



INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY

**PROF FREDNARD GIDEON
NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (NUST)
VICE-CHANCELLOR**

AT THE

OFFICIAL VICE-CHANCELLOR WELCOMING CEREMONY

TUESDAY, 04 AUGUST 2026

**IN FRONT OF THE ENGINEERING BASEMENT,
NUST LOWER CAMPUS,
WINDHOEK**

**Programme Director;
Honourable Ministers and Government Representatives;
The Chancellor and Members of the University Council;
Members of Senate;
Deputy Vice-Chancellors;
Members of Executive Management;
Distinguished Academics;
Professional and Administrative Staff;
Student Leadership and Students;
Industry Partners;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Good morning.

Today, I stand before you with immense humility, profound gratitude, and an unwavering commitment to serve this great institution that we all cherish: the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST).

I thank the University Council for the confidence they have placed in me, and I accept this responsibility with full appreciation of its weight, its expectations, and, above all, its possibilities.

I also pay tribute to those who have gone before us. Every generation of Council members, leaders, academics, researchers, professional staff, students and alumni has contributed a chapter to the remarkable story of NUST. We honour that legacy today; not by preserving it in place, but by building upon it with courage, imagination and purpose.

As Nelson Mandela once reminded us: *"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world"*.

For a university of science and technology, those words carry even greater significance. Education alone is not enough. Knowledge must become innovation. Innovation must become enterprise. Enterprise must create opportunity. Opportunity must transform lives.

That is the calling of NUST.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

History teaches us that great universities do not merely respond to society, they shape it.

- They produce the engineers who build nations.
- They educate the scientists who solve humanity's greatest challenges.
- They develop entrepreneurs who create jobs.
- They inspire leaders who uphold democracy, justice, and ethical governance.
- And they cultivate citizens who understand that knowledge carries with it the responsibility to serve others.

That is the university we must continue building.

We gather today during one of the most defining periods in higher education. The world is changing faster than ever before.

Artificial Intelligence is redefining industries.

Digital technologies are transforming economies.

Climate change is demanding new scientific solutions.

The nature of work is evolving.

Global competition is intensifying.

Economic uncertainty continues to challenge governments and institutions alike.

The question before us is therefore not whether change is coming. Change has already arrived. The real question is whether NUST will merely adapt to change or whether we will lead it.

I believe, without hesitation, that we are called to lead.

Our nation looks to us for solutions.

Industry looks to us for innovation.

Communities look to us for hope.

Young people look to us for opportunity.

We must never underestimate the responsibility entrusted to this University.

My vision is therefore both ambitious and deliberate:

To transform the Namibia University of Science and Technology into Africa's leading university of science and technology recognised for innovation and one that drives industrialisation, digital transformation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable national impact.

This vision is not about institutional prestige alone. It is about national purpose. It is about ensuring that NUST becomes an indispensable partner in Namibia's development journey.

It is about ensuring that every lecture delivered, every research project undertaken, every graduate produced, and every innovation developed contributes meaningfully to building the Namibia we all aspire to see.

Our ambition is to move beyond being a university that primarily generates knowledge, to becoming a university that develops solutions for Namibia, Africa and the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The future of NUST rests upon five fundamental commitments.

Our first commitment is to our students.

Students are far more than customers.

They are not statistics.

They are not enrolment numbers.

They are partners in learning and the reason this university exists.

Every decision we make must ultimately improve the student experience.

Every policy must enhance student success.

Every investment must expand opportunity.

We shall continue strengthening academic support, mentoring, student wellness, innovation programmes, entrepreneurship initiatives, leadership development, and career readiness.

We will ensure that our graduates leave NUST equipped not only with academic qualifications, but with the confidence, adaptability, digital competence, and ethical leadership necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

The graduate of tomorrow must not simply seek employment.

The graduate of tomorrow must create employment.

They must innovate. They must adapt. They must lead.

Our second commitment is on academic excellence.

Excellence is never accidental.

It is achieved through discipline.

It is sustained through continuous improvement.

It is protected through integrity.

We shall continuously renew our curricula to ensure that our programmes remain relevant to the needs of industry, society and the future economy.

Our strengths in engineering, science, technology, health sciences, architecture, computing, business, and applied research will continue to distinguish NUST.

But excellence also demands courage. We must have the courage to discontinue programmes that no longer serve our national priorities. We must have the courage to embrace emerging disciplines. And we must have the courage to prepare students for jobs that do not yet exist.

Our third commitment is on research and innovation.

Knowledge has little value if it remains confined to shelves.

Research must solve problems.

Research must create industries.

Research must improve communities.

Research must shape policy.

Research must generate hope.

We shall strengthen postgraduate education, establish new centres of excellence, expand innovation hubs, promote technology transfer, protect intellectual property, and create pathways for commercialising research that benefits society.

Our aspiration is clear:

NUST must become one of Namibia's leading engines of innovation.

A university where ideas become patents.

Where laboratories become start-up companies.

Where research informs national policy.

Where knowledge becomes prosperity.

Our fourth commitment is on partnerships.

No university succeeds in isolation. We will work alongside others to support Namibia's industrialisation agenda through applied research, technology development, entrepreneurship, and skills that respond directly to national priorities.

We will work hand in hand with Government.

We will strengthen partnerships with industry.

We will collaborate with municipalities, communities and civil society.

We will expand our international partnerships across Africa and the world.

Education designed together with industry produces graduates who solve real problems.

Research conducted alongside communities creates lasting impact. Universities connected to society remain relevant. And relevance is the foundation of sustainability.

Our fifth and last commitment is on digital transformation.

Technology is no longer simply supporting universities.

Technology is redefining universities.

We shall continue building a smart university where teaching, learning, assessment, research, administration, and student services are digitally enabled, secure, efficient, and accessible.

Our ambition is to become an intelligent university where data, digital technologies, and human creativity combine to improve every aspect of teaching, research, and institutional decision-making.

We shall embrace Artificial Intelligence responsibly.

We shall invest in digital infrastructure.

We shall prepare graduates for the Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolutions.

Because tomorrow belongs to institutions willing to innovate today.

Colleagues,

No university becomes excellent without exceptional people.

Buildings do not create excellence.

Technology alone does not create excellence.

Policies do not create excellence.

People create excellence.

Therefore, my leadership philosophy begins with one simple conviction:

We must build an institution that puts people at the heart of everything we do.

Our academic staff deserve opportunities to grow professionally.

Our researchers deserve environments where innovation flourishes.

Our professional staff deserve recognition for the indispensable role they play.

Our students deserve an environment where they feel safe, respected, challenged, and inspired.

Together, we shall invest in staff development, leadership programmes, postgraduate qualifications, staff wellness, and succession planning.

We shall encourage every lecturer to pursue the highest relevant qualifications and remain active contributors to scholarship and innovation.

At the same time, excellence requires accountability.

Performance matters.

Results matter.

Stewardship matters.

Accordingly, we shall strengthen performance management systems across the university.

Performance agreements, clear expectations, measurable outcomes, and evidence-based decision-making will become integral to our institutional culture; not as instruments of control, but as tools for continuous improvement.

Transparency will guide our leadership.

Integrity will guide our decisions.

Meaningful consultation will remain central to our governance.

Collegiality will remain our strength.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the defining characteristics of great universities is their ability to balance tradition with transformation.

We honour our traditions. But we cannot become prisoners of yesterday's successes. Our responsibility is to prepare for tomorrow.

That is why our strategic direction aligns closely with **Namibia's Vision 2030, Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6), the Harambee Prosperity Plan, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union Agenda 2063.**

These frameworks remind us that universities are not isolated institutions.

They are national assets.

They are catalysts of economic growth.

They are builders of human capital.

They are creators of knowledge.

They are guardians of hope.

As Vice-Chancellor, I will work tirelessly to ensure that our Integrated Strategic Business Plan becomes a living document: guiding every decision we make, every resource we allocate, every partnership we establish, and every outcome we pursue.

My responsibility is not simply to manage the university. My responsibility is to inspire its people.

To unlock its potential.

To remove barriers to excellence.

To create an environment where every member of this university community can contribute fully to our shared vision.

To our students, I say this:

Dream boldly.

Challenge yourselves relentlessly.

Never fear failure.

Innovation begins where comfort ends.

You are the generation that will build smarter cities and smart villages, develop cleaner energy, strengthen healthcare, modernise agriculture, transform industry, and redefine Namibia's place in the global economy.

The future is waiting for your ideas.

To our staff, I say:

Thank you.

Thank you for your commitment.

Thank you for your resilience.

Thank you for believing in this institution even during challenging times.

The next chapter of NUST will be written through your dedication, your scholarship, your professionalism, and your unwavering pursuit of excellence.

Finally, let me leave you with the words of the great African philosopher and statesman Kwame Nkrumah: *"The forces that unite us are intrinsic and greater than the superimposed influences that keep us apart"*.

Today, let us unite around one purpose. One vision. One university. One future.

Let us become known as the university that transformed knowledge into national prosperity.

The university that produced graduates who innovate, adapt, and lead.

The university that industry trusts.

The university that society depends upon.

The university that Africa admires.

And the university that every Namibian is proud to call their own.

The future of NUST does not belong to the Vice-Chancellor.

It belongs to every lecturer who inspires curiosity.

Every researcher who pursues discovery.

Every professional staff member who serves with excellence.

Every student who dares to dream.

Every alumnus who carries our name with pride.

Together, we will write a new chapter.

A chapter of excellence.

A chapter of innovation.

A chapter of integrity.

A chapter of transformation.

And when future generations look back at this moment, may they say that this was the time when the NUST community chose courage over comfort, excellence over mediocrity, collaboration over division, and possibility over limitation.

During my first 100 days as a Vice-Chancellor, my foremost commitment will be:

To listen, engage, and lay a strong foundation for the future we seek to build together

I will embark on a university-wide listening and consultation programme with staff, students, organised labour, alumni, industry partners, Government, and other key stakeholders to foster shared understanding of our priorities and strengthen our culture of collegiality and participation.

Let us align our efforts around the implementation of NUST's Integrated Strategic Business Plan by establishing clear institutional priorities, measurable performance targets, and accountability mechanisms that promote excellence, transparency, and good governance.

I will initiate transformation of academic programmes to ensure their relevance to industry and national development needs, while accelerating initiatives on digital transformation, research and innovation, student success, infrastructure development, and staff development.

Particular attention will be given to strengthening postgraduate education, enhancing partnerships with industry, creating strategic alliances, improving the student experience, and positioning NUST to improve its national, continental, and global standing.

Furthermore, we will strengthen institutional governance, assurance, and regulatory compliance as a matter of urgency.

These first 100 days will focus on listening, understanding, aligning, and acting; I will focus on building confidence and sustaining institutional momentum, demonstrating that together we can translate our vision into measurable action.

My commitment is that from Day One, every decision will be guided by integrity, inclusivity, accountability, and our shared aspiration to make NUST the leading African university of science and technology; driving innovation; serving as a catalyst for Namibia's industrialisation, socio-economic transformation, and sustainable development.

We will nurture a culture where ethical leadership, academic integrity, accountability, and respect are non-negotiable. The measure of our success will never be the buildings we construct, the rankings we achieve, or the awards we receive. It will be the lives we transform, the ideas we bring to life, and the contribution we make to the future of Namibia. That is our calling. That is our responsibility. That is the future we will build together.

Together, let us rise. Together, let us innovate. Together, let us transform Namibia.

May God bless each one of you.

May God bless the Namibia University of Science and Technology.

And may God bless the Republic of Namibia.

I thank you.

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