



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Remarks by Hon. Prof. Peter H. Katjavivi, MP,  
Chancellor of NUST**

**Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST)  
Academic Welcome for the Year 2020**

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

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**Vice-Chancellor of NUST,**

**Chairman and Members of the University Council of  
NUST,**

**Deputy Vice-Chancellors of NUST,**

**Academic Staff,**

**Distinguished Invited Guests,**

**President and Members of SRC,**

**Students,**

**Members of the Media,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Firstly, let me welcome you all to this new Academic Year 2020. The theme for NUST for this year is *"Innovation for Economic Revitalisation"*.

In this regard, I would like to basically talk to you about three salient issues, all centred on the "Role of the University in Nation Building".

- 1) The need to build, strengthen and galvanize university structures so that the institution can be relevant in addressing national concerns. We should learn from the past so as to secure our future.
- 2) The need to encourage and strengthen the university's research capacity.
- 3) The need to strengthen linkages with sister universities nationally, regionally and around the world so that the institution remains alive and dynamic so as to adapt to changing times.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On University structures, a university that has infights and other internal administrative challenges cannot be able to focus and contribute meaningfully towards addressing national challenges beyond its own shortcomings. It is for this reason that there is a need to ensure that our University continues to function on the basis of its rules and procedures, as provided for in the Act of Parliament



that established NUST. A university's autonomous environment should ensure minimal external interference if the institution is to be managed professionally. You can only do this if the University's structures are not weakened but if they are, then it calls for external solutions to the university's internal challenges. This usually breeds disharmony and a downward spiral movement for the institution. Therefore, this is a no go area for any great institution like NUST.

On strengthening the University's research capacity, if NUST wants to be counted among the top universities, particularly in addressing the challenges confronting the nation, we should deepen our research and publication capacity. This is especially significant now that the United Nations family has clearly outlined Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that every member country, including Namibia, has committed itself to. Furthermore, as a member of the African Union and the Pan-African Parliament, Namibia is committed to the realisation of the African Union's Agenda 2063. All these aspects imply that the arena of research is limitless.

I have good news for you. As the Namibian Parliament, we are embarking on a journey of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of SDGs as well as AU Agenda 2063. In this regard, we are looking towards partnering with tertiary institutions in the country, to undertake deeper research in these aspects. Very soon, we shall be



knocking on the door of the Vice-Chancellor to lend us some committed research intern students, if resources permit. Furthermore, every modern university is expected to sharpen its innovation skills through published research so as to compete favourably on the global scale.

On linkages with sister institutions, NUST will ably benchmark, source external funding, as well as acquire best practices from tested and approved research and applied technologies. Linkages could also involve exchange programmes for both staff and students. The world is very dynamic and therefore a university that knows what is out there in the world can easily adapt to changing times! It is only in this way that the University can maintain its relevance both at home and beyond.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Our chief economic development challenge in the country is lack of industries. Bearing this in mind, we realise or all agree that NUST is the country's main University of Science and Technology. In my view, this caption should talk to the industrialisation of the country and NUST can only achieve this dream through innovation. Obviously, these are issues that could be pursued with the relevant institutions within the Government of the Republic of Namibia.

As we move towards marking our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence, we continue to witness pressure from



external factors that continue to affect global economic progress. Notwithstanding that, we can also appreciate the progress that has been made on various fronts in terms of the transformation of the socio-economic conditions of our people.

In this connection, let me refer to a report by Oxfam, which was published in The London Guardian newspaper.

According to Oxfam, global arguments have been that current levels of inequality are due to the seemingly immutable forces of globalisation or technological change. These are undoubtedly powerful trends, of course – but they are in no way the full story. Inequality is not inevitable. It is a policy choice.

Oxfam's analysis has proven that Namibia, is a country that inherited the highest levels of inequality in Africa when it gained independence from the Apartheid-era South Africa in 1990. Yet the Namibian government has since then managed to systematically reduce the gap between rich and poor, more than halving the poverty rate from 53% to 23%. Oxfam said Namibia was starting to enact a wide range of policies, including progressive taxation and higher spending on schools and hospitals, though it said that Namibia started from a low base and inequality remained significant.

Oxfam's report reveals that the key factor has been Namibia's investment in education and health by



spending a high overall percentage of the national budget on these two sectors.

What's most striking is how clearly Oxfam's index shows us that combating inequality isn't about the country being the wealthiest but rather, the political will to pass and to put into practice the policies that will narrow the gap between the rich and the poor.

Indeed, Namibia is making strides and NUST will make us all proud by positively contributing to this noble cause as part of its mandate.

As I conclude, I would like to indicate that every Academic Year brings in new blood into the University in terms of Fresh Men and Fresh Women.

This is my message to the students. All of you should pour your phenomenal energy and talent into the collective cause of nation building so that all Namibia's national undertakings have flourishing results. As you may be aware, one of a University's key roles is to produce and supply key policy makers, experts and personnel for national development. Therefore, I urge you to champion the cause of your University so that it can be a shining example, living up to its name and be prepared to serve your nation, Africa and the global village.

**I thank you all!**