

## Keynote speech

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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Nuffic has asked me to talk about challenges of higher education and research in developing countries, based on the Southern perspective. Allow me to start by reminding us what is the critical role of higher education for the development of our countries, regions and world. In higher education we train our youth to become our critical mass. We are also the trainers of teachers, researchers, innovators, and political, social and business leaders. We are also a pool of knowledge and know-how, and most importantly, we are the institutions, the national institutions, that can more efficiently link to the international knowledge pool of the whole world. But, in the developing situation we are in, the dimensions of change are really putting a lot of pressure. Today we live in a globalized world, the increasing importance of knowledge and technology in development and economical development, in particular, is putting a lot of pressure on us. We are living the digital revolution that should connect all of us in real time, but unfortunately has created a bigger divide between rich and poor.

In higher education we face challenges related to the rapid change of technology. We need to be able to help our countries to adapt, to produce new knowledge, new technologies for our development. It is very important that Southern countries do not lose out on this new revolution.

We have increased demands for higher education and we cannot forget that as we open up access, we have to be very conscious of gender and regional equity issues. Rapid changes occur in the labour market. Many of our graduates are facing problems when they enter the labour market. So higher education has to cope with these changes. We even have to predict what the future labour market looks like so that we are continuously relevant to the country's development. Also, as the gateway to the international knowledge pool we need to be part of the national innovation systems to ensure that we constantly supply the country with relevant knowledge for its development as well as allow our knowledge to benefit other parts of the globe. But we are faced with a very concrete framework, which is going to influence the way we operate - I am talking about the WTO/GATS that increases the pressures in our national systems of higher education. Furthermore, there is the question of quality standards that were very widely discussed in the last few days.

We are conscious, in the South, that if we want to achieve sustainable development we need to have scientific capacity. We need to be able to give to our people access to knowledge. We need, in fact, to create a science culture. Therefore, we need increased funding for research and development. We need to make sure that we have more researchers involved in our development progress. We need to improve the quality of training and research.

Let me explain to you, very quickly, what was the feeling in Mozambique about higher education in 1996 and why we had to embark on a national process of strategic planning and consultation. Our higher education institutions were very bureaucratic, everybody was full of work, bureaucratic work. Very expensive, which the country could not continue to sustain, the lecturers were feeling very frustrated, due to the rigidity of the programmes, and not being able to tap from the new knowledge and the new challenges in science. Our students, who were facing a very big frustration of not being able to access higher education wanted changes. Many of them tried for years and years to get into a public university and once there, they had a very hard time to graduate. The average graduation time was, at the time, 7 years

for a 5-year degree programme. And after all this effort of getting a degree they came out as a faceless graduate with very little to contribute to your own country and to their own life. Therefore in 1996, at the request of our President, at the time President Chissano, we embarked on a very consultative process. As you imagine, in the beginning, not everybody could follow the discussion or identify the pieces of the puzzle. We had people that were quite eloquent in expressing what higher education should be. We had curious people that always like to know new things. And we had people with no clue at all. The whole process of consultation went from districts to provinces and to national seminars, and had the aim to arrive at a consensual national strategic plan that would enable the sector to play its challenging and important role in the sustainable development of Mozambique. The process allowed us to create a national vision for 10 years of development of higher education in the country.

The key characteristics of the process were wide consultation and participation. We came out of the process much stronger, we knew what each of the stakeholders had to contribute, we had a common vision, we had a common goal. And most importantly, we knew that we had others to support us in initiating our responsibilities. The main actions were related to increasing access with equity (addressing regional and gender inequities), creating a legal framework that promote a diversified higher education system, not only universities, but other kinds of higher learning institutions to be able to address the development changes. Improving research and technology development in the country, the creation of networks of excellence (we talk about that today), and curriculum development were other priority areas. In this implementation process it was very important for us the link between knowledge, technology and practical solutions to every day problems. Involving our own people in the discussion and in the evaluation of the benefits of the reforms, making sure that the cycle education - research - education is in place, was also part of our process. We need to feed research outcomes back into education to improve constantly our education level.

The role of foreign partners was very important in this process and let me use this opportunity to thank the Dutch government, Nuffic and some of the Dutch institutions that support us from the beginning, and also the other the development partners that were also part of this process. They helped us to introduce the international debate into the national process. Higher education is not isolated, will never be isolated, it has to be part of the bigger world so any national reform process has to include the international context. The provision of technical assistance and financial support and most importantly international recognition of achievements and impacts enabled us to be part of the international network of knowledge.

Mozambique is a rich country, starting with our human resources. We are investing a lot in skills and technology building. We are lucky to have access to quite important markets, but are we really achieving the level of development and growth that we need to eradicate poverty? What we need are things that are not there yet. I would say the first one is how the power is distributed and used in today's world. We need to make sure that whatever is the movement, the international movement, is for the good of all the people in the world. The terms of trade are still not fair for developing nations. We need income to pay for our own bills and without fair trade we cannot achieve that. In conclusion we can say we need values and good governance, at national levels, at institutional levels, and very importantly at international level, only then we can get equity. We can then open the way for sustainable development by creating jobs, by having our economies to grow in a sustainable way. Only then we can say we are indeed collaborating and building a better world.

There are roles also for the bilateral and multilateral partners and I would like to highlight them. One without any question is fair trade, as I just mentioned. I think we should be careful of the thinking that places higher education as a commodity. We need strong national higher education systems to develop and we can do it through international networks of excellence

and through strategic investments at the national level. I think that ODA needs to invest more in capacity building, research infrastructure to produce the knowledge we need and this means support to higher education in the South. Investments in research capacity, ICT as a development tool, should also be mainstreamed in cooperation programmes.

But there are some remaining questions that I would like to share with you, and I think that we were trying to look at those during these two days. The first one is how can we guarantee the national ownership of development plans. And I think this requires inclusive national processes for the definition of development priorities and the strengthening of South-South cooperation in order to gain legitimacy and set the way for new terms of negotiation. If we look at the strengthening of higher education institution leadership we should know what they have to do in order to meet the challenges of the future. I think institutions and their leadership should have an in-depth knowledge of the countries' needs and priorities. They have to be open to society of which they are part and they need to participate in national, regional and international networks for sustainable development. I think leadership has to understand the urgency of higher education reform and share the values and common goals that are important for the process. University leadership has to be prepared to act as a role model in terms of respect for humanistic and scientific values and in terms of management style and quality towards their staff and students and towards society as a whole. Higher education institutions have to realize that it is their duty to support efforts to transform primary, secondary and technical education in such matter that these institutions produce graduates with vocational skills for the labour market as well as good candidates for higher education.

The third question is how to promote South-South and how to reform North-South cooperation and I think we discussed these issues. In the discussions partnerships and mutual benefits were very important. I think we are much nearer to the dream of creating a common vision for development by building bridges of friendship and knowledge between our youth and cultures. By building a common understanding of the challenges we are facing and by building a common language and approach to respond to these challenges, and I think this conference contributes a lot in that respect.

Let me address the very last question, but a very important one too, how can bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies adapt their policies to what we need? I think the first important issue is that our partners understand our needs and share our development vision. The development of our countries requires that all of us have a seat at the table, a round table, and discuss the way forwards as peers. Not as developed and underdeveloped, not as rich and poor, but as people of good will and knowledge who share the same desire of a just world. We believe that fair trade is an option in commodity trade; similarly we believe that it is possible to design a framework that will guarantee that liberalization of trading higher education remains fair to the interest of the developing nations. Increasing development aid for higher education and increasing the support for basic and applied research in our countries will benefit, not only our countries, but also the whole world. Strengthening the national systems of knowledge and higher education will contribute to the consolidation of peace and prosperity and to the elimination of terrorism and injustice.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me finish by addressing some issues that are important for me. I think in order to build an enabling environment for higher education in the South we need to have leadership, leadership at different levels, so that we can build a shared vision, so that we can be all together in our conviction what should be our development paths and therefore being able to define clearly our development priorities. This is important because we need to have ownership of these programmes, because it takes a lot from the country and the region to

invest in higher education when the resources are so scarce. This means that we need to involve our people, our societies, they need to support us as we advance. It is also very important that the development partners and we increase the funding for higher education and research and this shows the commitment that we have to our vision to the development priorities that we define together. And, most importantly, ladies and gentlemen, let us make sure that we do not forget that we should have ethics, without it we cannot build true partnerships.

I thank you very much for your attention.