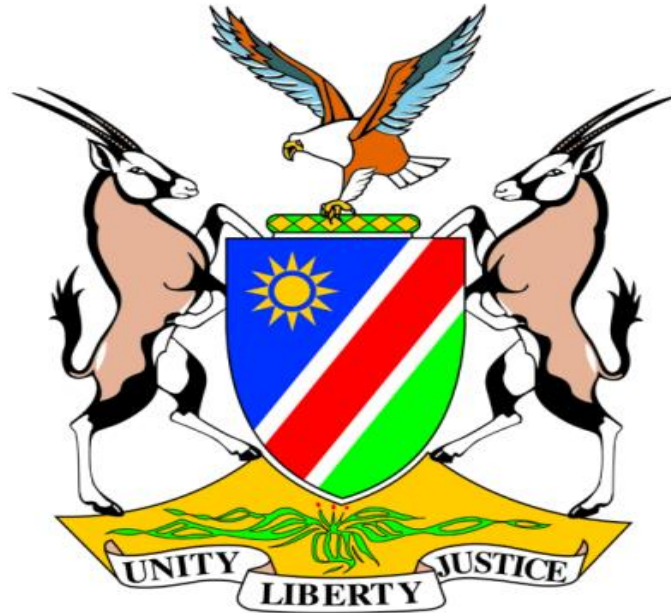


**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**BY**

**HONOURABLE DR ITAH KANDJII-MURANGI**

**MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INNOVATION**

**AT**

**GRADUATION CEREMONY**

**THURSDAY, 26 APRIL 2018**

**WINDHOEK**

**'BUILDING A WORLD-CLASS UNIVERSITY'**

Master of Ceremony, Prof Tjama Tjivikua, *Vice-Chancellor of the Namibia University of Science and Technology*

Honourable Professor Peter Katjavivi, *Chancellor of the Namibia University of Science and Technology*

Adv. Esi Schimming-Chase, *Chairperson of the Council of the Namibia University of Science and Technology*

Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament

Esteemed Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Esteemed Guests

Honourable Graduates

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today is a day of celebrating our achievement, therefore it is my pleasure welcoming a new cohort of graduates, this time around 1 300 graduates in the Management Sciences. These are graduates that are ready to move into the challenging Finance and Banking sector, Hospitality and Tourism sector, as well as the Logistics, Supply Chain and Transport sectors.

Special congratulations to the NUST Council, Vice-Chancellor and staff for always producing graduates that are in demand by industry and well prepared for a knowledge driven and globally competitive world. It is very challenging to consistently equip graduates with the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes that are demanded by industry and the

country at large. I must confess that this is a resource intensive exercise and with many logistical challenges.

Higher education is required to deliver graduates with the skills and right mindset to maximize their career potential in an ever-changing and globalising work environment. A survey conducted last year, by the National Council of Higher Education (NCHE) found that more than 80 percent of NUST graduates find employment within a year after graduation. Therefore, on behalf of all of us here, we congratulate NUST for a job well done.

Today's graduates need to be able to cross national, cultural and disciplinary boundaries, create new jobs and new skills as they go along. NUST through its internationalization strategy is clearly exceeding expectations when it comes to connecting the world of industry to upcoming student talent. Initiatives that are mainly expertise-focused, such as advisory capacity and providing guest lecturers from local businesses and other academic institutions; creating more industry cooperation in research projects, are all critical elements in bridging the gap between employer needs and student capabilities.

A big thank you to all parents, friends and family members, who have accompanied our graduates faithfully on their 'Student Journey' at NUST. Without your support, this graduation day would not have

materialised. As parents and guardians you have invested personal time, resources and many sleepless nights to ensure entry into the world of work on a stronger foot. Education opens the mind and expands horizons, thus enabling students and graduates to think better and engage better with society, meaning in more efficient and effective ways.

The Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation is cognisant of the debate taking place in the country on education and language policy and it is also seriously engaging the issue. If I have to wade in on the debate about language and in particular the teaching of English, may I say that English is our official language and it is also the medium of instruction at the secondary and tertiary level. And without basic proficiency in the English language, students enrolling in tertiary institutions will find it very difficult to cope. It is, therefore, incumbent upon students and their teachers to ensure that they get to the appropriate level of proficiency in English that will enable them to enter the halls of Higher Education with competence and confidence.

Vision 2030 demands of us to provide relevant and quality higher education and training systems that will capacitate our graduates to find and create employment in the economy and to transform Namibia into a knowledge-based economy. Critical to attaining this

aspiration is to create supportive and enabling policy environment for higher education. This includes the development of a national strategy and policy for human resources development, which will require functional policies for higher education and TVET. The successful implementation of these policies will require increased investment in this sector.

However, it is noted that funding of higher education remains a challenge and the Ministry is committed to addressing this important issue. Indeed, lack of adequate funding to higher education has serious ramifications for the sector. We also call on institutions of higher education to generate own resources through research and industry collaborations. Yet, it is the government's policy that funding should not be a barrier to access for students to enter into higher education institutions. Equally, funding should not be a hindrance to institutional performance. Therefore, NSFAF was created to improve access by students and in particular the needy to higher education institutions. While saying so, I should emphasize that the quality of higher education institutions must be globally competitive, with high global ranking.

Graduates, as our economy and industry continue to grow, you are in a position to use your skills and to improve the industries you will enter. There is a desperate need for innovation, creativity and

leadership skills. Your task is not simply to get employed; your task is to also create opportunities for yourselves and others in society. You have not been educated to be followers who take instructions only. No, as Martin Luther King Jr once said, the true function of education is to think intensively and to think critically. It is such thinking that will result in prosperity and wealth for all.

The American philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey rightly pointed out that education is not preparation for life, education is life itself. Learning never stops.

As you embark on the journey ahead, be prepared for the pitfalls, the mistakes you may make and what may feel like long periods of being stagnated in one position. It is through these that your character is built, so don't give up, instead challenge yourself to do better than you did yesterday. And as far-fetched as it may seem now, future generations depend on your decisions today. But most of all, find joy in the journey.

Once again congratulations.

I thank you!