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Media Release: Higher Education Leaders Forge Regional Pact for Innovative Future

A landmark Memorandum of Understanding was signed during the inaugural Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) Conference, held recently in Zambia. The event brought together two key regional higher education networks: The Association of African Universities Southern Africa Regional Office (AAU SARO), and SARUA.

The agreement formalises a strategic partnership focused on fostering collaborative innovation and promoting sustainable development across the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It represents a major step forward in strengthening continental cooperation to address the region's complex challenges through higher education.

NUST Vice-Chancellor Prof Eroid Naomab, who also serves as Chairperson of the AAU SARO Board, joined fellow regional leaders at the conference. His role strengthens NUST's presence and recognition within the continental academic community, creating new avenues for collaboration and strategic partnerships.

The event, held under the theme *'Innovating Higher Education for Sustainable Development Across the SADC: Innovation for Impact'*, brought together representatives from approximately 60 universities across 38 countries. It underscored the urgent need for universities to respond proactively to rapid economic, technological, and societal changes.

In today's fast-evolving world, cross-sector collaboration - spanning academia, government, industry, and civil society - is essential for advancing innovation and tackling shared challenges. By embracing cross-border and multidisciplinary partnerships, higher education institutions can amplify research impact, support evidence-based policymaking, and enhance their role in driving sustainable development and economic growth.

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