



**NAMIBIA
UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY**

WELCOMING REMARKS

BY

TJAMA TJIVIKUA

***VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE NAMIBA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY (NUST)***

AT

THE FIRST OFFICIAL ACADEMIC OPENING OF NUST 2016

ON

03 FEBRUARY 2016

AT

09:00

IN FRONT OF THE ELIZABETH HAUS

Director of Ceremonies

Honourable Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation, Dr Becky Ndjoze-Ojo

Senior Management and Staff Members of NUST

Members of the Students' Representative Council and Housing Committee Members

Esteemed Students

Distinguished Invited Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very warm welcome to you all. Thank you very much for joining us for this special occasion, the Official Opening of the 2016 Academic Year of the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST).

Many of us have come back fairly relaxed after a pleasant summer break and we are highly charged to get going in the new year. I'm sure the same is true for those joining this university for the first time. Today marks a major milestone in the life of this Institution because this ceremony is the first official opening event since we have become the newest university of the world, that is being officially rename as the Namibia University of Science and Technology, or for short NUST or NU as we shall be popularly known by the community.

Director of Ceremonies

At this important occasion I would like to warmly welcome back our staff and the returning students. Indeed, let me also extend a special welcome to our new community members - the faculty, administrators and other staff, and surely our new students, or freshmen as the Americans term them. You are special because you will be the first cohort of students who will do and completed all your programmes under the name of NUST.

Today, we stand proud to be called this nation's only University of Science and Technology. Our transition from the Polytechnic of Namibia to NUST come a long way; it has been a tough road that tested our strength and perseverance to the fullest. And the battle was won! Therefore, today's ceremony is a sweet victory, a celebration well deserved.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me hasten to acknowledge the Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation, Honourable Dr Ndjoze-Ojo, who has graciously accepted our invitation to deliver a keynote address at this special occasion, on behalf of the Minister. I would also like to express our deep appreciation for the strong support and encouragement the Honourable Minister and Deputy Minister gave us during our process of transformation. Without your championing of the NUST Bill through the legislative process we would not be where we are today. The NUST community is aware of your dedication to the cause of higher education in Namibia and globally, and for that we will remain greatly indebted to you, Honourable Deputy Minister.

To you the students who have come to join us at NUST, I am aware that many of you come from all over the country, while a few of you come from within the SADC region and all around the African continent as well as from all over the world. Thus I want to say that you have made an excellent decision by choosing to study at NUST. This new Institution is a global university and has been borne out of an institution that has over the years build a high pedigree of academic excellence, which provides NUST a strong foundation to launch itself into the future.

What have been those characteristics that have defined the former as a great public institution? No it has not been about the level of funding that we have received from the State, nor about the substance of research foci of our institution. It has been about the critical attention we have paid to the needs students and society at large, and the quality of our research and graduate training; it has been about our close connections to local, regional and national governments; and more importantly, it has been about the public spiritedness of our students and the deep engagement and commitment of our staff to advancing the greater good.

Director of Ceremonies

The bigger question awaiting our renewed engagement is, "where does the future point us to as NUST?" This is a question that the NUST community will have to constantly interrogate, particularly because the institution is immersed in a rapidly changing and globalised environment. If we do not do that, we will rapidly lose the advantages and strengths that we have inherited from the Polytechnic and thus soon stagnate and become irrelevant. Yet, there are many pointers to a bright future. As a University of Science and Technology it will be particularly important that we concentrate and specialise in our niche areas, namely the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. For instance, this year, 68% of our qualifications are already in STEM fields, which is a strong foundation for NUST.

Our focus is also in applied research, technology transfer from the classroom and laboratory to industry, and innovation. These characteristics will effectively distinguish us from other higher education institutions.

Another important issue about the future is to understand the importance of widening participation of communities in higher education as a strategic lever to drive societal development. We need to think out-of-the-box to find ways of making participation more meaningful. An additional element to a brighter institutional future is leadership – leadership that will work inclusively and develop an agenda that will work for the University; leadership that inspires trust and confidence in a tough world and that can challenge staff to change their ways as well as support them through the change.

And all this requires a sterling commitment to our mandate, and to excellence. But it is not possible without a dose of high energy, a sense of responsibility and accountability, and a load of high performance!

The study carried out by the Leadership Foundation points us in the right direction when it concludes that universities of the future demonstrate the importance of values in terms of the quality of student experience, the relationship with staff and how they engage with their communities. This is the future NUST we want to build. I am proud and hope all of you are proud, too, to be part of the development of NUST.

Finally, the official opening of the academic year signals the commencement of a contract. A contract between the Government or the Ministry and the University; a contract between the Vice-Chancellor and Staff, between the Faculty and Staff and Students, and between the University and Society at large. It is, therefore, appropriate that we make a commitment to NUST in the form of a pledge. Please repeat after me:

Therefore, I expect the students to report any faculty member or administrator who does not live up to their expectations.

I thank you and wish you a wonderful, successful 2016!