



SPEECH

BY

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RECTOR: POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA

AT

**THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH WORKSHOP OF THE MCA-N: COMMUNAL
LAND SUPPORT PROJECT**

TUESDAY, 23 MARCH 2010

at 09:00

POLYTECHNIC HOTEL SCHOOL

WINDHOEK

Ms. Ludwina Shapwa, *Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement*

Mrs. Penny Akwenye, *Chief Executive Officer of the Millennium Challenge Account Namibia*

Dr. Romamana Bertolini, *Counsellor for Development Cooperation at the German Embassy*

Mr. Frank Gswender, *Project Director: Communal Land Support Programme, GTZ International Service*

Mr. Christian Graefen and Ms. Tanya Pickard of the GTZ office

Ms. Elano Suero, *Project Officer at the Spanish Cooperation Office*

Dr. Busch, *Project Team Leader at the Polytechnic*

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

All protocols observed

It is my sincere honour and privilege to welcome you all to the Polytechnic, *Namibia's university of science and technology*. This event marks the start of the Communal Land Support Programme of the Millennium Challenge Account Namibia, and it is indeed another milestone in the partnership between the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement and the Polytechnic of Namibia. The Ministry and the Polytechnic have their shared vision for land reform in Namibia.

Ladies and gentlemen, for decisions on land reform to address the critical issues of equity and sustainability, the decision-making process must be based on sound information and scientific practices. This is why the MLR decided to engage a partner equal to the task in providing these essential components and capable of supporting its effort to build the human and technical capacity needed to drive the process. The MLR and the

Polytechnic of Namibia, in particular the Department of Land Management, enjoy a long standing partnership, which dates back to 1996 when the two parties agreed to start a training programme for land managers. The inception programme was funded by the Royal Dutch Government through the INSHURD which later became IT2, and later on by the EU and Federal Republic of Germany together with our academic partner the ITC, the latter which is now part of the University of Twente.

I am delighted to witness the fruition of this partnership based on 15 years of consultations, hard work and dedication in the collaboration to establish a world class university. We can look back with pride at how rapidly we have progressed towards this goal. I must admit, it was and will never be easy to balance the need for increased access to university-level education and the funding constraints we face at the Polytechnic. We will, however, continue to persevere through our hallmark features of innovation, transformation and capacity building, using best practices and sound and transparent management to remain competitive at both local and international levels.

From the humble beginnings of 1997, when we delivered tailor-made courses in land management for the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (then MLRR), we now can boast of a fully fledged Land Management Department that has grown from having two staff members and two certificate qualifications in Land Management to one that has over 25 staff members and offers six academic and professional degrees in Land Administration, Geomatics, Geo-Information Technology, Property Studies and Land Management, as well as a Master's degree in Integrated Land Management. A professional Town and Regional Planning qualification is under planning and should be implemented in 2011 to replace the current National Diploma in Land Use Planning. All these qualifications make provision for multiple exit

points at NQA-accredited levels. Because of the uniqueness and relevance of our qualifications, we continue to attract students from Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, as well as exchange students from Europe, America and other parts of the global village. May I point out that we have produced nearly one thousand graduates at the different levels and are enrolling 400 students this year. Our faculty profile in the department is international, with origins in Belgium, Germany, Ghana, Namibia, South Africa, Switzerland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Over the last 15 years, we have increased and strengthened our international cooperation, and cultivated and developed strategic partnerships in the field of Land Management. We established an Institute for Integrated Land Management (ILMI) two years ago that today can boast the acquisition of several projects and research for various land-related issues.

The Department of Land Management is clearly well on its way to becoming a SADC regional centre of excellence in land management education, research and services. This is evidenced by the number of regional conferences, workshops and training programmes that this department provides in land management and related fields.

Based on our profile, the UN University and ITC at the University of Twente have selected the Polytechnic as the natural partner to roll out the capacity building programme in Land Administration in the SADC region within the framework of the Land Administration for Economic Development initiative of the United Nations. Thus we are planning to create a Regional Land Administration Centre of Excellence that will provide several services to countries in the region.

It should therefore be no surprise that the MCA-N: Communal Land Support tender was awarded to GTZ International, in partnership with the Polytechnic of Namibia. Our staff members, together with GTZ , laboured intensely to put together an internationally competitive proposal that has led to the launch we are witnessing today.

The objectives of this project are two-fold: i) *to support the development of land administration systems;* and ii) *to facilitate the acceleration of the registration of communal land rights in the Northern Communal Areas through capacity building and the development of a modern land registration system for land parcels above twenty hectares.*

The Department of Land Management at the Polytechnic of Namibia already has a long history of cooperation and partnership with GTZ and the MLR on a number of projects. We look forward to continue and strengthen this cooperation, as evidenced by this MCA-N CLS project.

Surely, we have had to work very hard to develop the capacity and excellence in the department that is now evident in such projects. We pledge to continue doing so in order to maintain the high standards that we have set for ourselves. Through such systems, we are committed to developing the skilled human resources and technical systems that Namibia needs for its land reform agenda and, together with our partner, the Ministry of Land and Resettlement, we will continue to contribute to the realisation of true land reform. With all the partners at the same table with the same agenda, I am confident that we shall address Namibia's Vision 2030 in a successful manner.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As much as this is another feather in our cap, it is also the culmination of a process that includes much sweat and tears. With this launch, I assure the people of Namibia and our partners that we are committed to making sure that this project is a resounding success for the benefit of our people.

I would like to thank the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement for being an all-weather partner. Your belief in us and your generous support continue to motivate us to be innovative in the quest to meet your ever increasing human and well as technical needs.

To GTZ, I would like to thank you also for the confidence you have in us. You have valued us as an equal partner when it comes to developing Namibia. You availed support for the implementation of the Master's degree programme and continue to fund external experts who have made significant contributions to the Polytechnic's growth. We have collaborated on a number of projects and I am sure this one will not be the last one.

I would also like to thank the government of the USA, through the MCA initiative, for availing the funds that have made it possible for the project to begin today. I know that there have been long hours of preparation and negotiations with all stakeholders. Now we can start implementing the promises of the MCA project, and I can assure you, on behalf of the team that we will live up to your expectations.

To the media, thank you for supporting us. With so much going on in the country, we are grateful that most of you have chosen to remain factual and faithful to our agenda of making the Polytechnic a place that provides rich

and diverse learning for our students. We really value your presence here today.

To my colleagues, I wish you all the best in this project of national importance. Remember that this is a huge responsibility that demands focus, dedication and hard work. I wish you every success and a most productive launch workshop. You can count on my usual support! I thank you for your kind attention.

- **End.**