

# TUT 2024 AUTUMN GRADUATION CEREMONY

## WELCOME SPEECH

### By Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Tinyiko Maluleke (or Representative)

Sanibonani! Dumelang! Goeie more (middag)! Lotshani! Molweni! Xewani! He-ndaah!  
Welcome! Bienvenu! Karibu! Bem-vindo!

*Chancellor of the Tshwane University of Technology, Dr Gloria Serobe*

*Chairperson of the Council of the University, Mr Ivan ka Mbonani*

*Esteemed Members of Council and its Committees*

*Members of Senate*

*Members of the Executive and Institutional Management Committee*

*Representatives of labour formations*

*Members of the ISRC and its constituent sub-structures*

*Convocants and alumni*

*Donors, sponsors and industry partners*

*Esteemed graduands, parents, guardians and friends*

Manene na Manenekazi, bo Mme le bo Ntate

*Ladies and gentlemen*

On behalf of the Chancellor of the Tshwane University of Technology, Dr Gloria Serobe, and the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Tinyiko Maluleke, I welcome you all to this graduation ceremony – which is but one of our series of Autumn Graduation ceremonies.

The establishment of Tshwane University of Technology was first proclaimed in Government Gazette number 23549, Volume 444, of 21 June 2002. The proclamation declared the following: “The three Technikons in the Tshwane metropole, namely, Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon North-West and Technikon Pretoria should be merged”.

Eighteen months later, history was made, when on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2004, the brand-new Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), also known as, “the people’s university”, opened its doors for the first time. Twenty years later, “the University that makes knowledge work”, has fundamentally changed the game of higher education in this country. Today, we can confidently say that the Tshwane University of Technology has become **that** University which only TUT can be in the world. Look around you, in this country and elsewhere in the world, there is nothing quite like TUT.

TUT boasts a special breed of students - perhaps the feistiest and the most resilient students in the higher education sector. Before they arrive at the gates of TUT, many of our students have had many rivers to cross, several mountains to scale, winding roads to negotiate, and steep valleys to walk.

One of the greatest Rappers of all time, Tupac Shakur, might as well have been speaking of TUT students when he penned his poem titled: *The Rose that Grew from Concrete*:

*Did you u hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete  
Proving nature's laws wrong, it learned 2 walk  
without having feet  
Funny it seems but by keeping its dreams  
it learned 2 breathe fresh air  
Long live the rose that grew from concrete  
When no one even cared*

In this graduation we too wish to say, long live the resilient TUT student! Long live to the student who refused to give up. Long live to the students who have taken advantage of tiny cracks of chance and opportunity in the hard concrete of lack and poverty.

We at TUT are convinced that our students – graduate and undergraduate - deserve the highest quality of teaching and research training. From first year to final year, we immerse our students in trans-disciplinary and fourth-industrial-revolution-laden curricula.

Some of the key attributes of TUT graduates are:

- a) future readiness and an aptitude for entrepreneurship;
- b) ability to engage in problem-solving innovation and impactful research;
- c) the will to harness and leverage technology to solve the wicked problems of our time;
- d) the commitment to the prevention, combating and elimination of gender-based violence;
- e) a commitment to environmental sustainability.

In a speech delivered on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 1963, on occasion of the founding of the Organisation of African Unity, the late Kwame Nkrumah painted a vision of an industrialised and sustainable Africa - an Africa which TUT graduates are required to build. Nkrumah put it this way.

We shall accumulate machinery and establish steel works, iron foundries and factories; we shall link the various nation-states of our continent with communications; we shall astound the world with our hydroelectric power; we shall drain marshes and swamps, clear infested areas, feed the under-nourished, and rid our people of parasites and disease. It is within the possibility of science and technology to make even the Sahara bloom into a vast field with verdant vegetation for agricultural and industrial developments. We shall harness the radio, television, giant printing presses to lift our people from the dark recesses of illiteracy.

Similarly, at TUT, we have designed our curricula and our pedagogy to produce graduates who will have what it takes, to contribute to the emergence of an industrialised, energy secure, food secure, technology driven, and disease free Africa.

To ensure that our tremendous investment into future-readiness is impactful, TUT students are trained and coached, from the very beginning, to get the basics right, namely, not to waste a single day of learning, not to lose a single week of studying, not to forfeit a

single month of research, and never not squander the golden opportunity presented by each semester.

From first year to final year, TUT students are taught to work purposefully, constantly, and consistently.

In order to embed, within our institutional DNA, the ambition of producing graduates who are ready for the future of work, TUT established the Institute for the Future of Work (IFoW) in 2021 - a flagship institute that champions future readiness and builds bridges between industry and academia.

We were not the least surprised when the Department of Communication and Digital Technologies selected the Tshwane University of Technology together with the University of Johannesburg to join it as lead institutions in the founding of the Artificial Intelligence Institute of South Africa. This is a well-deserved recognition of TUT's largely unsung but nevertheless formidable contribution to the Fourth Industrial Revolution in Higher Education over the past twenty years.

Our participation in the Artificial Intelligence Institute of South Africa is especially focussed on: motor industry AI, farming and food production AI, 4iR manufacturing, AI in tourism, AI in Transport, AI in Health and Telecommunications – areas in which we already have considerable strength.

We are proud and delighted to announce that during the 2024 Autumn graduation season, TUT will add a total of about 10 700 future-ready graduates to the workforce.

Of these; close to 8 500 will receive undergraduate degrees, diplomas and certificates, while a total of about 1 990 will graduate with Honours, Postgraduate Diplomas and Bachelor of Technology degrees. As part of our contribution to problem-solving innovation, the Tshwane University of Technology will also graduate 181 master's degree candidates and a total of 29 doctoral degree candidates, during the 2024 autumn graduation season.

Additionally, four Honorary Doctorates will be awarded to exceptional individuals who have made tremendous contributions to human developments. These are: Ms Bongji Dhlomo and Mr Wouter Kellerman (Doctor of Art & Design), Prof Pitika Ntuli (Doctor of Language Practice) and the late President Samora Machel (Doctor of Public Affairs – posthumously).

Before I wrap up my remarks, I would like to make a special appeal to all our guests today; please; make donation pledges to TUT. I am particularly appealing for donations into the TUT Bursary and Scholarship Fund – a fund dedicated to assisting academically gifted but economically-disadvantaged TUT students.

It is with a sense of absolute confidence and pride that we release today, the brand-new list of our excellent and future-ready graduates. Nelson Mandela had the likes of our graduands in mind when he said, and I quote:

*Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.*

As aptly captured by Nelson Mandela, our graduands have no option but to go on and fulfil, not just their individual dreams, but the dreams of their parents and the dreams of the nation.

To our graduands I say, with your newly found skills, go and pursue the noble goals of the National Development Plan, the AU Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Go and help us build low carbon economy, in a country with zero tolerance for gender-based violence. Play your part in ridding the world of hunger, poverty, inequality and climate change. Help us build caring villages, sustainable cities and compassionate communities. With the skills and the knowledge you have acquired, you have what it takes, to fulfil the dream of Kwame Nkrumah, that is, “to make even the Sahara bloom into a vast field with verdant vegetation for agricultural and industrial developments”.

Above all, I urge you to take your rightful place, in moving this twenty-year old institution from good to great, in every way, at every level.

Future-ready graduates, go on and make your knowledge work for your country and for the world.

We congratulate you and we say, Halaaalah!

**I thank you.**