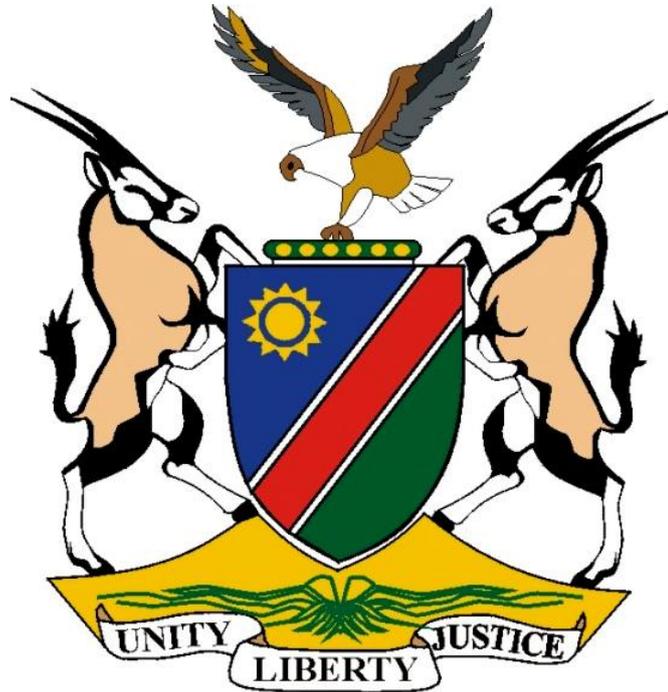


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



STATEMENT BY HON. TJEKERO TWEYA

DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

AT

**THE NAMIBIA BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTRE BUSINESS IDEA
COMPETITION**

POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA

19 MAY 2010

The Director of Ceremonies

The Rector of Polytechnic of Namibia: Dr. Tjama Tjivikua

Director: Incubation Services: Dr. Christian Toelg

Manager: Innovation: Ms Angelica Bergmann

It is a pleasure for me to be here at the Polytechnic of Namibia for the award ceremony of the BizScribe business idea competition that the Namibia Business Innovation Centre conducted over the last three months. I commend the Polytechnic of Namibia for taking the initiative in developing the concept of the “**Namibia Business Innovation Centre**” and pursuing its implementation. I am honoured to present some results of this work.

We are just setting off on the road of industrialization in Namibia. But we do so in a globalized system of production and exchange. To be able to compete in this system we must continuously innovate. Innovate both our production system as well as the processes required for the supply of goods and services.

Innovation is a popular term, you hear it everywhere and every product or service comes along with the label “innovative”. So what does this term “innovation” really mean?

It has two essential parts: The first one is an idea for something new that has not been done before. It could be an idea for a new product, a new service, an improvement in production, or even a better way to communicate. But at this point, all we have is an invention and at most we could file for a patent; what transforms this idea into an innovation is if we take the next step and put it into practice, this is the second part of innovation.

This implies that the idea has to be feasible in the first place, that is I have to be able to realize it either with known technologies, maybe also with some

additional research. If I have an idea for a new product, but there is no way to build it, innovation does not take place.

Let me give you an example: You will all remember the time when we used audio tapes to listen to music.

But who of you has bought one recently? Why not? What happened? Somebody had an idea for a disk that could hold much more information than a tape and could be read using a laser. Even better, the information on that disk was digital, not analogue as with magnetic tapes and therefore provided much better audio quality.

So was this idea feasible? Well, not right away. But the path to realizing it was clear to the inventors. They had to do research on how to burn a CD to store the bits, invent small lasers and photo diodes to read the CD, the mechanics for the head and for spinning the disk and so on. But they overcame these challenges and today we use CDs mostly. Tapes almost disappeared. And increasingly, we download music onto cell phones and other devices, so maybe even the CD will disappear. This is what we call disruptive innovation. In a similar manner DVDs replaced video tapes, email is replacing the fax machine. There are many more examples.

Why is innovation so important? Why do we need it here in Namibia? Without innovation we cannot compete globally and in the long term not even in Namibia. If our companies don't go outside of Namibia and compete there, the competition will come here. We need products that are better and cheaper than those of the competition, we need services that are more efficient and customer friendly than others.

How do we get there? I see four key elements: One important part is **technology**. Technology helps us manufacture goods more efficiently and at a lower cost. It helps us with new features for products. We don't have to develop all of it ourselves. But we can acquire existing technologies and improve on them for what is needed to achieve innovation. Using open source software for example, we can leverage the skills of a global

community of developers and achieve results quickly. Research and development play a key role here, as do international partnerships.

To be able to research and develop new technologies requires people with the right skills and knowledge. Education, especially tertiary education, is therefore a second key ingredient. If you look at the regions in the world where the most innovative companies were founded, you find that these innovative clusters have universities as a focal point. They all started with researchers and graduates from a university going out and commercializing their ideas and technologies but keeping close contact to their academic colleagues. Go to any science park and you will find a university close by, often several.

Thirdly, we need creative people that have ideas and the drive to put them into practice. You remember these were the two parts of innovation. The best ideas come from young people. Look at Nobel Prize winners, in most cases they made their discoveries in their twenties. To nourish ideas, we have to have an open culture where people exchange ideas and discuss freely.

Fourth, we need to connect people and institutions. Entrepreneurs need staff to build their companies, their suppliers, their customers, their financing. Researchers need developers and entrepreneurs to commercialize their ideas and funding support from government and private sector to be able to conduct research. Large companies need innovative solutions to address challenges they face, to innovate their own products and services, and to expand their business into new areas. Government needs solutions to provide efficient services to all citizens and thriving private businesses to provide employment and stable tax income. The public is looking to all stakeholders mentioned for innovative products and services.

In short therefore and in the context of our economy, I can simplify these definitions and refers to a knowledge based economy as a situation where value is increasingly valued as coming from the generation of new ideas as well as development of innovative software, services and relationships.

My task here is to share with you how innovation can play a role in bringing about a successful story to the economic life and how Namibia can ensure bringing about a goal of becoming a Knowledge economy as envisaged in Vision 2030.

During 2003 at the Policy Roundtable on discussing the establishment of a Namibia National Centre for Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Technology, the then Minister of Education now the Prime Minister Nahas Angula indicated in one sentence the objective of entrenching knowledge economy in Namibia. He said that **“Knowledge is the key to Poverty Reduction in Namibia”**

This basically means that the only way to fight poverty is to create wealth. And wealth can only be created if there is concerted effort in ensuring growth in knowledge-based industries or sectors.

These sectors are mainly value added oriented sectors in terms of its production process and may include the following

- Agro-processing, commercial farming and fisheries
- Business, financial and related services
- Manufacturing and materials
- Mineral Resources, metallurgy and minerals processing
- Energy, environment and waste management
- Forestry
- Tourism
- Biotechnology, Chemistry and Pharmacy
- Transport.
- ICT Software development and Web Design
- Electronics and automated products

Technological change is one of the most important sources of change in the economy. The capacity for science and technology in Namibia is not been adequately translated into innovative and dynamic business

organisation or enterprise. The economy remains largely dependent on natural resources, primary processing and manufacturing and, for the most part, on imported technologies.

Namibia needs to improve its international competitiveness. With the increasing impact of globalisation on business, the scope for competition is no longer limited by national boundaries or by the definition of a particular industrial sector. This implies, among other things, that it has become imperative to develop and maintain knowledge and skills as assets that can lead to the development and successful commercialisation of a wide variety of products and services that meet the demands of international markets. In his State of the Nation Address, President Pohamba also highlighted the need to penetrate global markets more deeply, increase savings levels, expand black economic empowerment and grow small and medium enterprises in order to address present and future economic challenges.

Competitiveness at the level of the enterprise is of utmost importance. In the industrial economy, access to cheap raw materials, access to cheap unskilled labour, access to proprietary production technology and privileged access to markets were driving competitiveness. New drivers that are related to customer value have emerged in the knowledge era. These include the ownership of designs and brands, the excellence of marketing skills and a focus on consumer demands. Smart production processes are vital. Management of technology, innovation and information have also emerged as key requirements for success in the Vision 2030 oriented enterprise.

Economic growth and international competitiveness are increasingly dependent on the generation and transfer of knowledge and technology. Research underpins economic growth and competitiveness by advancing knowledge and skills that sustain innovation and help solve problems for industry and business.

The Namibia Business Innovation Centre serves as a platform to bring all players together to enable communication and exchange of ideas between

them. Today's event is an example. We have young entrepreneurs and their ideas, we have an audience of students, researchers, business professionals, government representatives and interested public.

We are honouring all 33 participants who submitted their business ideas. Our country needs ideas such as yours and people such as yourselves to make these ideas reality. I hope you will pursue your ideas and start businesses that grow and provide income to you and your employees. Yes, I challenge you to take your ideas and convert them into innovations for Namibia.

I thank you

Awards

I would now like to present the awards to our entrepreneurs.

The Business idea and Business Plan competition was started in 2008 to encourage young Namibians to start thinking about Entrepreneurship. To expect the Government to provide jobs for all educated youth is not only unrealistic, it is also unfair. The progress of a nation is measured by economic stability and this can come about not only through measures put in place by the government, but also through private businesses. Therefore, to ensure that unemployment does not overtake any development that can take place in the country, the Polytechnic of Namibia started the two competitions mentioned above.

The 2008-2009 competition had about ten participants, but this year there was tremendous interest in the competition and there were 50 participants who registered from Polytechnic, UNAM and other colleges. The six winners were selected out a diverse range of Business ideas for the following reasons: They are simple, they are practical, they are well thought out, they are in keeping with the needs of the Namibian nation and they are original.

Namibia Business Innovation Centre would like to thank Leo for sponsoring some of the awards. In announcing the winners, I would like to start with the winners placed fourth and fifth. I ask them to come up to the podium together to receive their award. They will receive

- The award certificate
- A guaranteed place in the Namibia Business Innovation Centre Market Research and Business Planning Workshops starting 3 June this year
- A T-Shirt sponsored by Leo

The winners are

Place 5: ErRand RuNninG Services, Beatrix Sibeso (BTech Human Resource Management) and Immanual Hauwanga (BTech of Marketing)

and

Place 4: Bubu's Company Twitwies, Sonia Ndjambula (Bachelor of Business Administration)

For the winners of prizes 1 to 3,

I will announce the winner and kindly ask you to come up to the podium

I will then give a brief summary of your business idea and hand you the award.

After you receive the award, please tell us briefly what motivated you in participating in the event and if you would like to start a business based on your idea.

All of the top three winners will receive

- an award certificate
- a guaranteed place in the Namibia Business Innovation Centre Market Research and Business Planning Workshops starting 3 June this year
- a 3G USB adapter sponsored by Leo
- the Namibia Business Innovation Centre Shirt
- and prize money

The third prize with prize money in the amount of N\$1,500 goes to

**iTOURNam: Mobile/Web Portal Access Provision for Tourist Information
Pepukai Colin Mushanyuki Bishi(Masters in Information Technology,
Polytechnic of Namibia)**

A Mobile/Web portal for tourist information is a one stop access point for tourist information on mobile phones and internet, essentially providing information on points of interest and allowing tourist to make booking, companies to showcase their products promoted through an online marketing strategy. The tourism sector is an important part of the Namibia economy. There exist vast untapped opportunities as far as online marketing of products and services, such as, booking accommodation at hotels which can be made available via internet and mobile phones. It is interesting to note is that most tourist websites are outdated and don't provide tourists information to make their visit convenient and pleasurable. The student proposes a one stop mobile and web portal to access a platform for tourist information. All of the existing tourist sites do not implement online marketing and have no know-how of technology, such as, Ad servers which allow companies to have their products to be advertised on other websites. This portal will implement online marketing strategies to improve its portal ranking on search engines, ultimately ensuring in the long run that the website will be so popular that everyone in tourism and related businesses would want to advertise for a fee. The usefulness of our portal for tourists, which is called iTOURNam is that tourists will not need to go around searching for sites of interest or information on reservations or bookings to hotels, for example. Operators in tourism, such as, lodges and car rental companies can actually showcase what is available at any given moment through a system where they will subscribe to this site for free.

[handing over of award]

[statement of the winner]

The second prize with prize money in the amount of N\$3,000 goes to

GUINEA FOWL ENTERPRISE Tshwenyego Tamuhla (Btech Human Resources Management, Polytechnic of Namibia)

Guinea fowl will be mainly raised for their gamey flavoured meat which is not there in all poultry production in Namibia market. The meat of a young guinea is tender and of especially fine flavour, resembling that of wild game. The additional creative value of guinea fowl production can also be the fashioning of ornaments from them, such as provision of their feathers for beauty products that can be used by models. Guinea fowl can be given natural feeds like maize to retain the gamey flavour. This adds to the marketing advantage since some consumers want birds raised with no artificial feeds in the diet. In addition, incubators can be designed to increase the production of eggs that can be hatched. Some incubators will be sold to farmers who are in poultry production. Furthermore, as arable farming is growing in Namibia this kind of business will supply farmers with organic fertilizers to increase the productivity in their fields.

[handing over of award]

[statement of the winner]

And finally, the first prize with prize money in the amount of N\$5,000 goes to

Mobile Electricity Selling (MES) Albertina Joseph (Btech Human Resources)

Mobile Electricity Selling (MES) is a vending concept that will aim to allow individuals in a given community, be it in urban or rural areas, to use their cellular phone to sell electricity units to the members of their communities. Any person with a cellular phone can register with the authority e.g., City of Windhoek, NORED, CENORED, Erongo RED as a vendor, where he/she will be able to load a certain value of electricity units on his/her cellular phone.

The communication and transactions between the vendor and the buyer will be done via the means of sms. Taking into cognizance of the fact that Namibia is in a serious dilemma of unemployment situation, which is sky rocketing on a daily basis, this concept will be able to create employment in all community set-ups that utilise electricity. Further, the concept will promote Information and Communication Technology in all community set-ups, and equally turn cellular phones from a mere talking-over device to an income generation device.

Currently, people travel distance just to purchase electricity units, and they spend a lot of money on transportation and on the units. The situation becomes worse if a person travels to a vending machine and it is out of order. Therefore, this concept will eliminate and /or reduce the indirect costs and other inconveniences that are currently associated with the chain of electricity procurement. In the same vein, people will be able to utilise their cellular phones for income generation purposes. With the Mobile Electricity Selling concept, people will purchase their units by a simple exchange of sms.

[handing over of award]

[statement of the winner]

This concludes the awards. Congratulations to all of you.