



University of Venda
Creating future leaders

UNIVEN and CSPS Unite to Tackle GBV on Campus



UNIVEN, CSPS and Limpopo SAPS personnel pose for a group photo

On 15 September 2025, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) partnered with the Civil Secretariat for Police Service (CSPS) for a strategic engagement at the UNIVEN Student Parliament, focusing on combating Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) and improving campus safety. This event followed the recent tragic incident involving a UNIVEN student, Vhulondo Nevhukalanga who was allegedly stabbed to death by her boyfriend at one of UNIVEN-off campus accredited student residences. The gathering brought together university officials, law enforcement representatives, student leaders and civil society to discuss legislative frameworks, support mechanisms for survivors and collaborative approaches to creating a safer academic environment.



Mrs Uanda Ndou, UNIVEN Director of Human Resources during her opening and welcome remarks

Mrs Uanda Ndou, UNIVEN Director of Human Resources, welcomed attendees to the event, urging them to actively participate in addressing the critical issue of Gender-Based Violence.

She set the tone for a meaningful discussion and collaboration towards creating a safer university environment.



Mr Benjamin Ntuli, Chief Director of Intersectoral Coordination and Partnerships



Mr Madimetja Dolo, Civilian Secretariat for Police Service Director of Community Outreach Programme

When talking about the purpose of the day, Mr Benjamin Ntuli, Chief Director of Intersectoral Coordination and Partnerships, noted that 9.9% of women aged 18 and above have experienced sexual abuse and proposed a buddy system among students and dedicated personnel to handle GBV cases. While Mr Madimetja Dolo, Civilian Secretariat for Police Service director of Community Outreach Programme, discussed the challenge of Gender-Based Violence in South African communities, including university campuses highlighted the importance of collaboration between stakeholders, including universities, police, and student communities, to address GBV.

Combating Gender-Based Violence requires more than dialogue – it demands collaboration, accountability, and a united commitment to building a safer university community

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Ms Tshilidzi Makhado, Manager: Investigation and Liaison Officer



Colonel Baratang Maja from SAPS Limpopo



Mr Vusi Mokoena, UNIVEN SRC President

Mr Vusi Mokoena, the UNIVEN SRC President facilitated an open discussion on GBV with UNIVEN students. He shared a scenario where a student reported a case of rape, but the circumstances suggested that the accusation might be motivated by jealousy rather than actual non-consensual sex. Mokoena encouraged students to share their thoughts and opinions on the matter, asking them to consider whether the situation constituted rape or not. The discussion highlighted the complexities of GBV cases and the need for careful consideration and investigation. Students participated in the discussion, sharing their perspectives and insights on the issue.



Mr Takalani Ramaru, Deputy Director-General: CSPS

Mr Takalani Ramaru, Deputy Director-General: CSPS called on the University community to utilise its influence and research capacity to address GBV, encouraging students and academics to become ambassadors for GBV awareness and conduct research to identify root causes. He urged victims to report cases and seek assistance.



Mr Tsundzuka Hakamela, an ambassador of GBV at UNIVEN

Ms Tshilidzi Makhado, Manager: Investigation and Liaison Officer at UNIVEN, discussed challenges in reporting GBV cases on campus, encouraging students to report any violation and seek help. Mr Tsundzuka Hakamela, an ambassador of GBV at UNIVEN, highlighted the severity of GBV in South Africa, citing statistics such as 51% of women experiencing GBV and emphasised UNIVEN's zero-tolerance policy and efforts to support survivors.



Ms Keila Vilankulu, a Student Counsellor at UNIVEN's Disability Unit

Colonel Baratang Maja from SAPS Limpopo discussed the severity of GBV, calling for collective action to find preventative solutions and to support survivors. "We cannot come every time and talk about the statistics, let us stand up and do something against human rights violence," she said. Ms Keila Vilankulu, a Student Counsellor at UNIVEN's Disability Student Unit, highlighted challenges faced by GBV survivors, including fear and stigma, and advised students to "walk away" from red flag situations.

The discussion highlighted the complexities of GBV cases and the need for careful consideration and investigation



Mr Ndivhuwo Goliada, Manager: Student Governance at the University of Venda

Mr Ndivhuwo Goliada, Manager: Student Governance at the University of Venda, expressed his appreciation to the speakers and students who attended the event, thanking them for their participation. He said that he looks forward to continued collaboration and action towards creating a safer and more supportive University environment.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Dr Albert Barume's visit to UNIVEN



The guest speaker (centre, front row) poses with UNIVEN staff and external stakeholders.

The Ismail Mahomed Centre for Human and Peoples' Rights (IMCHPR) of the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, University of Venda (UNIVEN), in collaboration with the African Communities Resource Rights Alliance (ACRRA), hosted Dr Albert Barume, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, on

15 September 2025. He was accompanied to UNIVEN by his Chief of Staff, Ms Birgitte Feiring. Dr Barume's visit to UNIVEN was part of his regional mission to Southern Africa, during which he engaged with key stakeholders on critical issues, including resource governance, land rights, extractive industries, environmental justice, and the

protection of Indigenous Peoples' human rights in Africa.

While acknowledging the role that UNIVEN is playing in the struggle of Indigenous Peoples as a reason for the landmark visit, Dr Barume took the opportunity to raise awareness about the concept in his public lecture titled 'Understanding Indigenous Peoples as a

Human Rights Concept in Africa' delivered at the E2 Lecture room, UNIVEN. Later in the day, the UN Special Rapporteur met with high-level dignitaries of UNIVEN and guests at the Premier Hotel, to enhance the ongoing partnership activities with UNIVEN between ACRRA and the IMCHPR and explore further possibilities.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Dr Albert Barume's visit to UNIVEN continued...



Dr Albert K. Barume, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

In his insightful public lecture on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, Dr Barume offered a profoundly thought-provoking exploration of the concept of Indigenous Peoples in Africa. He explained that his first report as Special Rapporteur to the United Nations Human Rights Council, which he will present in Geneva next week, focuses on the recognition of Indigenous Peoples, a topic he believes is vital for Africa. "My argument is that if states do not understand what indigenous people mean, they are unlikely to provide protection," he stated.

Dr Barume distinguished between the word indigenous and the concept of indigenous peoples in international human rights law. While all Africans may be indigenous in the literal sense, not all are considered Indigenous Peoples in the human rights law sense. In his views, "when a group self-identifies as Indigenous peoples, they are making a statement: that we are a community whose culture, way of life, and livelihood have been demeaned, considered savage, and forced to disappear by dominant ways of life." He highlighted the psychological and social harm faced by these communities, from ridicule of their languages and clothing to the erosion of self-esteem in children, which often leads to high rates of substance abuse, homelessness, and marginalisation. Dr Barume also warned against confusing Indigenous identity with poverty, as Indigenous Peoples are victims of a unique human rights violation that affects both their mind and body. He reminded participants that protecting Indigenous Peoples is not about granting special privileges but ensuring equality and visibility for groups often rendered invisible within their societies. Drawing from decades of work with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, he emphasised that post-colonial Africa has perpetuated discrimination against nomadic and hunter-gatherer communities, who have generally self-identified as Indigenous Peoples in Africa. This development replicates the marginalisation of colonial times. Dr Barume concluded with an emphasis on the need to respect Indigenous Peoples' lifestyle.



Prof Tharien van der Walt, Deputy Dean, Teaching and Learning

When welcoming participants, the Deputy Dean of Teaching and Learning, Prof Tharien van der Walt who stood in for the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management,

Commerce and Law, Prof Modimowabarwa Kanyane, highlighted the privilege of hosting an international figure from the UN who is one of the leading minds in the field of human rights law and emphasised the significance of the day's lecture on the mandate and collaborative engagement on Indigenous Peoples' Rights. Prof van der Walt noted that the visit bridged academic learning with real-world experience and encouraged students and guests to engage meaningfully with the discussion.



Prof Ademola Oluborode Jegede, Director of the IMCHPR

The Director of the IMCHPR, introduced Dr Albert Barume, highlighting his exceptional career and historic appointment as the first African to serve as UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples since the mandate's creation 25 years ago. Dr Barume was appointed in December 2024. Prof Jegede explained that the distinguishing career of the guest speaker includes over 25 years of experience in the field of human rights law at national, regional, and international levels, his leadership in the adoption of the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, his academic contributions through teaching and publications, and his service as a senior expert within the global legal and human rights organisations. Following the presentation of Dr Barume, there was a question-and-answer session involving participants at the public lecture.



Some participants, asking questions and making comments during the event



Mr Botwe Krazyia, Chief Operating Officer, UNIVEN

Mr Botwe Krazyia, UNIVEN's Chief Operating Officer (COO), underscored the vital role of UNIVEN in providing skills, preserving knowledge and tradition, and operating sustainably while meeting the demands of communities, government, and students.



Dr Thivhusiwi Sikhitha, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mercantile and Private Law

While rounding up Dr Thivhusiwi Sikhitha, thanked the Special Rapporteur for his time and insightful presentation, and the participants for making the session quite engaging.

At the high-level management meeting, there were robust discussions around existing and possible future collaborative engagements on Indigenous Peoples' rights issues.



Mr Botwe Krazyia, Chief Operating Officer, UNIVEN

Mr Botwe Krazyia, UNIVEN's Chief Operating Officer (COO), underscored the vital role of UNIVEN in providing skills, preserving knowledge and tradition, and operating sustainably while meeting the demands of communities, government, and students.

Hence, the UNIVEN is committed to social responsibility, one health, and the growth of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) programmes. He highlighted UNIVEN's belief that centres and institutes have a significant place in contributing to the role of the university. Mr Krazyia hinted at the ongoing plan to launch Centres and Institutes while reaffirming the executive management's support for the work of the IMCHPR.



Dr Albert K. Barume, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Dr Barume took the audience through the mandate and collaborative engagement on Indigenous rights. He explained that the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is structured into four main areas: thematic reports, country visits, communications and complaints, and capacity building. He highlighted the growing challenges Indigenous peoples face, including land pressure from extractive projects, climate change policies, and negative public perceptions.

On collaboration, Dr Barume emphasised the importance of academic partnerships to support research, train students, and strengthen international advocacy. He mentioned his plan to have a research and advocacy hub in Africa during his tenure as the UN Special Rapporteur so that the expertise of scholars can be engaged more on the issues related to his mandate. He also revealed plans to write a report on violations of Indigenous women's reproductive rights, calling for collaboration with institutions specialising in the subject and other critical issues around transition minerals as they affect Indigenous Peoples.



The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Dr Albert Barume's visit to UNIVEN continued...



From left to right: Ms Birgitte Feiring, Dr Albert Barume, Prof Ademola Jegede, Mr Botwe Kraziya and Dr Crystal Mokoena

While presenting the purpose of the meeting, Prof Jegede indicated the session was necessary to demonstrate the alignment of the University /especially the Centre, to be informed by about the mandate and activities of the Special Rapporteur; to review the progress on initiatives that have been taken in conjunction with ACCRA regarding indigenous Peoples; and to encourage cross-pollination of ideas from diverse perspectives explore new opportunities for future collaboration



Adv Lawrence Malenge, Lecturer, Department of Public Law

Following the presentation of Prof Jegede on the Memorandum of Understanding between UNIVEN, ACCRA, and Jamma, and the expression of readiness of the IMCHPR to coordinate and further existing and future partnerships and collaborations, the floor was open for comments by participants. In kickstarting the session, Advocate Malenge, who is part of the team put together by the IMCHPR to support strategic litigation involving the Khoisan community in Fishhoek, Cape Town, shared the outcome of consultation, held with Khoisan representatives, during which significant cultural and heritage sites were observed, including ancient art, fish traps, and hunting beds. Adv Marange emphasised that the IMCHPR is now assisting the community with strategic litigation towards recognising and protecting their heritage and cultural rights.



Ms Annette Lansink, Research Associate, Ismail Mahomed Centre for Human and Peoples' Rights

Ms Annette Lansink shared her insights on the ongoing research initiatives at the IMCHPR. The IMCHPR is researching Indigenous Peoples, focusing on coloniality, decolonisation, inclusivity, indigenous knowledge systems and climate solutions and land rights in the context of climate change and climate justice. She also spoke about the relationship of the Centre with a group of scholars working on commentaries on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



Dr Seane Mabitsela, Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Sciences

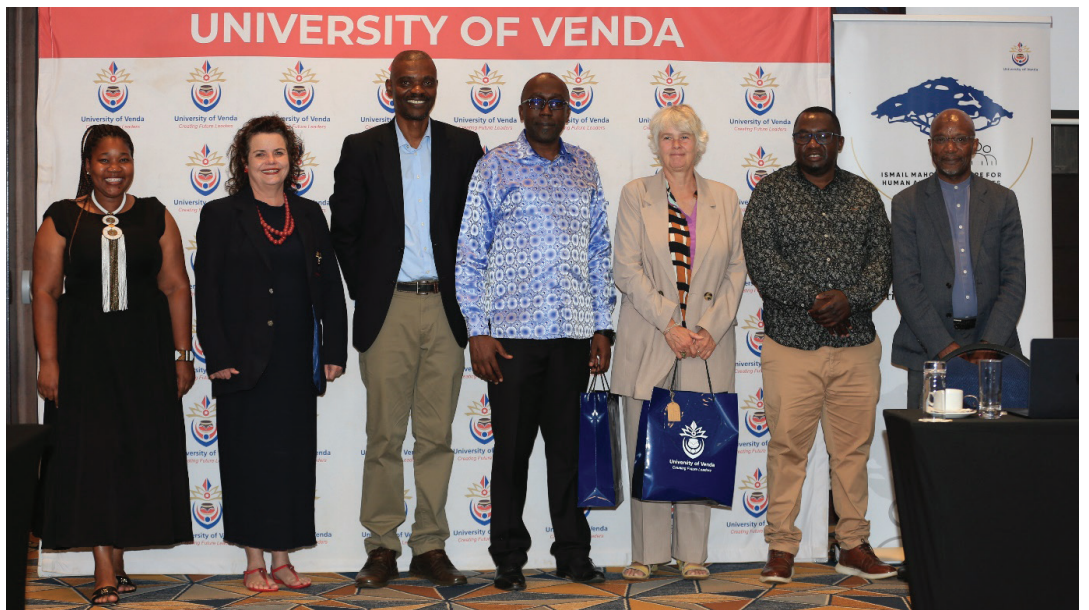
Dr Seane, a historian, connected his ongoing research to discussions at the meeting by referring to a European Union-funded collaborative project on slavery, a project still at the planning stage, which intends to investigate the impact of Dutch activities on the rights of marginalised peoples in South Africa.

The project involves universities, including UNIVEN and the University of Northwest, with Dr Seane and Prof Jegede of the IMCHPR as project participants.



Hosi Pheni Ngove, Chairperson, Limpopo House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders

Hosi Pheni expressed that the correct name for the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders is the Provincial House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders, as it is not meant only for Traditional Leaders. He emphasised the importance of this distinction as part of the journey towards inclusivity and decolonisation of the status quo. Hosi Pheni extended full support to the rights of Indigenous Peoples, urging collaboration to break the existing system that has, since democracy's advent in 1994, been treating Indigenous Peoples as subhuman. He indicated that his office is available to collaborate on research and advocacy to improve the status quo.



UNIVEN held Women in Science Dialogue under the Theme - 'Breaking Traditional Barriers'



Panelists during the women in science dialogue session



Dr Mpelegeng Bvumbi, Senior Lecturer in Chemistry delivered the keynote motivation

The University of Venda (UNIVEN), through the Green Technology Confucius Institute (GTICI) in collaboration with the Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture, hosted a Women in Science Dialogue on 02 September 2025 at the GTCI building. The dialogue formed part of the last events of the Science Week celebrations, which commenced on 04 August 2025. The main goal of the dialogue was to promote the exchange of insights among women regarding strategies and methods for achieving Gender Equality in Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI), while also contributing to progress on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5. During the opening and welcoming remarks, GTCI Chinese Language Teacher Ms Zhang Duo encouraged attendees to actively engage with the panellists in order to gain more knowledge around the theme.

During her presentation, Dr Mpelegeng Bvumbi, Senior Lecturer in Chemistry, stated that for decades, science in South Africa was not accessible to all, even to those who were determined and aspired to become scientists. Women, in particular, have frequently been discouraged from pursuing careers in science, with messages suggesting that the field is not meant for them. She highlighted that postgraduate female students continue to experience inequalities such as funding, underrepresentation in leadership roles, and unconscious bias within research environments. Dr Bvumbi emphasised that barriers are not permanent and breaking them requires turning obstacles into stepping stones. She made emphasis with reference to successful women in South Africa who broke barriers in science, including others, who graduated from the University of Venda.

The dialogue reinforced that while women in science continue to face challenges, obstacles can become stepping stones toward equality and leadership in STEM

barriers and obstacles she encountered, her successful completion of studies demonstrates that anyone can achieve their academic goals.



Ms Tshavhungwe, holding the microphone, and Dr Anza Ramabulana-Mhlongo formed part of the panel

Dr Anza Ramabulana-Mhlongo and Ms Vuhwavo Tshavhungwe also shared the challenges they face daily as women in the scientific field. "The barriers faced by women scientists, ranging from gender bias to funding disparities, are profoundly disheartening. However, it is essential to recognise how inclusivity, mentorship, and policy changes can drive progress," said Dr Ramabulana-Mhlongo. Ms Tshavhungwe added that, as a young scientist, navigating pervasive gender biases and systemic barriers in a predominantly male environment can be quite frustrating. "Women often grapple with implicit biases that undermine their authority and expertise," she emphasised, highlighting the need for continued efforts towards equality in the field of science.



Ms Mulalo Marandela gave a vote of thanks

When giving a vote of thanks, Ms Mulalo Marandela expressed her gratitude to the panel speakers. "When each one of them was talking about their stories, you could tell it was not easy, but they kept on pushing," she said. In her conclusion, Ms Marandela stated that she was inspired by all the women who have worked hard to pave their way, adding that one day she hopes to hear more women's stories and see their names celebrated widely, even in their absence, because their impact would be that great.



Dr Azwindini Maphiri, Senior Lecturer in Mathematics encouraged young women to break barriers towards success

Dr Azwindini Maphiri, Senior Lecturer in Mathematics, highlighted that despite advancements, barriers in science persist. Some are external, such as stereotypes and underrepresentation, while others are internal, like the voice that whispers, "Perhaps I don't belong here." These barriers, she emphasised, are meant to be challenged, questioned, and ultimately dismantled. "You must claim space where others may not expect you,"



Dr Sophie Mulaudzi, Senior Lecturer in Physics took to stage to encourage young women in science

Dr Sophie Mulaudzi, a Senior Lecturer in Physics, shared her experiences regarding the challenges she faced while managing her responsibilities as a mother, wife, employee, and student. She inspired the students by asserting that, despite the numerous



Group Photo of women in science

UNIVEN Hosts Inspiring Five-Day Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law Career Expo in Partnership with Standard Bank



University of Venda students participating in the third day of the exhibition programme

The University of Venda (UNIVEN), in partnership with Standard Bank, recently hosted a dynamic and empowering five-day Career Exhibition under the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law. The event which took place at UNIVEN Auditorium brought together students, alumni, industry professionals, and a range of public and private sector organisations in an effort to guide and inspire students while bridging the gap between academic study and real-world employment.



Mr Oatthotse, Madito, Manager: Economic Analysis and Trade Monitoring at the International Trade Administration Commission (ITAC), during his engagement at the University of Venda

Mr Oatthotse, Madito, Manager: Economic Analysis and Trade Monitoring at the International Trade Administration Commission (ITAC), during his engagement at the University of Venda



Mr Gilbert Madalane, Employee Value Banking Manager of Standard Bank Limpopo North

Standard Bank, as a leading partner for the event, this weeklong event offered career guidance, financial education, and recruitment information to students in various fields. Standard bank was represented by Mr Gilbert Madalane, Employee Value Banking Manager of Standard Bank Limpopo North, who emphasised the importance of empowering students to become employable and workplace ready.

"We came here to help students understand what to expect in the workplace, how to conduct themselves professionally, and how to apply for jobs at Standard Bank."

The consistent presence of Standard Bank throughout the expo demonstrated its strong commitment to youth development and graduate employment. Students had the opportunity to ask questions, engage in one-on-one sessions, and learn how to prepare for professional opportunities in banking and finance. The Standard Bank's Head Office participated on day four and day five. Mr Mameela Siziba, Head of Talent Acquisition for Personal Client Coverage, overseeing all national physical branches, Voice branch, Money Management, and Advisory divisions, led the bank's engagement with students on 11 and 12 September 2025.

Ms Siziba conducted presentations and engaged in direct interactions with attendees. The Standard Bank representatives provided final-year students with QR code access to their graduate programme portal, enabling students to register their information and explore current career opportunities within the organisation.

This participation represented a valuable connection between the university's graduating students and one of South Africa's leading financial institutions, offering direct pathways to potential employment opportunities in the banking sector.

A key highlight of the expo was the return of UNIVEN alumni who shared their career journeys to motivate current students. Among them was Clarence Mangena, popularly known as Hitboss, a former UNIVEN student who is now the CEO of a mining and energy law firm. His inspiring story from humble beginnings to leading a company left a lasting impact on attendees, proving that hard work and focus truly pay off.

Throughout the week, students from the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law participated in panel discussions, Question and Answer sessions, interactive games, and networking activities. Their active involvement showcased the enthusiasm and readiness of UNIVEN students to take charge of their futures.

The event featured participation from a wide range of organisations including: Legal Aid South Africa, International Trade Administration Commission (ITAC), South African National Defence Force (SANDF), Auditor-General South Africa (AGSA), MMG (Mining company), The Hawks (Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation), The Competition Commission of South Africa, and Limpopo Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Limpopo Tourism Agency (LTA), Public Service Commission (PSC), just to name a few.



Mr Vusi Mokoena, SRC President of the University of Venda, during the exhibition engagement

The Career Exhibition showcased UNIVEN's commitment to empowering students with knowledge, networks, and opportunities—bridging the gap between academic study and the world of work

These organisations brought valuable insights into various career pathways and shared information about graduate programmes, cadetships, internship opportunities, and commission-based roles. They also guided students on ethical conduct, regulatory careers, law enforcement, economic justice, and public service.

From law and finance to government, mining, and auditing, students were exposed to a rich variety of professional options, all while gaining direct access to the people and institutions shaping South Africa's economic and legal landscape.

The successful hosting of this Career Expo highlighted the power of collaboration between universities and the professional world. UNIVEN continues to be a leading force in preparing its students for the challenges and opportunities of the modern workplace, ensuring that they are not only academically qualified but also career ready.



University of Venda students attentively engaging with the exhibition presentation

UNIVEN Charts its Future in 2026–2030 Strategic Planning Session



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) recently took a decisive step in shaping its future when it hosted a two-day strategic planning session on 18–19 September 2025 at Park Hotel, Mokopane. The session finalised the 2026–2030 Institutional Strategic Plan and the 2026 Annual Performance Plan, while refining divisional operational plans to ensure the University is ready to implement its vision in the 2026 academic year.

Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni, officially opened the session by outlining its purpose, emphasising alignment with UNIVEN's mission of societal relevance, academic excellence, and research impact. He highlighted the importance of strategies such as innovative teaching and learning, entrepreneurship, research, digital transformation, and financial sustainability. Prof Nthambeleni confirmed the unanimous Council approval of the 2026–2030 Strategic Plan and 2026 APP, encouraged senior managers to engage their respective teams with the approved documents, and called for collaboration, creativity, and commitment as UNIVEN advances toward Vision 2040.



Prof Nthambeleni's presentation on the 2026–2030 Strategic Plan outlined the roadmap toward Vision 2040, anchored in four strategic thrusts: student-centeredness; research, innovation, and entrepreneurship; people, health, and environment; and internationalisation and partnerships. Ten key outcomes focus on employability, digital transformation, research excellence, financial sustainability, inclusivity, well-being, environmental stewardship, and global standing. Informed by a SWOT analysis, the strategy leverages UNIVEN's strengths, such as Indigenous Knowledge Systems and its location in the UNESCO designated Vhembe Biosphere Reserve, while addressing weaknesses like low postgraduate recruitment and siloed research. The plan calls for diversification and an entrepreneurial culture to mitigate threats like financial constraints and technological disruption.

His second presentation on the 2026 APP explained how the Strategic Plan will be translated into measurable annual objectives, with ministerially approved targets aligned to DHET requirements and council-controlled

targets advancing transformation. Key priorities include improving throughput and graduation rates, expanding online learning, increasing research outputs, developing entrepreneurial ventures, diversifying revenue, and enhancing inclusivity, wellness, green initiatives, and global collaborations.

Dr Mutshinyalo Ratombo, Director of Strategy and Risk, outlined UNIVEN's approach to aligning performance reporting with the Strategic Plan and APP through a Theory of Change framework and coordinated risk management. Key focus areas include student success, research excellence, entrepreneurship, and partnerships, with flagship projects such as satellite campuses, smart villages, and centres of excellence.

Prof Barwa Kanyane, on behalf of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) Teaching and Learning, emphasised a student-centred approach to teaching and learning, calling for psychosocial support, problem-based learning, and design thinking. He urged collective effort to ensure students graduate on time with industry-relevant skills, highlighting hybrid learning, digital readiness, and staff well-being as key enablers.

Adv Rolien Roos, also representing the DVC Teaching and Learning, stressed that UNIVEN has a limited three-to-four-year window to equip students with durable skills. Using the metaphor of a restaurant, she highlighted the importance of a relevant programme mix, cutting-edge curriculum, and a supportive student experience. She called for holistic academic and psychosocial support and reaffirmed that the next five years will focus on teamwork, staff development, and creating a supportive teaching and learning ecosystem.

Acting DVC Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Joseph Francis, presented a strategy positioning UNIVEN as a research-

buoyant, entrepreneurial university driving socio-economic transformation. Six pillars guide this strategy: research capacity, innovation and knowledge sovereignty, infrastructure and visibility, science for society, governance and ethics, and postgraduate studies. The plan integrates entrepreneurship into teaching, research, and community engagement to produce innovators and job creators.

Ms Sue Govender presented a R1.95 billion Infrastructure Plan (2025–2030) designed to support Vision 2040 through optimised space use, modernised assets, and green and digital principles. The plan includes hybrid learning spaces, innovation hubs, housing, and sustainability projects governed by clear oversight frameworks.

HR Director, Mrs Uanda Ndou, outlined the 2026–2030 Human Resources Strategy, addressing slow recruitment, weak HR technology, and succession planning gaps. It sets 12 objectives focused on transformation, performance culture, talent acquisition, technology adoption, and staff development, aligning HR processes with institutional goals and global competitiveness.

Acting CFO, Mrs Mavis Madzhie, presented the draft Financial Sustainability Strategy, focusing on revenue growth through academic innovation, research commercialisation, and commercial services, cost control, ROI maximisation, and growing long-term reserves. She emphasised that successful implementation would require university-wide participation and continuous monitoring.

University Registrar, Dr Joel Baloyi, presented the Governance Maturity Assessment, noting strengths but urging action to improve value generation, strategy execution, digitalisation, and Council's stakeholder engagement role to sharpen accountability and resilience.

The 2026–2030 Strategic Plan positions UNIVEN for societal relevance, academic excellence, and research impact—advancing boldly toward Vision 2040

The 2026–2030 Strategic Plan sets UNIVEN firmly on course toward Vision 2040

UNIVEN Charts its Future in 2026–2030 Strategic Planning Session continued...



Day two featured a virtual keynote address from Dr Vuyisile Phehane from the University of Johannesburg, which underscored the urgent need for universities to diversify income beyond strained government subsidies and student fees, proposing a wholly-owned technology holding company to commercialise intellectual property (IP) and generate third-stream revenue through licensing, spin-outs, start-ups, short learning programmes, and strategic partnerships. Such a model, anchored in robust governance, clear mandates, and enabling policies, would mitigate institutional risks while fostering entrepreneurship, innovation, and socio-economic impact. With strong institutional support, aligned vision, access to funding, and supportive government frameworks, UNIVEN can transform its intellectual assets into sustainable revenue, industry collaboration, societal benefit, and a strengthened reputation as a university of choice.

“Universities must move beyond subsidies and fees by transforming intellectual property into innovation, revenue, and societal impact.”

Dr Vuyisile Phehane



Another keynote speaker was Prof Joey Chifamba, a globally recognised nanopharmacist and drug development expert with over 30 years of international academic and industry experience. He emphasised in his presentation that universities must evolve into entrepreneurial ecosystems that translate research into market-ready innovations. He highlighted that in today's knowledge economy, intangible assets such as intellectual property and data drive value creation, positioning universities to lead through collaborative models like the Triple and Quadruple Helix, which link academia, industry, government, and society. Stressing the importance of translational research in overcoming the “valley of death” where promising ideas fail, he showcased the RDCI model and the ATRIC BioSciences case study as examples of how preparation, top-down innovation, user-driven prototyping, and strategic partnerships can bridge commercialisation gaps. Prof Chifamba called for a reimagining of institutional missions, infrastructure, and curricula to embed goal-driven, multidisciplinary approaches that anticipate regulatory demands and convert research into impactful goods and services, ultimately delivering both public value and economic growth. He has recently been appointed Adjunct Professor at the University of Venda, while his primary residence remains at the University of Zimbabwe.

Adv Roos reported on progress with the Radisson June 2025 Catch-Up Plan, focusing on improving success rates, throughput, and programme reviews to strengthen teaching and learning outcomes. Prof Francis also presented an analysis of underperformed KPIs, highlighting low student throughput, delayed graduations, and research underperformance, recommending academic

support, research incentives, and streamlined administration.

Dr Patience Mativandelela presented the 2026 Divisional Operational Plan, a roadmap linking planning, budgeting, monitoring, and quarterly reporting to ensure alignment with the Strategic Plan and APP.

Mrs Madzhie also presented the 2026 Draft Budget, projecting modest enrolment growth, tuition and residence fee increases, and a 10.3% contribution from third-stream income. Spending will prioritise cost efficiency, infrastructure upgrades, and teaching capacity expansion.

Mrs Beauty Mutheiwana, Director of Supply Chain Management and Expenditure, reviewed 2025 procurement successes and challenges and introduced the 2026 Procurement Plan, focused on early planning, governance, and compliance, with new policies aligned to SANS ISO 10845 and NEC4 standards to support research, infrastructure, and sustainability.

The session concluded with a recap by Prof Modimowabarwa Kanyane, who emphasised priorities including staff establishment expansion, commercialisation of Intellectual Property, and integrated planning, budgeting, monitoring, and reporting.

Prof Nthambeleni's closing remarks underscored UNIVEN's commitment to building a responsive, future-ready institution, thanked participants and guest speakers, and called for cascading the Strategic Plan and APP to all staff to ensure shared understanding.

By the end of the two-day session, UNIVEN had reaffirmed its commitment to innovation in teaching, excellence in research, student success, financial resilience, and sound governance, positioning the University to make a lasting impact in the years ahead.

We would like to hear from you!

Nendila is your communication channel.

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