

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT:

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY LUCIA WITBOOI, VICE PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE REALTEST RESEARCH PROJECT
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA MAIN CAMPUS**

WINDHOEK | KHOMAS REGION

10 AUGUST 2026

- **Director of Ceremonies, Dr. Marius Kudumo;**
- **Professor Kenneth Matengu, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Namibia;**
- **Professor Nelago Indongo, Executive Director of SASSCAL;**
- **Representatives of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany;**
- **Representatives of the German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space;**
- **Leadership of SASSCAL and Projektträger Jülich;**
- **Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**
- **Government Officials Present;**
- **Researchers, Academics and Students;**
- **Distinguished Guests;**
- **Members of the Media;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning.

It is my distinct honour to join you today for the official launch of the REALTEST Green Hydrogen Research Project. This initiative represents far more than the commencement of another research programme.

It signals Namibia's determination to build an economy founded on science, innovation, technological excellence and industrial competitiveness.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space, SASSCAL, Projektträger Jülich, the University of Namibia, and all implementing partners for your confidence in Namibia and for your continued investment in our scientific and technological capabilities.

This partnership demonstrates what can be achieved when nations unite around a shared vision of sustainable development, technological advancement and human progress. It is a partnership that goes beyond financial and technical cooperation; it is an investment in knowledge, in people, and in the future productive capacity of our country.

Director of Ceremony,

The world is under-going one of the greatest industrial transformations in modern history. The transition towards clean energy, advanced manufacturing, digital technologies, artificial intelligence and sustainable production is fundamentally reshaping global competitiveness.

As industrial development increasingly expands into new regions, including the African continent, Namibia must position itself not just as a participant in this transformation, but as an active contributor and beneficiary.

Therefore, green hydrogen is one of the strategic technologies at the centre of this transformation.

Namibia has been blessed with world-class renewable energy resources. These favorable energy resources position our country uniquely to become one of the world's most competitive producers of green hydrogen and green ammonia. However, our national ambition must extend far beyond the export of green molecules.

- Our ambition is to build an industrial economy.**

- **Our ambition is to create more prosperous and resilient communities.**
- **Our ambition is to develop knowledge-intensive industries.**
- **Our ambition is to ensure that Namibians become the scientists, engineers, innovators, entrepreneurs and industrial leaders who will own, shape and drive this transformation.**

True industrialization occurs when a country develops its own scientific capabilities, technological expertise, human capital to innovate, adapt, and compete in the global economy. Therefore, our goal must be to industrialize ourselves as a nation.

And that journey begins in our universities, our laboratories, our research institutes and our innovation ecosystems.

Director of Ceremonies,

It is in this context that today's launch is so significant. The REALTEST Project will contribute to strengthening our national capabilities in advanced research, hydrogen

safety, materials testing, engineering innovation and scientific excellence.

These capabilities are essential if Namibia is to participate meaningfully across the entire green hydrogen value chain from research, design and resource assessment, to materials development, manufacturing and production, as well as the operation, maintenance and servicing of facilities.

As we all know, countries that lead in science are better positioned to lead in industrialisation. Countries that invest in research create new industries. Countries that innovate create new jobs and new enterprises and Countries that develop knowledge create sustainable prosperity.

This understanding is reflected in our Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6), which recognizes science, technology, innovation and industrialization as critical drivers of economic transformation and inclusive growth. Equally, it is aligned with our long-term national aspirations under Vision 2030 to build a prosperous, industrialized and knowledge-based economy.

Therefore, in this context, we are serious about our nation becoming a modern industrial economy. Through our institutions of higher learning, such as UNAM, we are committed to investing in scientific leadership, research laboratories and research infrastructure.

Our goal is to further invest in entrepreneurship and technology transfer so that scientific discoveries, inventions and research results can be transformed into industrial applications, products, services and enterprises. And, above all, we are committed to investing in our young people.

The laboratories we build today can become the industrial capabilities of tomorrow. The researchers we train today will become tomorrow's innovators. The doctoral students we support today will become tomorrow's leaders in research, academia, industry and government. Therefore, the efforts we make today are investments in Namibia's future productive capacity.

Director of Ceremony,

The University of Namibia carries a responsibility that extends beyond excellence in teaching and tertiary education. As such, and as Namibia's flagship university, UNAM must continue to emerge as one of the leading centre for scientific discovery, technological advancement and applied research. I urge UNAM to be a centre to transform scientific inventions and research findings into practical industrial applications and, in turn, generate further home-grown innovations that contribute to the prosperity and development of Namibia.

The government therefore looks to UNAM to provide the research excellence, technical expertise, scientific leadership and innovative capacity that will underpin Namibia's industrial development.

In this regard, the government welcomes and strongly supports the further development of the centres of the Institute for Applied Advanced Research (IAAR), because such institutions are indispensable to building a competitive, knowledge-driven and technologically capable Namibia. We should aspire for IAAR to become a platform where ideas become inventions, inventions

become innovations, and innovations become technologies, enterprises and industries.

I therefore, congratulate the University of Namibia and all the partners involved in making the REALTEST Project a reality. Furthermore, I congratulate UNAM for the establishment of the Institute of Advanced and Applied Research, as a hub to turn inventions into innovations, as a catalyst and a premise for scientific excellence, technological innovation and sustainable industrialisation for Namibia, embedded in Africa and the world.

Director of Ceremonies,

May I conclude with the following reflection on the nature of wealth and prosperity in the twenty-first century:

“The wealth of the 21st century will not belong to the nations with the largest deposits beneath their soil, but to those with the greatest knowledge within their people. Namibia has the opportunity to possess both. Let us therefore invest as boldly in our scientists as we do in our natural resources.”

Together as partners in education, let us invest in knowledge, let us invest in research and innovation.

Let us invest in our young people, because they are the architects, innovators and industrial leaders of Namibia's future.

Let us ensure that the Namibia we build today is not only a country rich in natural resources, but a country rich in ideas, inventions, innovations, technologies and opportunities - a nation that creates its own prosperity through the capabilities of its people.

Once again, allow me to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, and all implementing partners for your confidence in Namibia and for your continued investment in our scientific and technological capabilities.

With these remarks, it is now my singular honour to declare the RealTest Project officially launched.

I thank you.