



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**BY**

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***MINISTER OF YOUTH, NATIONAL SERVICE, SPORT AND CULTURE***

**AT THE**

**POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA'S 16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL AWARDS**

**CEREMONY**

**WINDHOEK**

**14 APRIL 2011**

**Director of Ceremonies**

**Council Members**

**Dr. Tjama Tjivikua, *the Rector of the Polytechnic***

**The Management and Staff of the Polytechnic of Namibia**

**Distinguished invited guests**

**Members of the Media**

**Dear Students**

**Ladies & Gentlemen**

I am delighted to have been invited to this auspicious occasion – the Polytechnic’s 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Ceremony. Celebrating outstanding achievements is not only important for the institution, but for the students, the donors as well as the parents.

I am told that this is a time to reward hard work and commitment, and to thank the business community for promoting hard work by sponsoring awards for these deserving students. This is also a time for parents to rejoice in their children’s achievements and for the hardworking students to reap the fruit of their labour. I believe that this is also the perfect platform for the Polytechnic to showcase the future business leaders, parliamentarians, scientists, engineers, IT programmers etc who have proven themselves in their respective fields.

I wish to thank the sponsors for believing in what the Polytechnic does by sponsoring these students. Your donations and contributions bear testimony to the fact that you believe in what the Polytechnic does. I think the Polytechnic should therefore continue to work hard to produce the necessary human capital for national development.

Those companies that have stepped up to the platter to award scholarships to these young people have taken serious and keen interest by making tangible contributions towards Vision 2030.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

There are no short-cuts to success. Success comes by working hard. These awardees have invested a lot of efforts and time in what they are reaping today. They have toiled and now we can celebrate their achievements.

Success is not a destination but a journey with important milestones. Today you have arrived at an important juncture in your life, but the journey is just beginning. I therefore challenge you to use this occasion as a stepping stone to greater things in life.

For your colleagues who are not being honoured today, I wish to encourage them by saying that in life there are only a few winners at a given point in time. Remember that life, including academic life, is full of hard knocks and you will have to know how to roll with the punches. Persistence and consistency are the keys to success.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

As the Minister responsible for youth affairs, I will be failing in my duty if I do not say a word or two on social issues affecting our young people. The three issues that come immediately to mind are youth unemployment, alcohol abuse and HIV/AIDS.

our unemployment rate is currently hovering at above 50%, and the social group that is hardest hit by unemployment are our youth. That is why we have put various programmes in place to address youth unemployment.

Now coming to alcohol abuse, I want to stress that alcohol abuse contributes to a wide range of social and health problems and is a direct factor in the abuse and rape of women and children. Furthermore, alcohol abuse leads to violent crimes and to young people having unprotected and often promiscuous sex. We must therefore seek to re-address this situation as a matter of urgency.

Concerning HIV/AIDS, young people, those between 15-35 years of age, remain the most susceptible to HIV/AIDS because they are the most active in terms of sex.

What does this have to do with this occasion? The best way to equip yourself to become employable is by acquiring quality education. Therefore count yourself lucky to be given a bursary to further your studies at the Polytechnic, a prestigious institution of higher learning. It would be a sad day for a company to invest in a student just to discover that the particular student has been expelled from the Polytechnic because of unbecoming conduct, such as alcohol abuse, or that his/her life has been cut short by HIV/AIDS.

Most young people get into all sorts of social problems because of peer pressure. I believe that the biggest challenge facing young people is to have the courage not to accept pressure by their peers. However, I

want to tell you that being who you are with the sound values and dreams and goals you have, is the best thing you can be.

The **World Development Report of 2007** refers to five transitions in lie that the youth undergo: The decisions that will affect young people's wellbeing and society's are those that shape the foundational human capital to be productive workers, *family heads, citizens, and community leaders*. In other words, young people undergo transitions *in learning, work, health, family and citizenship*.

If made well, decisions about these transitions will develop, safeguard, and properly deploy human capital. If made badly, the consequences will be very costly to correct because dropping out of school, prolonged periods of unemployment, or risky health behaviours can have serious repercussions.

I would therefore like to urge students receiving these scholarships to make responsible decisions that will not affect your future negatively but that will assist in your growth and enhance human capital.

**Director of Ceremonies,**

The presence of the business community here tonight is a clear indication that the Polytechnic has earned your confidence, your cooperation and your support. It is my hope and belief that they will continue to raise the frontiers of producing qualified and skilled manpower to propel our country towards achieving Vision 2030.

Congratulations to the best performers and to their parents and relatives.

I thank you