

**JOHANNESBURG LAUNCH OF STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY'S
HOPE PROJECT, 26 & 27 July 2010
Prof Russel Botman, Rector and Vice-Chancellor**

Goeiedag, dames en here. Good evening. Molweni.

Welkom aan almal van u.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, we are here to launch Stellenbosch University's HOPE Project. The video you have just seen provided some background. What I want to do now, is to expand briefly on the challenges we face and how we intend meeting them.

WHAT IS THE HOPE PROJECT?

We have three responsibilities as a university.

The first is a moral responsibility. Given our history, we have a moral responsibility to the poor, to rural communities and to a diversity of individuals in our country.

Our second responsibility is the historical responsibility to face up to the lingering burdens of the 20th century.

The third responsibility is the responsibility to embrace the challenges of the 21st century, the world of a new generation of young people, new ways of learning, new opportunities for research and the need for harnessing emerging technologies on an ongoing basis.

The HOPE Project is our way of living up to these responsibilities. It is Stellenbosch University's new, long-term strategic plan – and it is ambitious, comprehensive and integrated.

THE INFORMATION AGE

A decade into the 21st century, life on the cutting edge of society has exceeded some of the wildest predictions of yesterday's science fiction authors.

As our ability to communicate and travel faster and easier grows, so the world is getting progressively smaller. In the global village of today, we are all closely connected to each other.

Our age has been called the Information Age, in recognition of the fact that the most important commodity is no longer a specific natural resource or industrial product, but knowledge itself.

WHOSE 21ST CENTURY?

Whose 21st century is it going to be (Lange, 2010)? Not everyone has arrived in the 21st century, regardless of what the calendar says.

In large parts of the world, people are still battling with basic challenges – getting enough food to eat and clean water to drink, a roof over their heads, peace and security in their streets, a decent job with a fair salary, and quality education for their children.

Only a minority of people in the world and in our country and continent have arrived in the digital age. Most people still need a bridge to this better future.

ORIGINS OF HOPE

The notion of Stellenbosch University as a place of relevance can be traced back to Stellenbosch University's *Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond* (SU, 2000). On the one hand, this called for Stellenbosch to build on the high standards it had achieved as a world-class research university. But it also required of the institution to change. So, the university acknowledged that it had been a role player in the injustices of the past. And it expressed a commitment to redress, which would be pursued by building a staff and student corps demographically more representative of society, and by promoting development in the context of pressing needs in South Africa and the rest of the continent.

When I was appointed rector three years ago, we discussed these issues in the management team, and committed ourselves to the practical realisation of this commitment. And I am proud to say that the University community united behind this vision.

A campus-wide process of intensive consultation followed, in which our management team played a key role. Supported by the Deans of our 10 Faculties, they spearheaded a process to formulate the University's response to the challenges that we faced. This led us to this point, where we can say, "We" – the whole university – "are the HOPE Project".

’n Belangrike verwysingpunt vir ons plan was die VN se Millenniumontwikkelingsdoelwitte (MOD's), waartoe wêreldleiers in 2000 ingestem het. Die oortuiging dat universiteite ’n belangrike rol te speel het, is bevestig by ’n vergadering van die Statebond se ministers van onderwys by ’n vergadering in Kaapstad in 2006. Hulle het gesê die MOD's kan slegs bereik word tersiêre onderwys floreer.

Another source of inspiration was our government's priorities for South Africa, as articulated in its Medium-term Strategic Framework (MTSF), which calls on higher education institutions to "contribute to the economic and social well-being of the country and the wider global community".

We looked at the international and national development agendas, and in the end we distilled five themes to guide our core activities of teaching and learning, research and community interaction.

Our five development themes are: The eradication of poverty and related conditions, and the promotion of human dignity and health, democracy and human rights, peace and security, as well as a sustainable environment and a competitive industry.

Our vision for our country and continent is a future free from poverty, where the human dignity of all people is protected, where our social and ecological systems are healthy, and where peace, security and democracy are safeguarded.

We want to be seen to have played a role in realising this vision. By following a science-for-society approach, we are bringing about tangible change within communities.

HOPE INITIATIVES

How are we doing this? Leaders, academics, researchers and students in our various faculties have developed more than 20 hope-generating academic and scientific initiatives.

Daar is so baie opwindende inisiatiewe, ek kan nie uitgepraat raak nie. You can read more about all our initiatives in *HOPE Times* and the HOPE Project brochure, available here as handouts, as well as on our website, www.thehopeproject.co.za, but let me highlight just one.

The Stellenbosch University Water Institute is an interdisciplinary effort to help preserve and sustain the precious water resources of our country and continent.

Gauteng's impending water crisis due to acid mine water has been in the news lately. And all over the country and elsewhere on our continent, polluted water supplies are a problem. More than 90% of all cholera cases are reported in Africa, and 300 million people on our continent do not have access to safe drinking water.

In this photograph we see Prof Eugene Cloete, a microbiologist and Dean of our Faculty of Science. Along with his colleagues, he has just patented a revolutionary water filter that looks like a tea bag, fits into the neck of a water bottle and delivers clean and safe drinking water as you drink from the bottle – at just 6c a litre. This is a good example of science for society in action.

In addition to our various academic initiatives, the HOPE Project also includes steps taken by the University to maintain its position as a leading 21st century institution of higher learning. This we are doing by:

- Recruiting the best calibre students, researchers, lecturers and support staff, and actively assisting them so that they produce top results;
- Improving our diversity profile;
- Expanding postgraduate study further; and
- Establishing excellent facilities and infrastructure.

Op dié manier, kan ons 'n plek van belang en betekenis wees. Ons werk hard daaraan om 'n multikulturele, nie-rassige, diverse instelling van uitnemendheid te wees – een wat ook sy billike verantwoordelikheid teenoor Afrikaans nakom.

Let me mention an example of how we are using our expertise to help improve education.

In collaboration with the Western Cape Education Department, our Division for Interactive Telematic Services broadcasts live lectures by top teachers ...

... to 120 schools over weekends. In this way, 14 000 Grade 12 learners receive extra tuition in six school subjects.

Last year there were 10 schools in the pilot programme. It was so successful that it has been expanded to 120 schools this year. And we have now received requests for it to be rolled out in the Free State and Eastern Cape as well.

Of course, some learners still fail, or do not pass well enough to proceed to university. At Stellenbosch, we offer learners that show potential and are willing to work very hard a second chance.

Our SciMathUS programme provides 100 learners a year access to an intensive 10-month course in science and maths, after which they rewrite their matric exams. Our success rate the past three years has been 100%. This is with students who have failed or barely passed these subjects the year before.

Here with me in this photograph are Pumza Ghu and Bongwiwe Tyhala. I should say Doctors Ghu and Tyhala. Both of them have come through SciMathUS, dramatically improved their marks, gained admission to our Medical School, and are now working in the public health sector out of choice – Dr Ghu at the Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital in Mthatha, Eastern Cape, and Dr Tyhala at the Mokopane Regional Hospital, Limpopo.

Ons gryp in op skoolvlak, ons gee leerders met potensiaal 'n tweede kans, en dan, wanneer hulle by ons aankom, verskaf ons aktief steun sodat hulle nie uitsak nie.

Stellenbosch has been the first institution in South Africa to introduce a First-year Academy, a university-wide initiative to improve the academic success rate of our new students. Across all our faculties, the success rate of the first year cohort now stands at 87%.

WELDOENERS VAN HOOP

If we want to be of service to society and be a place of excellence, we must ensure that our activities are sustainable. This we cannot do without the help of our partners, networks and supporters.

An example is the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which has granted Stellenbosch R150 million, of which we are utilising R25 million for our school partnerships, SciMathUs and related initiatives. The rest of the money has been entrusted to us for distribution to a collaborative network of other higher education institutions, the Western Cape Education Department and NGOs as part of the SEEDS programme.

In this public launch phase of Stellenbosch University's HOPE Project, therefore, we are not just announcing what we are doing to change the world for the better, but also inviting others to join us. Individuals, alumni, friends, companies and organisations can get involved and help improve the lives of the people of South Africa, Africa and the rest of the world.

Universities worldwide are under tremendous financial pressure as state subsidies decrease and the demands of access, relevance and excellence increase. Stellenbosch is grateful for the state support it receives, but it has none-the-less become clear that subsidies and class fees on their own are no longer sufficient for everything we need to do at this critical juncture.

So, as part of the HOPE Project, we are publicly launching the largest fundraising campaign ever by an African university. Our goal is to raise gifts of at least R1,75 billion by 2015.

It is with pride I can tell you that the past three years – in the silent phase of the HOPE Project – we have raised nearly R500 million in philanthropic contributions. More than 4 500 donors have supported Stellenbosch since my installation in April 2007, when the idea of the University as a centre of hope in Africa started taking shape.

Iemand wat die idee van hoop deur diens aan die samelewing beliggaam het, was die US se voormalige kanselier, Dr Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, wat ongelukkig in Mei vanjaar oorlede is. Die Universiteit beoog om hulde te bring aan hom deur die Frederick van Zyl Slabbert Instituut vir Leierskapsontwikkeling tot stand bring.

Dr Van Zyl Slabbert's successor, Dr Johann Rupert, is not only our new Chancellor but also a benefactor of the University. He has announced the establishment of an Endowed Chair in Intellectual Property at the University in the context of the HOPE Project, to be funded by Rlichemont, the company of which he is Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.

One of the goals of this campaign is to inspire more of our alumni to support their alma mater. We would like to increase the rate of those who give back to the University from less than 2% to closer to 10%.

Setting an excellent example in this regard, are recent Stellenbosch graduates Paul **Antohnie**, Nico **Mans** and Alphonso **Primo**.

Here (in this photograph) we see them with Prof Magda Fourie, Vice-Rector for Teaching, and Mr Arrie Hanekom, Head of Undergraduate Bursaries and Loans.

These young men started putting R100 each per month into a kitty, and when they reached R4000, they launched a fund for needy students. They call it the **MAP** bursary, using the first letter from each of their surnames – **M**ans, **A**ntohnie and **P**rimo.

Among our 4 500 donors are companies who support specific initiatives. An example is Standard Bank, who supports the newly created Standard Bank Centre for Agribusiness Leadership and Mentorship Development in our Faculty of AgriSciences.

We thank all our donors for their trust in investing in Stellenbosch University, enhancing our ability to make a difference.

We cannot name them all at this occasion, but all the details will be on the HOPE Project website in due course.

It is significant that our strategic partners support our vision of being a builder of hope, as well as the steps we have taken to ensure that Stellenbosch University's proud tradition of excellence is maintained. Their contributions are a motion of confidence, but also an investment in a better future.

SLOT

Ladies and gentlemen, a number of negative stereotypes of Africa were shattered through South Africa's recent successful hosting of the soccer World Cup. It changed the world's perceptions of Africa.

More importantly, though, Africa's World Cup opened African eyes to Africa's potential. It convinced Africa that it can stand tall on the world stage.

Our challenge now is to sustain this momentum. And the best way of doing this, is by investing in education. As former President Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Higher education, in particular, unlocks and imparts reliable knowledge, and produces professionals in a variety of fields.

Stellenbosch University's HOPE Project is tailor-made for this challenge. It allows us to deploy our key strengths to tackle some of Africa's biggest problems, in the process developing the human resources the continent needs to progress to the next level.

Dames en here, ons leef in 'n snelveranderende wêreld wat groot eise aan ons stel. Die 21ste eeu se kennisekonomie vereis voortdurende aanpassings. Terselfdertyd leef ons nog met die nalatenskap van die 20ste eeu saam. Die HOOP Projek stel ons in staat om bestaande probleme en toekomstige uitdagings met ewe veel mening te takel.

The HOPE Project is the right thing to do. Now is the right time for hope. Future generations deserve nothing less.

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