



POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA

SPEECH BY

PROF TJAMA TJIIVKUA

RECTOR

ON THE OCCASION OF THE SIGNING OF A MEMORANDUM OF COLLABORATION

BETWEEN

THE

POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA

NAMIBIA HOUSING ACTION GROUP (NHAG)

AND

THE SHACK DWELLERS FEDERATION OF NAMIBIA (SDFN)

AT

EHANGANO INFORMAL SETTLEMENT

WINDHOEK

27 FEBRUARY 2012

11:00

The Governor of the Khomas Region, Honourable Samuel Nuuyoma

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands and Resettlement, Ms

Ludwina Shapwa

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development, Mr Erastus Negonga

The National Coordinator of the National Housing Action Group, Dr Anna Muller

Representative of Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia, Ms Elisabeth Amakali

Polytechnic Faculty and Students

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Following independence in 1990, the need for land reform became a priority of the Namibian government. Therefore training in land management was identified as a priority and with the support of the Dutch government the NGO Ibis conducted short courses for the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, then under Minister Pendukeni Ithana.

Clearly these courses were inadequate in terms of scope and duration and a more comprehensive and sustainable solution was sought. On August 1st 1996, I received a delegation from the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement and ITC (Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation in the Netherlands) to consider the introduction of academic qualifications in land management. At the end of the meeting we agreed to proceed based on the commitment of funding and an academic partnership with the ITC. Two 1-year certificates were designed in July 1997, respectively in Land Use Planning and Land Measuring which initially enrolled 22 students evenly in the two components.

Ms Maria Kasita was seconded by the Ministry to the programme which at that time was running courses in block mode with lecturers from the Netherlands. Mr Joe Lewis became the first full-time member of the Land Management department in 1998, the year in which we produced the first graduates and the land management programme was institutionalized.

Since then we developed the 3-year National Diploma and BTech degrees in Land Management, which later was further revised to become the BSc in Land Management. Today we offer seven programmes in Land Management covering the wide range specializations at undergraduate and post-graduate levels in the following:

- i) Diploma in Property Studies
- ii) Bachelor of Property Studies Honours
- iii) National Diploma in Land Valuation and Estate Management
- iv) Certificate in Land Administration
- v) National Diploma: Land Management and Registration
- vi) Diploma in Land Administration
- vii) Bachelor of Land Administration
- viii) National Certificate Land Use Planning
- ix) National Diploma in Land Use Planning
- x) Certificate in Land Surveying
- xi) Diploma in Geomatics
- xii) Bachelor of Science in Geomatics
- xiii) Bachelor of Geo-information Technology
- xiv) Bachelor of Town and Regional Planning
- xv) Bachelor of Regional and Rural Development

From its foundation the focus at the Polytechnic of Namibia has been to produce graduates who are job-ready, IT-savvy and internationally-competitive. To this end, our curricula are regularly upgraded and we thus regularly make substantial investments in improving our infrastructure and technology. We believe that education and applied research are key agents of change that institutions of higher learning can contribute to help nations attain sustainable development. Thus our Institution is ever-prepared to collaborate with your Society in the areas of innovative research and technological advancement.

It is this desire to collaborate with society which has led to the formalisation of the ongoing cooperation between the National Housing Action Group (NHAG) and the Polytechnic of Namibia. There is an increasing number of people residing in informal settlements, with little or no access to shelter, sanitation, water and other services. Currently it is estimated that there are 135 000 families, comprising at least 540 000 individuals, living in more than 230 informal settlements across Namibia. These are the people represented by the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia; and that rely on the technical support provided by the National Housing Action Group of Namibia. The Polytechnic of Namibia has a 15-year history of collaboration with the NHAG. This collaboration has ranged from the surveying of informal settlements, land use planning, pro-poor policy development, support and advocacy and research on water and land administration.

In this way the Polytechnic has surveyed numerous informal settlements on behalf of the NHAG. We have contributed to the development of a policy on flexible land tenure while continuing to deliver constructive criticism on the Flexible Land Tenure Bill at the recent National Council Hearings. The NAHG serves on the Advisory Boards of our land management programmes and give critical inputs needed to make sure that the programmes are relevant and meet the needs and expectations of all sectors of our society.

For these reasons and due to the importance and continuing interest in this cooperation, it was decided to formalise the cooperation through the signing of this agreement. This MoU will further support and encourage the creation of pro-poor cities that integrate the interests of informal dwellers in the conceptualisation and design of our urban spaces. It will also serve to create a generation of leaders and administrators that have been exposed as students to the issues and needs of informal settlement dwellers. This should create a pool of land administrators that view the poor as contributing partners in urban planning, rather than as a burden for urban planners. The Polytechnic and the NHAG will also continue to exchange ideas on curriculum development in land administration and land use planning and engage in joint research activities on pro-poor interventions in the areas of surveying, urban planning, land administration and policy.

Access to land, shelter and food are basic human rights. The Polytechnic is thus duty-bound to contribute to the goals of our constitution by addressing national laws, strategies and challenges in partnership with all stakeholders.

I am therefore deeply honoured to sign this Memorandum of Collaboration between the Polytechnic of Namibia and the Namibia Housing Action Group (NHAG).

I thank you for your kind attention.

- ***Ends.***