

**OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**



**VICE CHANCELLOR'S REMARKS AT  
ELEVATE 2026: LEADING WITH PURPOSE AND CLARITY**

**ADDRESS BY:  
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**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2026  
ITALIAN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE**

- *Your Excellencies, Ambassador and representatives of the Italian Embassy,*
- *Founders and Leaders of Glitz Africa,*
- *Distinguished Guests,*
- *Fellow Women Leaders and Executives,*

*A very good morning to you all and happy new year.*

## **Introduction**

It is an honour to join you today at **Elevate 2026: Leading with Purpose and Clarity**. I thank Glitz Africa and our friends at the Italian Embassy for convening this timely and visionary gathering - a space where women of influence, experience and determination come together to listen, to learn, and to rekindle the purpose that guides our public and professional lives.

I had to re-arrange my schedule to make room for this event. The effort I put in to avail myself for today's engagement is for obvious reasons. For someone like me who has served in a number of leadership capacities, this is a call to duty. This meeting presents an opportunity to re-energize the "sisterhood" at such an opportune time as the beginning of a new year. Also, this meeting is among fellow women striving to make a difference in their respective endeavours, to make the world a better place for us all.

For women leaders, executives, and change-makers, this conversation matters even more. We often lead in environments of complexity, heightened scrutiny, and competing expectations.

***Purpose therefore becomes our compass, and clarity our currency.*** Together, they enable us to rise above noise, navigate uncertainty, and shape institutions that endure. As we begin this new year, recommitting to purposeful and clear leadership is not a luxury—it is a strategic necessity for women determined to make impact, influence policy, and leave a lasting legacy.

## **Leading with Purpose and Clarity**

I will pretend to be in the classroom for a moment – *what does it mean to lead with purpose and clarity?* To lead with purpose and clarity is to anchor leadership in ***meaning and direction***—so that people understand:

- why they are working,
- what they are working toward, and
- how to get there.

### **To lead with purpose means:**

- Being guided by values, not just titles or targets.

- Understanding the deeper impact of your decisions on people and society.
- Aligning personal conviction with institutional or organizational mission and
- Making choices that serve a long-term vision, even when they are difficult.

Purposeful leaders often ask these three key questions: *What problem am I here to solve? Who benefits from this work? What legacy am I building beyond my tenure?*

### **Leading with Clarity**

To lead with clarity on the other hand means:

- Setting clear priorities and expectations.
- Communicating decisions clearly and consistently.
- Translating vision into actionable goals and measurable outcomes.
- Reducing confusion, ambiguity, and unnecessary complexity.

Clarity builds trust, accelerates execution and empowers others to act confidently.

## **Practical Steps to Adopt**

Drawing from my own experience and learning from others, permit me to share with you five (5) practical steps you could adopt to truly *elevate in 2026* while leading with purpose and clarity:

### **1. Re-articulate your leadership purpose for 2026:**

Begin the year by clearly defining or redefining your leadership.

### **2. Set Up to Three Strategic Priorities and Guard Them Fiercely:**

Clarity starts with focus. Identify at most three priorities that will define success for you in 2026.

### **3. Communicate Direction Early, Simply, and Often:**

Purpose and clarity only matter if others can see and understand them.

### **4. Invest in Strategic Relationships:**

Elevation is rarely a solo journey. Be deliberate about building relationships that stretch your thinking, expand your influence, and open doors.

## 5. Create Space to Think, Reflect and Correct

Purposeful leadership requires reflection. Schedule regular time—monthly or quarterly—to pause and ask:

- What is working?
- What is misaligned with my purpose?
- What must I stop, start, or scale?

### **The Evolving Role of Women**

My dear ladies, the role of women in institutions is no longer peripheral or symbolic — it is structural, strategic, and transformative. Here are a few pointers to note:

1. The role of women has evolved from visibility to accountability and measurable impact. Representation alone is no longer the goal. Women leaders are expected to deliver results, and not just be place holders.
2. The role of women has evolved from leaders within institutions to shapers of institutions. Women are increasingly not just managing departments or programmes, but they are redesigning how institutions work through their governance models, work cultures, innovative policies, and overarching priorities.

3. Women leaders are shifting the focus from individual excellence to collective advancement. The conversation is no longer personal success but collective impact.
4. Women are redefining power as something that is collaborative rather than controlling, inclusive rather than exclusive and purpose-driven rather than ego-driven.
5. Women leaders are scaling from community engagement to national influence and further unto global stewardship, increasingly operating across borders and shaping global conversations on education, health, governance, sustainability and development among others.

## **Conclusion**

One truth stands out clearly: **elevation in 2026 will not be accidental—it will be intentional.** Leading with purpose and clarity is about knowing why you lead, choosing what truly matters, and having the courage to act with focus and conviction. It is about translating values into decisions, vision into direction, and ambition into measurable impact. In a year already demanding bold leadership, purpose steadies us, and clarity propels us forward.

For the women leaders and change-makers in this room, this

moment is both an invitation and a responsibility. An invitation to reset priorities, to lead with authenticity, and to claim your space with confidence. It is also a responsibility to build pathways for others, to communicate with intention, and to shape institutions that endure beyond our tenure. If we commit to leading with purpose and clarity, then 2026 (and by extension, subsequent years) will not just be a year of progress—it will be a year of transformation. Let us rise with purpose, lead with clarity, and elevate not only ourselves, but every individual, system or community we are privileged to influence.

Thank you once again for this opportunity.

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**Vice-Chancellor**

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