



**NAMIBIA
UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY**

OPENING REMARKS

BY

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OF

NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

14 SEPTEMBER 2016

Director of Ceremonies Ms Bianca Tjizumaue

NUST Management and staff members Mr Calicious Nawa and your team

Ms liue Kauta, Marketing and Customer Education Officer and other officials of the Representatives of the City of Windhoek Municipality

Mr Roham Louw, Business Developer and PRO Manager of Rent a Drum

Sponsors and others who have contributed to this launch

Students, SRC Members, and Student Clubs

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

I get appalled by the dirt I see on campus. I get appalled by the dirt I see in our city, towns and communities, and by those who cause the state of uncleanness and the spread of diseases. Why have our communities turned into waste dumps? Why have we accepted to live in dirt? Somehow, somewhere, something has gone wrong and we haven't paid enough attention or effort to correct it. And why have leaders at all levels largely remained silent? Is it because we do not care enough about our image, our reputation, our future?

A few months ago, I was on NUST-FM radio twice decrying the appalling behaviour of a few members of our University community who deface our campus with their carelessness, ignorance and poor manners by throwing trash anywhere on campus. From 20 years ago, I have seen the status of cleanliness declining. It is a social disease we have to nip in the bud.

Therefore, I welcome you all to the first annual NUST Clean-Up Campaign drive. Being the first of its kind for our institution, we are grateful to have the support of sponsors who have

partnered up with us to make today a success. Issues pertaining to a healthy environment concern and affect us all, and your support reassures us that we have partners with whom we can advocate this good cause

The idea of a Clean-Up campaign has been in the making for some time. At a Management level, NUST saw the need to create a culture of awareness and attitude of cleanliness among its students. Although we rely on and greatly appreciate our Auxiliary Services department, the men and women responsible for ensuring that an acceptable level of sanitation is upheld around our campus, it did not escape our attention that some of our students, and some staff members as well, take this service for granted. This attitude, unfortunately, is also often visible in our communities where people throw their empty bottles, cigarette butts, wrappers or whatever else out of their moving vehicles, or the curious behaviour of dropping waste on a sidewalk or right next to the dustbin instead of in it, with the assumption that someone else will do the cleaning. However, this is not an opportunity to reprimand, but an opportunity to educate and encourage.

Director of Ceremonies

There are numerous incentives to preserving a clean environment, so allow me to highlight a few: According to a number of health experts, news reports and environmental articles, a clean environment is a healthy environment. Reducing our waste and ensuring that it is not carelessly dumped limits the breeding of parasites, germs and disease-spreading insects. Deadly diseases such as cholera and even food poisoning are most common in places with poor sanitation, hence it is important to vigilantly guard against habits and practices that contribute to these undesirable consequences. A clean campus, contributes to us breathing in clean and fresh air. We are all familiar with the repugnant stench created by festering garbage and waste, but perhaps not many of us are aware that airborne germs can also be spread through that unclean smell in the air. Finally, and just as significantly, a clean environment is appealing and raises the value of a place. In a cleanliness training manual produced by a British trust that specializes in primary care for the elderly, it is noted that

standards of cleanliness are seen as a reflection of the quality of care provided. Likewise, the standard of cleanliness we conserve on our campus speaks volumes about the dignity of the people and the standard of education we deliver.

These are echoes of our culture and attitude, which speak volumes to those we partner with and those who visit our campus on a daily basis or even occasionally. Having a habit of keeping the environment around us clean, instils within us an ethos of also keeping up our personal hygiene - the act of washing our hands instead of licking our fingers when we are done eating for example - and avoid diseases.

Speaking to *The Namibian* newspaper in October of last year, the Windhoek City Mayor Hon. Muesee Kazapua during a clean-up campaign is said to have admitted sadly, that Windhoek had lost its status as the cleanest city in Africa to Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. Although this can only be confirmed through various travel guide sources, including the 2014 Mercer Global Financial and the African-led current affairs opinion polls, what is significant are the lessons to be learnt from Rwanda's approach to a clean environment. Through what they call Umuganda, denoting community contribution, Rwanda practices social environmental awareness. Every last Saturday of the month, all able-bodied persons in Kigali between the ages of 18 and 65 are expected to come together and tidy up. As a result, its residents have become less inclined to litter in their daily lives, thus a culture and pride of conserving the city's clean image has been instilled through collective contribution.

Director of Ceremonies

The culture of maintaining our environment and surroundings is a global concept that has taken shape in the form of goal 15 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2016. The goal is to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

The world sees the need and the value of maintaining and appreciating what we have, this earth that makes it possible for us to live and thrive, and that gives us the responsibility to

preserve it for posterity. This is a global macro-vision that can only be achieved through individual and community micro-efforts. As the saying goes, 'charity begins at home'.

An article in the *Oxford Journals* 2003, titled: Environmental pollution and the global burden of disease points out that 8-9% of the total disease burden may be attributed to pollution, but this percentage is higher in developing countries. Unsafe water, poor sanitation and poor hygiene are seen to be major sources of exposure. The time to act is now!

Director of Ceremonies

NUST is OUR environment, it is our collective responsibility, and it is partially because of our facilities that we are able to thrive intellectually and academically.

I encourage each of us to take personal reflection and have an attitude change from today onwards. Let us think of what we now know and what we will continue to learn. To the students, as you participate in the different challenges and competitions, as you go around from class to class alerting other students about this drive, let this not be a single-day event, but let this be a continuous life-style that you pass on to your fellow students. Let's build a tradition of excellence in cleanliness, a tradition for now and forever!

I welcome you all once more. Let us make our campus great again, let us nurture a culture of cleanliness and pride in our University!