

**Welcoming Address at a SA- China Gala Dinner**  
**By**  
**Prof Fred Otieno, Deputy Vice Chancellor: Technology, Innovation and Partnerships,**  
**Durban University of Technology, Durban, South Africa**  
**On the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011**

Guests of honor, Distinguished Guests, The Vice Chancellor DUT, The Chair of DUT Council, The Chancellor, DUT, Senior Staff of DUT and other Institutions present, Staff of DUT, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor and pleasure to welcome you all to DUT and specifically to our proudly South African dinner tonight.

Ladies and gentlemen, we live in a moment of history where change is so fast, that we sometimes only see the present when it is already disappearing.

Today, success, whether on an individual, collective or country wide basis, depends on vastly different parameters than in the past.

For the first time in hundreds of years educational institutions have to deal with fast, radical change, linked to a growing need for a new generation of knowledge workers – people with much higher levels of relevant, applicable knowledge and skills, who are able to function optimally in multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural environments, and under rapidly changing circumstances.

Traditional approaches to business have changed virtually overnight, and the sources of wealth and economic development in the Information Era have shifted to knowledge, learning and innovation which reside in people, and have brought new pressures and challenges to the educational system.

The challenge now is to live and thrive in the new world, where the call is for more innovation. It is precisely this that makes the collaboration between China and DUT more significant and we at DUT wish to thank all those who were instrumental in setting this up, running it and hopefully sustaining the same.

I must add that a key lesson in any successful venture is that there are no "quick-fixes" Success stories have all been developed over longer periods of time with major commitment and dedication from management, staff, students, regional structures and financial institutions. The starting point of all this is the creation of an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit among management, staff and students, linked to vibrant research and development programmes and activities. The Department of Biotechnology and Food Technology at DUT under the leadership of Prof Suren Singh is a leader in this work and sets the pace and direction. We are proud of their work and wish to encourage such work across other departments of the University.

I wish to also take the opportunity tonight to thank those members of the collaboration from both China and DUT; The National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa and the equivalent organization in China for the support that they provided and are providing in supporting this collaboration.

I am aware that you have had a full day of deliberations and have a further day tomorrow. I trust that these went well and wish you well for tomorrow and beyond.

After a day's hard work, sit back and relax. As you network further among yourselves, enjoy the hospitality of DUT and its students and staff.

Before I conclude,

May I leave you with the following words of Alvin Toffler:

**“The illiterate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn. I am of the view that the work that is being done will contribute to creating learned societies in both China and South Africa.**

I thank you all and God bless you.

Kind regards

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