



SPEECH BY

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RECTOR: POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA

ON THE OCCASION OF THE POLYTECHNIC'S 16 CAREER FAIR

24 MARCH 2011

POLYTECHNIC CAMPUS

"TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION"

Master of Ceremonies

Hon. Petrina Haingura, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services

Representative of First National Bank of Namibia

Esteemed Guests and Exhibitors

Faculty and Staff of the Polytechnic

Students and learners

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to see so many learners from different schools and Polytechnic students here in their numbers this morning for the opening of the 2011 Career Fair. As always, it is also a pleasure to have representatives of the media here. I'd like to welcome you all warmly to this 16th Annual Career Fair of the Polytechnic of Namibia. We are also privileged to have as our special guest and keynote speaker here today the Honourable Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Petrina Haingura, to whom I'd like to extend a particularly hearty welcome.

As you may know, The Polytechnic's theme for this year is **"Sustainable Innovation"**. Our institution places a particular premium on innovation for success and achievement - its own as well as that of its students and graduates. Innovation enables one to achieve more with less in every aspect of life, whether you're a corporation, institution, a student, or whatever. It allows one to find new solutions to old problems, to add value to whatever one does without necessarily having to use up more time or more resources. It permits one to not only differentiate your product or services in a crowded market, but also to give them a valuable edge over their competitors - the list of advantages I could mention goes on and on. This is why innovation - durable, ongoing innovation, the kind that allows one to maintain your advantage over your competitors and

that allows you to extract the most you can for as long as you can from whatever you have - is a way a life at the Polytechnic. It is also something that we try to embed in the education and skills we provide to every student at the Polytechnic, whatever field of study they choose and whatever profession and career they choose to pursue.

So, dear learners and students, as you listen to the various presentations and visit the stands of the various Polytechnic Schools and departments today and tomorrow, I want to encourage you to remember the one intangible feature of EVERY Polytechnic programme that the presenters will NOT always be able to show you. That feature is the inculcation of the underlying skills that one needs for lifelong innovation - a questioning or critical mind, creative or lateral thinking skills, the intellectual flexibility to consider any problem or situation from various angles, and the emotional intelligence to understand and control the impact of one's feelings on good-decision-making.

Today is also a unique opportunity for learners to assess which Polytechnic programme best suits their career aspirations. To assist you in this process, the various Polytechnic Schools have gone to a great length to build stands offering you some insights into their programmes, and lecturers and students will be on hand to share their knowledge and experience with you. Feel free to engage them - that's why they are here today. Do not forget to measure each programme against the potential for employment - or self-employment that it offers, both in Namibia and in the rest of the world. I am confident that you will find that all Polytechnic programmes are industry-rated and much in demand, besides the fact that they are internationally recognised. The latter characteristic, of course, will allow you to continue your studies in virtually any part of the world, if you so choose.

The Polytechnic Career fair is also an occasion where a large variety of Government ministries and private companies showcase themselves. One of the main reasons for this exercise is to attract the attention of students in the hope that they will one day choose to join those companies and ministries as productive, competent and skillful graduates of the Polytechnic. Students, this is your chance to "check out" these opportunities, if I may borrow this expression from you. I am sure no corporate exhibitor will mind if I encourage you to ask: "What can you offer me before or once I've graduated? Can I fulfill my potential within your company? Can you help me realise my career aspirations while I apply my knowledge, skills and innovative abilities to help you realise your business objectives?"

Dear students, you have made an important choice in life just by joining the Polytechnic. You represent the real value, the most precious resources in Namibia today. In the public debate, we sometimes ask: 'How can we secure wealth and welfare in Namibia – when the natural resources run out?' We tend to forget that the answer is YOU.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This morning I am reminded of a particular question I often hear students ask: 'are leaders made, or born?' This question is indicative of a mind that is anxious to know whether there is hope for the future.

Let me assure you that leaders can be shaped or molded. The making of leaders begins with the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge effectively. Polytechnic students can face the future confidently, knowing that they are among the most knowledgeable students in Namibia, trained at an institution that focuses on applied learning and that is one of the

better ranked tertiary institutions in Africa in terms of web visibility. In this regard, I am proud to mention that the Polytechnic is currently rated second amongst all African Universities of Science and Technology in the highly regarded Webometrics ranking of World Universities. The Polytechnic has also won multiple top awards in industry-led surveys of Namibia's higher education institutions.

Director of Ceremonies,

Allow me to reassure every learner, student and visitor here today that the 2011 Polytechnic Career Fair is a superb platform for planning for a brilliant future career. It is my sincere hope that every learner and every student present here today will take full advantage of the opportunities it offers to seize their dreams and to position themselves to contribute optimally to Namibia's development and success on the global stage.

The Polytechnic - as an institution driven by the ethos of leadership, entrepreneurship, innovation, science and technology – is well-positioned to fully participate in the *knowledge-based economy* wished for in our *Vision 2030*.

I am very impressed with the number of companies participating in this year's Career Fair. I would like to thank our sponsors, especially First National Bank, and the other companies for participating and for giving learners and Polytechnic students career opportunities and guidance. There are no words to describe how grateful we are for the help you all have given us. Finally, I wish to congratulate the Dean of Students, Ms. Frieda Shimbuli and her team for yet another outstandingly organized and coordinated Career Fair.

I thank you all for your attention, and invite you to enjoy the day with us.

- **End.**