



ΠΑΜΙΒΙΑ
UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY

Welcoming Remarks

Mr Morné du Toit
Acting Vice-Chancellor

Signing of MoU
NUST and the City of Windhoek

Thursday, 16 May 2019

Honourable Councillor Agatha Ashilelo, Chairperson of the Management Committee, City of Windhoek

Robert Nandaa Kahimise, CEO, City of Windhoek

Dear Faculty, Management and Staff

Distinguished Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcome to the Namibia University of Science and Technology.

We are gathered here today to mark an agreement of cooperation between our institution and the City of Windhoek, our host city and the capital of Namibia.

This agreement is long overdue. Cooperation between our institutions has a long history, dating back to the days when we were still the Polytechnic of Namibia. This agreement, therefore not only aims to increase coordination of our joint activities, but also to systematise our partnership, to monitor it, and hopefully expand it.

As you may know, today, most of the population of Namibia lives in urban areas; and projections are that at least two million more people will have to be accommodated in towns and municipalities in the coming three decades, both due to internal growth and migration to urban areas. This population increase will primarily happen in the larger urban areas, and predictably a considerable part of this transformation will take place in Windhoek.

The capital city therefore has the unique opportunity, if not a responsibility to set an example for the other 57 local authorities in the country and lead the way in innovation in urban developments. And we are here to help.

NUST hosts many of the disciplines concerned with urban development under one roof. We have land administrators, town and regional planners, architects and urban designers, quantity surveyors, engineers, statisticians, economists, social scientists, surveyors, IT experts, health scientists, ecologists, among many others.

Through the Integrated Land Management Institute (ILMI) and other initiatives, we have focused and increased our efforts in getting colleagues to work together across disciplines, as it is increasingly clear that contemporary challenges of urbanization require a transdisciplinary approach.

Partnerships like the one we are celebrating today, are excellent tools to deepen and expand such work across institutions.

MoU's do work. While some remain ceremonial documents of intent, others potentiate and activate partnerships that bear concrete results. We are happy to announce that last week, the partnership between our University and the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia, the Namibia Housing Action Group, local government, central government, and the private sector, was distinguished with the 2019 Community-Led Habitat Award in the category of 'Best Partnership' by World Habitat, urbaMonde, and SDI International.

The award will be delivered at the inaugural 'Habitat Assembly' at the UN-Habitat headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya later this month. Countries from all over the world were able to apply, and it is this partnership that was selected as an example of outstanding achievements through joint institutional efforts.

NUST has concluded an MoU with the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia and the Namibia Housing Action Group. This award therefore stands as an example of a MoU that has yielded clear and recognizable results, highlighting the value of partnerships and collaboration in matters related to urban development.

Today, the world is required, if not compelled, to tackle its greatest and most pressing challenges in an inclusive, innovative, and informed ways, such as how to improve living conditions in informal settlements; how to engender social inclusion in our segregated cities, as well as how to use scarce natural resources efficiently and in sustainable ways. We should strive to remind and show the world that the most adequate ways to transform the urban future of the Global South should be developed indigenously or locally.

Today, Namibia faces economic headwinds of an unprecedented scale, in addition to growing tensions among the great powers over trade issues that will impact small economies such as ours in an adverse manner. We can no longer rely on large budgets, or invest time and resources in strategies that require significant public investment.

We need 'frugal innovation' and we need to learn to work with less to accomplish our mission as a University. These are the realities facing us all. The informalization of cities and economies, unsustainable growth in urban areas, drought and scarce natural resources. Hence the need to innovate and to remain open to change and new ideas on how to solve the most pressing challenges we

face as institutions and national communities. In times such as these, partnerships achieve more with less, and we need to do so in innovative and inclusive ways.

We hope that the partnership between NUST and the City of Windhoek, together with other stakeholders, will yield numerous successes, and that it will produce innovative knowledge and practices to transform the urban future of the City of Windhoek and the country at large.

I would like to thank the colleagues at the City of Windhoek who have committed themselves and responded positively to this commendable undertaking. Finally, I would like to thank the colleagues that spearheaded the initiative at NUST, particularly Dr Samuel John, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Mr Phillip Lühl, lecturer in the Department of Architecture and Spatial Planning and Mr Guillermo Delgado, ILMI Coordinator.

I would also like to thank the colleagues in the Department of Marketing and Communications for their efforts to make this ceremony possible today. A word of recognition is also due to the Founding Vice Chancellor, Professor Tjama Tjivikua, who enthusiastically supported the process during his tenure.

I hereby welcome you all to this ceremony, and look forward to celebrating the successes of this important partnership in the not too distant future.

I thank you.

