

# Rector's speech

## Doctoral Awards Ceremony

### Rector Gunnar Bovim's speech

Doctoral Awards Ceremony 17 November 2017,  
The Aula of the Main Administration Building, NTNU

To our new doctoral graduates and honorary doctors, our guests, colleagues and friends.

Congratulations! Today, we are celebrating 187 new doctoral graduates from NTNU.

Soon you will receive your doctoral diploma as tangible evidence of what you have achieved. There are no shortcuts to a doctorate. It means hard work. It also means having ambitions, having a goal, and never losing sight of that goal. In the words above the entrance to the library: *Per aspera ad astra* – through difficulties to the stars.

NTNU also has ambitious goals. In our vision, we sum up the most ambitious of them all: Knowledge for a better world.

This is not just a vision to make us look good. This is a guide for everything we do. I would go as far as saying it's a shared dedication. Wherever we are, we will contribute!

This autumn, we are revising our strategy. It must be adapted to the changes both within NTNU and in our society. But our vision of "Knowledge for a Better World" stands firm. *No one* at NTNU has said they want to change it. That tells us more than anything else about our pride and dedication to our vision.

Our vision focuses on knowledge and the potential that knowledge gives us to make changes. As new doctoral graduates, you know better than many others the power that knowledge brings. As we write in our strategy: Knowledge gives people opportunities and authority. It is a basis for making good choices, for influencing and

changing. Knowledge inspires and challenges. It changes attitudes, mindsets, and the way we see the world.

No people on Earth have ever been as privileged as we are, in our peaceful and prosperous society. That gives us an added duty to use the knowledge we are creating to make the world a better place for more people.

Through the United Nations, the world has agreed on 17 Sustainable Development Goals. NTNU will help to make these goals a reality. Our duty is to contribute to a development where we meet the needs of people living today without destroying the potential of future generations to meet their own needs.

To create sustainable development, the world community must work in several areas, such as climate and the environment, the economy, and social conditions.

NTNU has excellent research communities in all these areas. Our ambition is to be an important participant in society, contributing research-based knowledge to good political decisions both nationally and internationally.

We also make high demands on ourselves in the future development of a new NTNU campus: It must be a model of sustainable design and use for tomorrow's public buildings in Norway.

Research, education and innovation are vital to develop a sustainable society for future generations. Science provides the facts that politicians need to make wise decisions. And we urgently need those decisions!

We urge politicians to take note of the knowledge that is already available, and to make some important right choices. Within energy and climate, we urge four specific actions:

- Use zero-emission mobility as the basis for restructuring the transport sector!
- Stimulate development of sustainable competitive industry!
- Invest in electrification, digitization and greater energy efficiency!
- Decarbonize fossil energy sources!

Many people are sceptical about whether the world community will succeed in achieving the sustainability goals. We know that progress is slow – far too slow. But we cannot afford to stop trying.

There are many different paths to the goal. Researchers at the Department of Psychology are exploring whether computer games could have positive effects on our attitudes, habits and environmental choices. Knowledge and creativity are a good combination when attitudes and behaviours need to be changed.

Because sustainability is also about the choices we make as individuals, every day. We who work or study at NTNU are important role models. That brings responsibility! Through our priorities, we show that we mean what we say; through our concrete

actions in everyday life – such as our consumption, energy and transport solutions, creating an inclusive society, and equal opportunity.

Dear new doctors. The knowledge you have gained and shared with society can make a difference. In many ways, you are managing the knowledge that will decide what tomorrow's society will look like. Your doctoral degree will give more authority to the views that you communicate. Use that authority wisely.

And above all – make sure it is in line with our vision: Knowledge for a better world.