



14 October 2026



Vice-Chancellor and Principal,
Professor Rushiella Songca

I would like to address the alarming rise in gender-based violence (GBV) and femicide in our country, which affects too many lives. It is trite that GBV is quickly becoming a pandemic; every day we read and hear about women or children who have been brutally murdered or assaulted.

During the Founder's Annual Lecture at Durban's International Convention Centre (ICC) on 3 October 2026, I opened my speech by acknowledging how we are all impacted by GBV. I referred to President Mr Cyril Ramaphosa's

address, wherein he reminded us, in his recent address to the nation, that we cannot simply police our way out of this crisis; that prevention must begin in our homes, schools, and workplaces.

I assert that GBV goes beyond physical violence; it dehumanises and violates the dignity of individuals, perpetuating harmful stereotypes and power imbalances. As a lawyer, an African woman, and the Interim Vice-Chancellor of this University, this issue is deeply personal to me. We must intensify our conversations and awareness programmes on GBV across all corners of our campus.

It is crucial to remember that behind each statistic is a real person whose death impacts an entire community. Our discussions must not only address perpetrators and victims, but also focus on the reasons that engender GBV, the nature of relationships, the importance of inculcating a culture of respect, and the kind of society we want to create.

While our Constitution and policies offer protections, they only have power when we enact them in our daily interactions. We need to reflect on our daily transactions as human beings; are we creating an environment where individuals can seek help without judgment? At MUT, we embrace the values of Ubuntu, "I am because we are", recognizing that our dignity is interconnected; thus, our culture and practices must foster mores of caring and community.

I urge everyone in the MUT community to engage in this essential conversation. We should collectively foster healthier relationships and challenging harmful behaviours. We need to create a safe atmosphere for those experiencing abuse to reach out for support.

As a university, we must cultivate not just skilled professionals, but compassionate individuals. Let us collectively respond to GBV not with fear or scepticism, but with a commitment to dignity, respect, and caring for one another. Let us choose Ubuntu and support each other.

MUT free to introduce new academic programmes as ‘moratorium’ is lifted



Vice-Chancellor and Principal,
Professor Rushiella Songca

Vice-Chancellor tells Senate the milestone opens the way to curriculum renewal under IGNITE 2030

Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) can once again develop and introduce new academic programmes. Interim Vice-Chancellor Prof Rushiella Songca announced the lifting of the moratorium to Senate on Friday.

She described the moment as “a gift to the people of MUT, our academics, our current students, our future graduates, and generations of scholars who will walk through our gates.”

Prof Songca said the restriction had held back the creativity of the university’s professors, PhD holders, deans and heads of department. “The lifting of this ‘moratorium’ is not merely an administrative achievement. It is an academic liberation,” she told Senators.

She said the timing was fitting. At the Founder’s Annual Lecture last Saturday, keynote speaker Mr Zwelakhe Mnguni urged the university to produce graduates who are employable and able to create employment. He called for curricula that meets industry needs and responds to the way artificial intelligence is transforming workplaces.

Prof Songca said this matches the aspirations of MUT’s IGNITE 2030 strategy, which commits to future-fit teaching and learning, research, innovation and digital transformation. New programmes in fields such as robotics, artificial intelligence and the future world of work could now move from aspiration to reality.

She also set out what she expects next. “I want to see proposals. I want to see innovation,” she told Senate, adding that she will follow up with the DVCs, deans, heads of department, professors and academic leaders on their plans. She also wants the infrastructure endeavours at MUT to be accelerated to enable students to use technologies similar to those used in the world of work. She undertook to follow up on the IGNITE 2030 facility Mr Mnguni committed to help establish, which will support curriculum development.

Regarding the uplifting of the hold on offering new programs, she credited the achievement to a collective effort rather than any one person namely Council, Senate, executive management, academics, and professional and support staff. “In less than nine months, we have achieved what once seemed impossible,” she said.

She closed with the words she uttered since her first staff meeting this year: “Thulani nizobona! We are on the road to IGNITE 2030!”

The Masakhe spirit takes shape with a successful execution of the Founder's Annual Lecture



From left, Zwelakhe Mnguni, guest speaker; Connie Mametja, Deputy Chair of Council; Professor Rushiella Songca, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, HRH, Prince Zuzifa Buthelezi; Velenkosini Hlabisa (MP), Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs; and Dr Pali Lehohla, former Statistician General



Zwelakhe Mnguni, left, with HRH, Prince Zuzifa Buthelezi

Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) successfully hosted its Founder's Annual Lecture at Durban's ICC on Saturday, 3 October 2026, bringing together University leadership, Council, distinguished guests, partners and stakeholders to honour the enduring legacy of MUT's Founder, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, while reflecting on the University's contribution to the future of higher education and the world of work.

Held under the theme, 'Towards 2030: MUT's Shared Vision for South Africa's Higher Education Contribution to the Global World of Work,' the Founder's Annual Lecture provided a platform not only to remember the vision that gave birth to MUT, but also to consider how that legacy finds expression in the University's journey towards 2030.



Chairperson of Council, Dr Mosidi Makgae

The Chairperson of the MUT Council, Dr Mosidi Makgae, stated “The responsibility to build is now ours”. She emphasised that the lecture “represented a moment to remember the extraordinary vision that led to the establishment of MUT and, equally, to accept responsibility for what the current generation does with that inheritance.”

Dr Makgae reflected on Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi’s conviction that education could transform the lives of Black South Africans and recalled how a dream shared with Mr Harry Oppenheimer, Chairman of Anglo-American Corporation for 25 years, and Chairman of De Beers Consolidated Mines for 27 years, ultimately became an Institution that has since opened doors of opportunity to generations of students. To date, MUT has graduated more than 54 000 students, some of whom have gone on to make a big impact in industry and other economic platforms.

But remembrance, Dr Makgae reiterated, was not enough. “A legacy is not preserved by words alone. A legacy is preserved by what we do,” said Dr Makgae.

Dr Makgae challenged the MUT community and friends of the University to judge their

stewardship of the Founder’s legacy by the institution they leave behind, the opportunities created for students, the quality of education provided, research and innovation advanced, partnerships established, and the integrity with which the University is governed.

The Founder’s Annual Lecture, she said, should therefore bring the Founders and Friends of MUT together not only to celebrate the past, but to ask what each could contribute towards sustaining the vision. Those contributions could take the form of financial support, partnerships, mentorship, expertise, research collaboration, industry partnerships or in-kind assistance.

The responsibility was now to build a university that was “stronger, more resilient, more ethical and more excellent than the one we inherited.”

Dr Makgae linked this responsibility directly to IGNITE 2030, MUT’s five-year strategy, saying its implementation represented more than delivering against a strategic plan. “We are carrying forward a legacy. A legacy born from a dream. A legacy built through courage,” she said. “The foundation has been laid. The vision has been planted. The responsibility to build is now ours.”

From legacy to action: Founder's Annual Lecture positions MUT for partnerships, investment and impact

Outlining the purpose of the Founder's Annual Lecture held at the ICC on 3 October 2026, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of MUT, Professor Rushiella Songca, expressed appreciation to all dignitaries and guests and explicitly stated that "The Founder's Annual Lecture is an intellectual and public engagement platform where academia, government, business, industry, traditional leadership and civil society can engage the major questions and shifts confronting South Africa, Africa and the world."

For MUT, she added, "it is also an opportunity to reclaim its space within the academic realm and showcase research that responds to pressing challenges in energy, climate and water, food security, health, advanced manufacturing, digital transformation and artificial intelligence."

Professor Songca said the University hoped the conversations initiated through the lecture would ultimately translate into relationships, partnerships and financial commitments capable of supporting the ambitions contained in IGNITE 2030.

Professor Songca further noted that "Naturally, the infrastructure of the University is an important pillar of IGNITE 2030". To have world-class laboratories, MUT requires partners and funders; greater work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities require stronger industry relationships; research excellence requires funding and collaboration; international opportunities for students require global partnerships; and ensuring that talented young people succeed regardless of their economic circumstances, MUT needs to attract more bursaries, scholarships and investments. Thus, Ambitions espoused in IGNITE 2030 require resources."

Professor Songca said MUT's vision was anchored on strengthening the academic project while providing decent, technology-infused living and learning spaces. Strengthening relationships with government, industry, business, foundations, development agencies, international universities, philanthropists and investors would therefore remain critical to achieving that vision.



Vice-Chancellor and Principal,
Professor Rushiella Songca

Professor Songca's aspiration is that when the University returns to the Founder's Annual Lecture year after year, its success will be visible not merely in the conversations held, but in "the partnerships created, students supported, research funded, innovations developed, and opportunities created for our students and staff."

Professor Songca captured the evening's central message in a fitting tribute to the Founder:

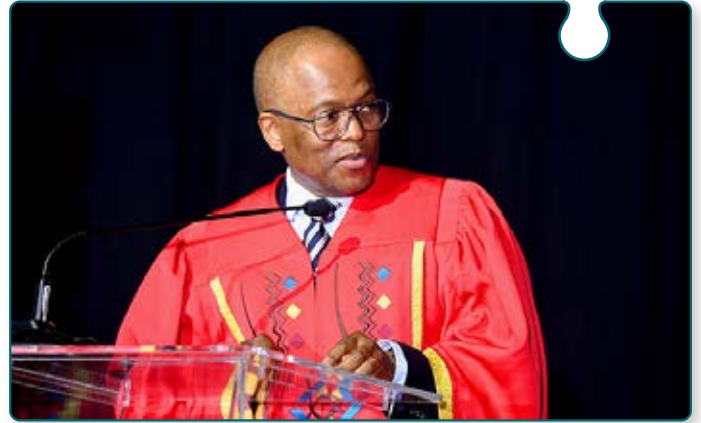
"Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi lit a match; ours is to sustain the flame and nourish it for generations to come."

The successful execution of the Founder's Annual Lecture therefore established more than a new event on MUT's calendar. It created a platform for the University to connect legacy with action, relationships with resources, and the Founder's original vision with MUT's ambitions for 2030 and beyond.

The Legacy of Prince Buthelezi through the lens of various speakers



Dr Pali Lehohla



Sandile Zungu



Professor Brian Itumeleng Nakedi



Professor Bhekisipho Twala



Professor Ntebogeng Mokgalaka-Fleischmann

A common thread across the programme was Prince Buthelezi's legacy. Generally, all speakers emphasised that the most meaningful way for MUT to honour its Founder is to build upon his vision of education as an instrument for human development, opportunity and social and economic advancement. They reflected on the responsibility of the current generation of MUT leaders, staff, students and partners to keep this legacy alive through the University's impact.

Zwelakhe Mnguni, Chief Investment Officer and Co-Founder of Benguela Global Fund Managers, delivered the keynote address, supported by three discussants namely, Dr Pali Lehohla, former Statistician-General of South Africa, Professor Ntebogeng Mokgalaka-Fleischmann, Acting DVC: Teaching, Learning and Technology, Tshwane University of Technology, and Professor Brian Itumeleng Nakedi, Commissioner, Public Service Commission, Free State Province

Professor Bhekisipho Twala, MUT's Interim DVC: Resources and Planning, facilitated the Critical Reflections highlighting salient features from all the presentations and summarising the way forward to ensure that they are implemented or acted upon.



Zwelakhe Mnguni – Keynote Speaker,
Co-Founder and Chief Investment Officer,
Benguela Global Fund Managers

Keynote speaker Zwelakhe Mnguni shifted the conversation from commemorating the Founder to asking what his legacy demands of MUT today. Tasked with addressing seven questions about the future of graduates, curriculum responsiveness, the responsibilities of industry and government, artificial intelligence, entrepreneurship, inclusion and partnerships, Mnguni reframed each question as an opportunity for MUT to implement. His proposition is that universities must become more agile in updating curricula; industry and government must help create the conditions in which young people can work and build enterprises; and artificial intelligence should change education from testing recall towards assessing judgment.

On entrepreneurship, he argued that “universities could do more than teach students how to start businesses; they could become their first customers. Mnguni emphasised the need for students to be imbued with skills that would help

them survive in a constantly evolving world. He noted the importance of integrating soft skills into the curriculum to strengthen students’ graduate attributes.

Partnerships, he argued, must similarly move beyond goodwill towards arrangements in which universities and their partners share investment, responsibility and risk. “A gap is only a problem if nobody owns it,” Mnguni said. “I am proposing that MUT owns all seven.”

Furthermore, Mnguni offered concrete ideas for what such ownership could look like; for instance, programmes in robotics and automation, energy and grid systems, the embedding of AI-supervised engineering across qualifications, a procurement and financing mechanism supporting graduate enterprises, and a Township Industrial Extension model through which MUT could apply its research expertise to real challenges in Umlazi and surrounding communities.

His address returned repeatedly to the Founder. He asserted that MUT’s location in a township, should not be regarded as a disadvantage the University has to overcome, but as a strategic asset that positions it close to the people, communities and markets it was established to serve.

He also challenged MUT to make the Founder’s Annual Lecture a platform for accountability as much as remembrance. Among the measures he proposed for annual reporting were graduate employment and self-employment, the survival of graduate-owned businesses, the adoption of MUT research by industry and municipalities, alumni outcomes, and the progression of Black women in STEM.

In that way, he argued, the Founder’s Annual Lecture could progressively become an annual test of whether the Founder’s vision is producing measurable impact.

In conclusion, he reminded the audience about the genesis of the lecture and opined, “What Founder Shenge did in 1979 was not generosity. It was strategy, and the strategy still works.”

The observations of Prince Zuzifa were more intimate and reflective, his title “Through a son’s eyes: Prince Zuzifa reflects on a father who lived for ‘abantu bakithi abampisholo’



HRH, Prince Zuzifa Buthelezi chief of the Buthelezi tribe

For HRH Prince Ntuthukoyezwe Zuzifa Buthelezi, the Founder’s Annual Lecture was deeply personal. It was an opportunity for a son to reflect on the father he knew, the interactions they had as a family and a legacy of service that continues to touch generations.

Accompanied by members of the Buthelezi clan and his family, among whom was his sister, Princess Phumzile, Prince Zuzifa Buthelezi offered those gathered at the Founder’s Annual Lecture a glimpse beyond the public figure of Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi and spoke about a man whose life was characterised by service and an enduring concern for people who were denied opportunities.

At the heart of those reflections was a phrase closely associated with the Founder; “abantu bakithi abampisholo”, (our black people), his people, particularly those who had historically

been marginalised and disadvantaged, were always close to his heart and went to great lengths to assist the underprivileged

For Prince Zuzifa, the phrase abantu bakithi abampisholo helps explain why his father invested so deeply in education and social development.

Prince Buthelezi believed education could liberate people from poverty and prepare them to participate meaningfully in their country’s future, which he believed would be liberated. Under his leadership in the pre-democratic dispensation, Zululand saw more than 6 000 classrooms built, alongside teacher-training and nursing colleges. This also included establishing clinics and the Prince Mshiyeni Hospital, located a few kilometres from Mangosuthu University of Technology, as well as Ithala Bank and industrial development initiatives in Mandeni and Newcastle.

Prince Buthelezi's commitment to education ultimately gave rise to one of the institutions closest to his heart: Mangosuthu Technikon, now Mangosuthu University of Technology.

Established in 1979 and initially opening with only 15 engineering students, the Institution represented more than bricks and mortar. It embodied Prince Buthelezi's conviction that young black South Africans deserved access to technical and higher education and the opportunity to become engineers, scientists, professionals and leaders.

As Prince Zuzifa Buthelezi reflected on this legacy, he also brought the audience into the private world of the Buthelezi family. Behind the statesman, traditional leader and Founder was a father. Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi and his wife, Princess Irene Audrey Thandekile Buthelezi, nee Mzila, were blessed with eight children, three sons and five daughters. Six have since passed away, leaving Prince Zuzifa and his elder sister, Princess Phumzile Nokuphiwa Buthelezi, as the two surviving children.

Prince Zuzifa's reflections recalled their father's love for his children and the importance he placed on their education. This is a side of the Founder Prince Zuzifa has spoken about before: a father who expected his children to apply themselves academically and took a keen interest in their progress at school and university.

It was a poignant reminder that while South Africa knew Prince Buthelezi through public life, the Buthelezi children knew him simply as their father and that the demands of his lifelong public service were shared, in many ways, by his family.



Front row, from left, Sandile Zungu; Zwelakhe Mnguni; Professor Rushiella Songca; HRH, Prince Zuzifa Buthelezi; Dr Mosidi Makgae; Velenkosini Hlabisa(MP); Dr Pali Lehohla; Connie Mametja. Back row, Bhokuyise Buthelezi; Professor Bhokisipho Twala; Tebogo Letsie; Sandile Dlamini; Professor Ntebogeng Mokgalaka-Fleischmann; Thembisa Jimana; Dr Pat Mazibuko; Mokgobi Ramushu; Professor Brian Itumeleng Nakedi; Dr Xolile Ngubane; and Professor Mncedisi Maphalala

A legacy inherited from Princess Magogo



HRH, Prince Zuzifa Buthelezi, left, with Zawada

Prince Zuzifa also reached further back into the family story, recognising his grandmother and Prince Buthelezi's mother, the legendary Princess Constance, Magogo, Sibilile, Mathinti, Ngangezinye, Thombisile kaDinuzulu.

Princess Magogo was herself an extraordinary figure in South African cultural history: a composer, singer, poet and renowned authority on Zulu musical traditions. She became particularly celebrated for Zulu classical and traditional bow music, performing with instruments including the ugubhu. Her repertoire preserved traditional songs reaching back generations while also incorporating her own compositions.

Princess Magogo's contribution was so significant that she was posthumously awarded the Order of Ikhamanga in Gold for her prolific musical composition and her contribution to preserving and developing traditional music in South Africa.

In remembering Princess Magogo, Prince Zuzifa effectively located MUT's Founder within

a much longer family tradition, one in which service, culture, education and the preservation of heritage were passed from one generation to another.

And therein lay perhaps one of the evening's most powerful reflections. The story of Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi cannot be told only through the positions he occupied, or the institutions he established. It is also the story of a son shaped by Princess Magogo; a husband and father who raised eight children with Princess Irene; and a leader who repeatedly sought ways of creating opportunities for abantu bakithi abampisholo.

Today, MUT stands as one of the most enduring expressions of that commitment.

For Prince Zuzifa and the Buthelezi family, returning to the Founder's Annual Lecture was also a return to something profoundly personal. Every student who enrolls with MUT, every graduate who leaves equipped to build a life and contribute to society, and every new opportunity created through the University carry forward a part of their father's vision.

The Founder's Annual Lecture thus became more than an institutional tribute. Through the reflections of Prince Zuzifa, it became a family story of a grandmother who preserved the music and cultural memory of her people; of a father who translated service into schools, colleges, healthcare facilities and a university; and of succeeding generations entrusted with ensuring that this legacy continues to serve abantu bakithi abampisholo.

It was a great intimate night of intellectual reflections and personal journeys that underpinned one message - a life well lived.

Songca's global vision comes alive as MUT student leaders return from Rwanda



Dr Xolile Ngubane, Senior Director in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor (far right) and Mdumiseni Chonco (hugging two students on the left) with 9 students.

When Professor Rushiella Songca assumed the role of Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) at the beginning of March this year, one of the aspirations she expressed was simple but significant: MUT students needed to see the world beyond South Africa's borders.

Less than eight months later, that vision has become a reality. A delegation of nine outgoing Student Representative Council (SRC) members, led by the former SRC President Mdumiseni Chonco, travelled to Rwanda for a Global Engagement Programme at the University of Kigali (UoK), giving all the student leaders their first experience outside South Africa.

The partnership between MUT and UoK, fostered by former Interim Dean of Students Professor Sibusiso Chalufu, made the engagement possible. Professor Chalufu has since left MUT to assume his new role as Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Resources and Planning at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT).

Professor Songca delegated Dr Xolile Ngubane, Senior Director in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, to lead the nine student leaders on the international engagement. They returned home with more than memories of another country.

Dr Ngubane said, "For the students, Kigali became a classroom without walls, an opportunity to encounter another society, interrogate assumptions about their own country and appreciate both what South Africa offers them and what it can learn from elsewhere."

For most of the student leaders, one of the most profound lessons was realising how easily South African students could take some of the opportunities available to them for granted. The experience prompted reflection on access to higher education and student funding, public transport and the broader support systems available to South African students. At the same time, Rwanda challenged them to consider what South Africa could learn from Kigali.

“We came back appreciating many things about Kigali, particularly the cleanliness, which appears to be a collective responsibility. We also experienced the freedom of being able to walk at night without constantly worrying about being mugged,” reflected Chonco.

Another striking feature was the visible security culture surrounding public spaces.

“Every time you enter a university, a mall, a hospital and even hotels, you go through security. It is normal there,” Chonco said.

For the student leaders, these observations opened broader conversations about personal safety, crime prevention and the responsibility communities themselves can assume in creating safer public environments. They returned asking what practices could be adapted within the South African context, including on university campuses, as the country continues to confront crime and gender-based violence.

But international exposure also meant confronting the unfamiliar. For many of the student delegation, this was their first journey outside South Africa. Something as ordinary as food suddenly became part of the learning experience. Different preparation methods and unfamiliar tastes took some adjustment, with some students turning to takeaways, only to discover that regularly buying familiar food could become considerably more expensive than they had anticipated.

These seemingly small experiences were precisely part of the value of the journey: learning to adapt, navigating difference and functioning outside the comfort of home.

For Professor Songca, this is at the heart of meaningful internationalisation. Internationalisation should not simply be measured by agreements signed between universities or the number of international engagements undertaken. Students must ultimately experience its value. “The essence

of internationalisation is also about learning to appreciate what we have, while being sufficiently open to recognise what others may be doing better,” said Professor Songca. “When our student leaders are exposed to different countries and different ways of doing things, they return with a wider perspective. The challenge then is for them to ask: what have we learnt, and what can we champion within our own University and society?”

The Kigali experience was particularly significant because the delegation comprised outgoing SRC members. Their leadership journey at MUT may have drawn to a close, but Professor Songca believes the international exposure equips them with perspectives they can carry into their communities, professions and future leadership roles.

Ms Mbali Mkhize, senior director of Marketing and Communications, said, “This visit also demonstrates what MUT intends internationalisation to become under IGNITE 2030; not an activity confined to an international office, but an institutional culture that expands the horizons of students and staff.”

And for the nine student leaders who boarded a flight as South African university students and returned having experienced another African country, Kigali offered something that cannot easily be taught in a lecture hall - perspective.

They returned more appreciative of home, more conscious of what could be improved, and more aware that solutions to some of South Africa’s challenges may also emerge when young leaders are given opportunities to look beyond its borders.

In less than eight months, Professor Songca’s wish to expose MUT students to the world has begun to take shape. Kigali may have been one destination, but for MUT, it represents the beginning of a much bigger journey.