



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Faculty of Natural Resources and Spatial Sciences**

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## **VOTE OF THANKS**

### **Signing Ceremony – MoU between the Namibia University of Science and Technology and the City of Windhoek**

Date: Thursday, 16 May 2019, 8:00h

Venue: E-Haus courtyard

Speaker: Phillip Lühl, Lecturer, Department of Architecture and Spatial Planning

Honorable councilor Mrs Ashilelo,

Esteemed CEO, Mr Kahimise,

Dear colleagues,

before we get to the vote of thanks that I was asked to deliver, allow me to speak briefly about the way forward for this collaboration. You have heard from our previous speakers about the challenges the city faces and the broad scope of possible collaborations envisioned in this MoU. We imagine this document only as the backbone of what is still to follow: the hard work needed to create a platform – indeed a living laboratory – for urban innovation and critical research.

In a resource-scarce environment as Namibia, providing equitable services and indeed positive life outlooks for the majority of our fellow citizens might be easier to achieve in urbanizing areas, if we allow ourselves to think beyond the current ways of understanding and planning our cities. The President's recent declaration of informal settlements as a humanitarian crisis reminds us that we have to re-think the way we do things.

As the challenges of urbanization are very dynamic, we hope that this MoU will open doors for all of us to engage each other directly and without much protocol, to develop knowledge and strategies to harness the opportunities that urbanization presents! Of course there is a lot of expertise at our two institutions and in some cases existing knowledge and experiences from elsewhere can be shared without reinventing the wheel. We are aware our institutions have their own limiting circumstances and internal processes to follow. In our own case it is the strictures of the academic calendar that do not always allow us to act if and when needed. But we do hope that through the direct lines of communication created through this MoU we can intensify the process of collaboration. I would say we need a common whatsapp group!

At NUST I will be in charge of coordinating the activities that fall under this MoU, and I will have a counter-part at the City. We will ensure that the annual work plans that will describe in more detail the priorities and planned activities for each year are

drafted in collaboration with all those of us interested to propose activities under the MoU. We will monitor those activities, create platforms for discussion and report back to our various stakeholders. We want to make this an engaging, pro-active and vibrant platform for exchange.

In fact, the first meeting to flesh out the workplan for the coming year should be arranged quite soon, as our second semester starts in July and any projects that involve students need to be planned well in advance. I see a number of people in the audience who I know are eager to start this discussion and I would like to welcome you all to meet and greet after the official session is over to share your ideas. I would also like to request all of you to share the news of the existence of this MoU with those of your colleagues who you think might be interested to join the activities.

Now let me move on to my official business. I would like to thank the leadership of our institutions who see value – and I am sure have high expectations – in establishing this platform: our keynote speaker, councilor Ashilelo, who will share these messages with her fellow councilors; Mr Kahimise who hosted a NUST delegation headed by former Vice Chancellor Prof Tjivikua for the initial discussions of the MoU last year; indeed Prof Tjivikua in absentia for his support and Mr du Toit, our acting Vice Chancellor for keeping the flame alive and hosting this signing ceremony.

I would also like to thank the numerous staff at both institutions who have joined in discussions, provided input and feedback on the draft document and have generally shown their enthusiasm for this endeavor. Again, our work is only starting and we will require lots of energy going forward. Thanks also to Mr Delgado from the Integrated Land Management Institute and some of the administrative support staff who did much of the legwork to get the document and this ceremony off the ground. The NUST Hotel School deserves an applause for setting up the venue and catering.

Please join us now for a group photo and some refreshments!

Thank you.