



POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA

WELCOMING REMARKS

BY

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**ON THE OCCASION OF HANDING OVER OF LAPTOPS TO
BACHELOR OF LOGISTICS HONOURS STUDENTS**

ON

14 NOVEMBER 2012

POLYTECHNIC HOTEL SCHOOL

AT

12H00

Master of Ceremonies, Mr Albin Jacobs

German Ambassador to Namibia, His Excellency Onno Hückmann

Members of Management, Faculty and Staff of the Polytechnic

Bachelor of Logistics Honours Class

Esteem Invited Guest

Member of the Media

Ladies and gentlemen

Good afternoon. It is my honour and pleasure to welcome to all of you at this Ceremony of Handing over of 21 laptops to Bachelor of Logistics Honours students. Let me extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Onno Hückmann, the German Ambassador to Namibia, who is visiting the Polytechnic in an official capacity for the first time. Sir, we are indeed honoured to have you here to deliver the keynote address. I am informed that you have been in Namibia only for a few months, and therefore would like to wish you a pleasant stay in our country.

This is the second donation of laptops to the Logistics Honours students, the first being 20 donated to the inaugural class of this qualification. Today I think the whole class is quite excited and looks forward to owning these wonderful modern educational and working tools. I want to join you in your excitement and congratulate you for being recipients of these computers. This event is of great significance to the Polytechnic itself as well as to you as students.

Since the inception of institution, there has been recognition that we had entered the technological age and therefore there was a need that students were trained to meet the needs of the rapidly changing technological environment. The institution took a deliberated decision to modernise, particularly, its information and communication infrastructure such that it could derive benefits of increased effectiveness and efficiency in the management and administrative effort, as well as in other functions such as teaching and learning, and research. It is in the area of teaching and learning and research where we have continued to use the power of ICT to support and drive the student-centred approach to learning we adopted. Furthermore, extensive computer laboratory facilities which provided access to students were established.

With the installation of the wireless infrastructure across the institution as well as imminent availability of broadband, the institution has initiated a Laptop Project that enables students procure laptops. Substantive progress has been made in this regard. Therefore, it is a time gesture that Honours students will be receiving these laptops, which from a learning perspective will provide them “the wings to fly”.

Our theme for the year 2012 is “Internationalisation of Higher Education”. In highlighting this theme we are creating awareness within the university community as well as in society in general of the importance of institutions of higher education to engage in a broad range of activities in teaching and research in cooperation with international partners. At the same time there is recognition that institutions that form linkages with each other tend to build strategic alliances that allow greater agility and responsiveness and consequently have competitive urge. The Polytechnic has for a number of years been engaging international partners and at the moment our cooperation agreements with institutions all over the globe stand at about a hundred. However, I need to emphasise that many of the partnerships are with German institutions and these relationships are special to us.

Just to illustrate this point, the Namibian German Centre for Logistics (NGCL) here at the Polytechnic is such an example. This was an entity established through partnership between the Polytechnic of Namibia and Flensburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany and funded by the German Federal Foreign Office as part of their “Aktion Afrika” programme, implemented by the German Academic Exchange Services (DAAD).

It is out of the collaboration in NGCL that various undergraduates and postgraduate programmes in logistics, supply chain management and transport, i.e. Bachelor of Logistics Honours, Bachelor of Logistics and Supply Chain Management and the Bachelor of Transport Management, have been developed to provide the necessary skills to drive the logistics and transport sector. This year twenty six (26) students were admitted in the Bachelor of Logistics (Hons) programme, while one hundred and fifty seven (157) were admitted in the Bachelor of Logistics and Supply Chain Management programme, and one hundred and twelve (112) in the Bachelor of Transport Management.

In 2011, the Centre started with the development of the Master's of Logistics and Supply Chain Management, to be introduced next year. The Centre has also developed into a key service provider for industry programmes, for example, the centre is the education provider for the Chartered Institute for Logistics and Transport (CILT), the Operations Management Association for Southern Africa (SAPICS), the Chartered Institute for Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) as well as the Supply Chain Council (SCC) – currently the centre has sixty students in these programmes.

The Centre has also developed strong partnerships with local logistics companies sponsoring the annual logistics and transport workshops as well as support internship programmes for the Logistics Honours students. Because of this support, students had the opportunity to spend six months in Germany for training at Flensburg and for an attachment to a German Logistics Company.

The NGCL has been engaged in research activities since its establishment. Earlier this year, the Centre in conjunction with Huddersfield University, United Kingdom, received an international logistics award for the best research paper on ***“Impact Assessment: High Capacity Vehicles”***, at the Logistics Research Networks Conference 2012.

I want to express our appreciation for the support we have received from the German Embassy here in Windhoek, as well as our partners nationally and internationally. We would like to continue to strengthen this relationship with you, Your Excellency.

Our National Development Plan (NDP-4) has as one of its key focus areas on Logistics and Transport. The development of Namibia into a hub for logistics and transport for the Southern African sub-continent is central to this. The NGCL has developed key partnerships with the Walvis Bay Corridor Group (WBCG) and NAMPORT to support them in fulfilling their role in this process.

Finally, to the Honours Class of 2012, I am happy that you will be receiving gifts of laptops – they are educational tools that will give independence, you will be able to work wherever and whenever you can. More importantly these tools will give you access to the technology and information highway, something of critical importance for someone doing postgraduate studies. I have no doubt that this simple gift of laptops if used properly will put you in a position where you will confidently be able to compete with any other graduates internationally.

Congratulations and I thank you all.