

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA AND CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA AT THE
OCCASION ON THE LAUNCH OF THE FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA
“FRIENDS OF UNAM”

9TH SEPTEMBER 2010

SAFARI HOTEL

WINDHOEK

Directors of Ceremonies;
Honourable Ministers;
Honourable Members of Parliament;
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps here present;
Chairperson of the University Council, Professor Filemon Amaambo;
Distinguished Vice-Chancellor of the University of Namibia, Prof Lazarus Hangula;
Your Worship, the Mayor of the City of Windhoek, Comrade Mathew Shikongo;
Members of the University Council;
Members of UNAM Management;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I feel deeply honoured for the invitation extended to me to come and launch the Friends of UNAM here this evening.

Most of the world now recognizes the University of Namibia as among the 30 top performing universities on the African continent. The climb to this status was not easy. We all witnessed the transformation of this institution to a university in 1992 and I have followed its growth with very keen

interest as it grows. Today UNAM is known far and wide as a think tank and respectable university. Indeed, UNAM has grown by leaps and bounds since its establishment in 1992 with only 300 students. Today UNAM's overall enrollment stands at about 12500 and the university has played a major role in producing quality human resources which our country needs to achieve Vision 2030 and other development goals.

At its establishment UNAM had only five faculties. These were the Faculty of Economics and Management Science; the Faculty of Education; the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences; and the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences. With the passage of time more Faculties that include the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources as well as the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology, were added, bringing to eight the number of faculties at the university, with the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences being replaced with the Faculty of Health Sciences, comprising of the School of Medicine and the School of Nursing and Public Health.

Director of Ceremonies;

There were other developments as well. The Centre for External Studies – the distance education arm of the University of Namibia – was established, with centres opened in 9 of our administrative regions, to give Namibians who were employed but wished to study further, an opportunity to do so without giving up their jobs. This had two major advantages. At the household level, the breadwinner kept his/her job and continued to provide for the family. At the workplace, production was not disrupted because the employee continued to work while studying part time and acquiring new knowledge and skills in the process. Today, the Centre for External Studies has about 2500 students countrywide.

The University of Namibia has just opened the country's first School of Medicine and plans are afoot to open Namibia's first schools of veterinary science, pharmacy and dentistry soon. The establishment of the School of Medicine has therefore necessitated the formation of a Faculty of Health Sciences, which now also houses the renamed School of Nursing and Public Health as stated earlier.

Since its establishment, a lot of financial resources – the bulk of it from the Government of the Republic of Namibia - has been made available for infrastructure improvements as well as in investing in modern teaching facilities.

Yet still a lot has to be done. Recreation and accommodation facilities for students need to be put in place. Work has already begun at the new site for our School of Medicine. The university needs to support research and publishing by its academics as it plays its role as a partner to the Government in successfully implementing its development agenda.

Distinguished Friends,

Over the years, we have received a lot of support from sections of the private sector and other friends. I am here today with you, to let you know that we value the support some of you have given us and the friendship that has developed between us. That you have answered our call to establish a Friends of UNAM platform speaks volumes of your commitment to work with us, as we strive to make this university the university of choice for Namibians and our friends abroad.

The relationship we are cementing today will, I believe, benefit our nation, our children, our grandchildren and generations to come.

Those of you who have accepted our hand of friendship and are here today have taken a bold step. Each of us needs to rally others to answer this call to community service. We need to actively engage any person, organization or country that can be a good ambassador of our university and help us with ideas to mobilize funds to achieve our growth targets.

We want more men and women of substance like you gathered here today; people who understand and articulate our vision and mission.

We are grateful that you are here with us and are looking forward to working with you for the benefit of our university and its community. True, many times the going gets tough even for us running the university but we are confident that with your friendship and support, we will enjoy everything we do with you. Without sincere friends, we may not notice where we need to improve to do better. It is for this reason that we welcome you as friends and advisors.

With these few words, it is now my distinct pleasure and privilege to declare the FRIENDS OF UNAM platform officially launched.

I thank you.