



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INNOVATION

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

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DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, TRAINING AND
INNOVATION

AT

THE FIRST OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2016
OF THE NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY (NUST)

ON

03 FEBRUARY 2016

AT

09H00

IN FRONT OF THE ELIZABETH HAUS
NUST CAMPUS
WINDHOEK

Director of Ceremonies

Vice-Chancellor of Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), Prof
Tjama Tjivikua

Senior Management and Staff of the University

Members of Students' Representative Council

Dear Returning Students and Freshmen

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning!

May I join the founding Vice-Chancellor of NUST to welcome you all to the first day of a new academic year? I wish to express my appreciation for the honour and privilege I have been given to come and share my thoughts and ideas with you on this special occasion of the first official opening of the new University.

Thank you, Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, for the kind invitation to the, Hon. Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation (HETI) Hon. Dr. Itah Kandjii-Murangi, who delegated me to come. I am most delighted to be here to participate in the First Official Opening of Academic Year 2016.

Last week I was privileged to take part in the Academic Welcome of staff. It was rewarding experience as I was very impressed with the many innovative ideas and projects presented. I was exposed to some of the wonderful practical work of both the staff and students are engaged in and I wish to encourage them to keep up! The good work. In fact, I could not help but be reminded of the fact that universities are unique amongst human institutions – unique in the range

of knowledge they encompass. Hence, when they combine their unrivalled capacity and skills in creative ways, they have the potential to address some of the intriguing global issues such as climate change, infectious diseases, poverty eradication, unemployment, global economy and many others. I, therefore, welcomed this invitation because the opportunity to address the whole university community, and especially, new students enables us as a Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation to give support to this university's endeavours to explore the deepest and intractable problems that not only challenge our country, but the whole of humanity.

Director of Ceremonies, Ladies and gentlemen, may I extend a warm welcome to the students, and in particular those entering this university in 2016.

It is unfortunate that the start of the year at our universities was marked by students' groups staging protests relating to registration fees and students debt. In future, it is important that such issues are constructively discussed through the proper available channels at universities and amicable solutions are found to address them appropriately. Nonetheless, may I use this opportunity to applaud and thank all those who worked tirelessly to ensure that an amicable solution was found. I would like to thank the public universities for the professional way they have worked together with the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation (HETI) to quickly resolve the issues that faced our students. The swift manner in which we found solutions to these matters is indicative of how important institutions of higher learning are to us as a government and as a ministry responsible for providing higher education.

The need for universities to be given space to focus on preparing young people for a rapidly changing future cannot be overemphasised. In fact, the human capacity development agenda of our country should be the driving force and the engine to propel us to Vision 2030. In fact, the future you wish to see is right inside you and awaiting you tapping it maximally so that in the final analysis you the future you want to see.

In view of these events I think all of us: namely; the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation; the faculty members; administrators; the students and other members of NUST are quite excited that this day has finally arrived, for you to become newest members of the newest university, NUST, in the Land of the Brave.

NUST must be brave to take the bull by the horns as it sets itself to be the Hope of the future for Science Education in the country with new ways of doing things. It cannot be business as usual but must be business as unusual. This means that you must unusually tackle new challenges with new vigour, inquisitiveness and resolve.

Director of Ceremonies, Ladies and gentlemen, the beginning of university life especially for you as new students marks one of the most important transitions of your lives. In the next three to four years, you will learn and incredibly acquire new knowledge. You will need to refine your abilities to study, think critically and express your ideas in writing and speech. Therefore, the university is expected to teach students to question interpretations that are given to them; to reduce information overload to the order of a coherent argument; to identify problems for themselves and use rational approaches supported by evidence to resolve problems. This should put you in a good stead to frame a good argument, while being able to listen to and appreciate intellectual views held by

others. This emphasises the importance and power of teaching. In the words of the Nigerian poet, Ben Okri, the role of the university should be: “*setting up their students for the act of self-discovery,*” while Wilhelm von Humboldt, founder of the University of Berlin, concluded that teaching is the very *raison d’être* of the university, more so even than research. Therefore, those who teach must learn and perhaps those who learn must teach. Teaching is a complex phenomenon that should not simply be about helping students to master facts, but should enable them drive their own intellectual and creative development to the limit. The sky is the limit!, so they say and perhaps beyond the sky are limitless opportunities to grow. Thereto, grow your cognitive and intellectual potential to always look beyond what seems formidable. Benefit from what university education offers.

Director of Ceremonies, Ladies and gentlemen, Vice Chancellor sir, I think it is important for all of us to have a holistic idea of the work the Ministry is carrying out in the short- medium and long term. The Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation is set and committed to advance the higher education system. We are currently looking and working at expanding the technical and vocational training; improving the status and quality of output and outcome of higher education; and finding creative ways to increase financial support to students. These measures are intended to create more opportunities for Namibians to access higher education and training so as to acquire skills in those areas needed by industries. As a science and technology oriented institution, NUST must continue to work with and to Industry.