

THE MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY 18TH CONGREGATION

23 November 2018

VICE CHANCELLOR'S SALUTATION (GRADUATION)

Your Excellency, The President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Head of State and Government, Commander-In-Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces and Chancellor of the Midlands State University, Cde Dr Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa;

The Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development, Honourable Professor Amon Murwira;

Minister of State for Provincial Affairs in the Midlands Province, Senator Larry Mavima;

Other Honourable Ministers here present;

The Permanent Secretary for Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development, Professor Fanuel Tagwira and other Senior Government Officials here present;

The Chairman of the Midlands State University Council, Engineer Caleb Makwiranzou and Council Members here present;

The Chairman of Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education and founding Vice Chancellor of the Midlands State University Professor Emeritus, Ngwabi M Bhebe;

The Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education, Dr Hilton Chikuya;

Pro Vice-Chancellors of the Midlands State University, Professor Kadmiel Wekwete and Professor Doreen Moyo;

Acting Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences, Professor Albert Chawanda;

Vice-Chancellors of Sister Universities and Principals of other tertiary institutions here present;

His Worship the Mayor of the City of Gweru, Councillor Josiah Makombe;

Co-Patron of the Midlands State University Fundraising Committee; Mrs Sekai Holland;

The Chief Executive Officer of Vungu Rural District Council, Mr Alex Magura;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps, here present;

Midlands State University Student Representative Council Members here present;

Midlands State University Staff;

Our graduands, parents and guardians;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Comrades and Friends.

VICE CHANCELLOR'S ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

SALUTATIONS

Let me Start by Saying this song of Solomon;

Unless the Lord builds the house its builders labour in vain

Unless the Lord watches over the city the watch men stand guard in vain

Give thanks to the Lord his love endures forever.

May I start by thanking you Your Excellency and Chancellor for gracing this occasion and entrusting me with the leadership of this great University. I wish to take this opportunity to accept the leadership mantle that you have placed on my shoulders with gratitude and humility.

From today I dedicate myself to the exacting task of leading the Midlands State University. Your Excellency and Chancellor, I will always cherish the immense love and goodwill you have for the Midlands State University.

I am highly privileged to follow in the footsteps of the founding Vice Chancellor of the Midlands State University, the renowned historian and administrator *par excellence*, Professor Emeritus Ngwabi Bhebe. He is here today and I am honoured to build on 17 years of his astute leadership. For that, I wish to thank him.

I am also honoured to welcome the founding Chairman of Council, Mr Canaan Dube and extend my heartfelt gratitude for his Council's dedicated service in building this University. Your Excellency and Chancellor, MSU would not have reached such commanding dizzy heights without the able leadership of Mr Canaan Dube, an astute lawyer and corporate governance guru.

Your Excellency and Chancellor let me take this opportunity to thank our hardest working Minister Honourable Amon Murwira who is taking Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development to another level the 5.0 University. Universities are a place where knowledge and innovation meet. Through Honourable Minister Murwira's support we intend to make MSU a hub of intellectual, innovative and academic excellence.

Your Excellency and Chancellor, as witnessed today, my fellow experienced Vice Chancellors and esteemed colleagues from sister universities, have guaranteed me their unwavering support and collaboration. I am truly thankful to them.

Allow me to thank the current Chairperson of Council, Engineer Makwiranzou, Councillors, the University Senate, the entire academic and non-teaching staff and students for their support in my position of Vice Chancellor. I assume leadership of this great University with humility and I am indebted to the men and women who have built this University to what it is today **under very trying times.**

Your Excellency and Chancellor, let me underscore the fact that the Midlands State University is a stakeholder-driven institution. As such, every piece of advice is valued, be it from the Midlands Provincial leadership, parents and guardians and our valued alumni. The Captains of Industry and Commerce who are our co-partners in the training and nurturing of our students and the whole wide range of our stakeholders and friends of the university remain dear to my heart.

I am passionately indebted to my loving, hardworking, committed and supportive wife and my life-long partner and dear friend, Professor Irene Muzvidziwa. She has been by my side under difficult circumstances, offering her wise counsel and advice. Irene you are a jewel. To my in-laws and especially my mother in law thank you for producing such a wonderful daughter. Let me thank my bigger family, the Muzvidziwa clan, especially my late loving and caring grandmother Mbuya vaNgoni. To my late mother thank you for your humility and being there for us. To my mother's sister Amai Imelda Jessica Muzvidziwa thank you mum you are the best. There is one man I wish to salute, my maternal Uncle Sekuru Philemon Ngundu Muzvidziwa, a loving, caring, disciplined and devout Christian for sacrificing everything in order to ensure that I went to the best boarding Schools of the time such as Thekwane High School. My beloved children you are a blessing thank you for your unconditional support. My Comrades in the struggle, friends and colleagues in the academic fraternity, my pastors and my brothers and sisters in Christ thank you so much for your prayers and continued enormous support.

Your Excellency and Chancellor, I assume leadership of this great University at a time when the new dispensation has dawned upon our country. MSU is well positioned to give impetus to your vision of turning Zimbabwe into an upper middle income economy by 2030. MSU seeks to innovate in order to support the industrialisation and modernisation of our beloved country.

The history of MSU inspires me and its future is guaranteed. It has been a short 18 years, and yet, MSU has grown phenomenally from humble beginnings with 400 students at inception in 2000 to over 24000 in 2018. MSU is now a fully-fledged multi-campus university spreading its wings from Gweru to Harare, Zvishavane, Bulawayo and Kwekwe thereby increasing access to quality higher education especially for those in continuing/life-long education.

As I accept the onerous task of becoming the second Vice Chancellor of this University, I am aware that Universities, especially in Africa are operating in very challenging times. I therefore do not underestimate the responsibilities that come with this new appointment. Globally, public universities are being called upon to be inventive in terms of resource mobilisation.

Economic challenges have also resulted in high student indebtedness and inadequate funding for capital projects. These challenges are however not insurmountable, but call for creative leadership and dedicated effort from everyone. I feel highly encouraged by the team

work, hard work, commitment and respect that the Midlands State University staff and students have demonstrated.

Your Excellency and Chancellor: the strategic priorities of my term in office are outlined in the Midlands State University Strategic Plan Draft for 2019 to 2023, which has already gone through rigorous edification by our Senate and Council and now awaits input by our line Ministry. Our Strategic Plan is in Compliance with your stated Vision 2030. My major preoccupations will be to:

- Establish a governance and leadership culture underpinned by international best practices and our national philosophy;
- Mobilise resources to fund the upgrading and expansion of our physical facilities and infrastructure;
- Reinvigorate the generation and dissemination of knowledge in support of our country's economic and social aspirations;
- Promote research, innovation, technology transfer, industrialisation and commercialisation in order to contribute to sustainable national development;
- Integrate an international dimension to the strategic operations of the University in order to achieve global competitiveness; and

- Establish more value adding networks, collaborations, partnerships and linkages at national, regional and international levels as part of the Community Engagement agenda.

Cognisant of the fact that teaching and learning are the core business of the University, we will endeavour to equip students with relevant knowledge, skills and value systems essential to make them competent citizens.

Research, innovation and technology transfer are critical for wealth creation and contribution to sustainable national development. This is the mantra of our Minister, Honourable Professor Amon Murwira. Mindful of this fact, MSU will increase research output and strengthen synergies with industry and government. To this end, the University will seek to fully exploit the opportunities presented by the Incubation Hub, whose construction was funded by government and which you, Your Excellency, officially opened this year- June 2018.

Your Excellency and Chancellor in the next five years MSU will strive to attract the best under and postgraduate local and international students, and engage in cutting edge research that is valued and applied by business and government.

MSU will continue to be a stakeholder-driven university, which is responsive to the needs and aspirations of our people.

Let me once again thank you your Excellency and Chancellor for appointing and installing me today as the second Vice Chancellor of the Midlands State University. In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that MSU is the University of First Choice committed to achieving further greatness and contributing to the uplifting of our country. We will honour the sacrifices made by the public, government and the private sector by doing what is right.

I THANK YOU