



(DRAFT)

ADDRESS BY

MR. JOHANNES ENDJALA,

*PRESIDENT OF THE NAMIBIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
AND INDUSTRY (NCCI)*

AT THE 15TH ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY OF THE
POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA

*THEME FOR 2010: "RETHINKING COMPETITIVENESS FOR
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT"*

THURSDAY, 15 APRIL 2010

Master of Ceremonies

Mr. Oloff Munjanu, *Chairperson of the Council of the Polytechnic of Namibia*

Other Council members

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

Staff and Students of the Polytechnic of Namibia

Parents, Relatives and Friends

Representatives of the Sponsors of tonight's awards

Distinguished student award winners

Honoured guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and gentlemen

Let me start by expressing my appreciation to the Rector, Dr. Tjama Tjivikua, for the invitation to deliver the keynote address at this 15th annual Awards Ceremony of the Polytechnic of Namibia. Tonight's event is about honouring the commitment, hard work and performance of those Polytechnic students who have achieved the best academic results at various levels, in the different courses and programmes during 2009. This ceremony will also honour the recipients of the Polytechnic's Merit Awards, as well as those receiving various sponsored Performance Awards. I am excited to be part of an event that salutes some of our nation's academic champions. Champions are winners, the best in their category, and everyone likes to be in the company of a champion. So, I am very pleased to be here with so many champions, starting with you, the students who will be receiving the various awards and prizes on offer here tonight.

Of course, dear student champions, you are very privileged to be part of an institution that is widely recognised as a champion. I am told that last year alone, the Polytechnic of Namibia received at least four local and international awards. Some have reflected international appreciation for the quality and efforts of your various schools and departments. Others have re-affirmed the Polytechnic's growing international profile as a mover and shaker amongst African universities at large and in the subregion in particular. These believe are the reason why the sponsors are willing generous to participate in this event. For these, I offer my hearty congratulations!

And then, of course, your Rector himself has a long tradition of winning awards. For example, a few weeks ago he was inducted into the Namibian Business Hall of Fame, an award jointly presented by the NCCI and Junior Achievement Namibia to honour Namibians who excelled in business or, as in the case of your Rector, in the promotion of enterprise development in Namibia. Last year, your Rector was the Bank Windhoek Business Communicator of the Year. In fact, since the early 1980s, he has won numerous awards and accolades, many of these awards were for his outstanding academic achievements as a student. You should also know that he published highly acclaimed scientific research while at American universities, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. But he also received many top awards for his leadership, including an honorary doctorate, lifelong fellowships from the University of Cape Town in South Africa and Duke University in the USA, and the remarkable achievement as being named as Outstanding Young Man of America in 1985. I am sure there will be many more to come for him, and I am relating his story to you in the hope that some of you will follow in his footsteps!

And now I'd like to focus on another side of being a "champion". I would like to reflect for a few minutes on that aspect which relates to a person who dedicates himself or herself to a particular cause, or who works tirelessly to facilitate change and development in a particular direction. I am very pleased to confirm that the Polytechnic of Namibia has proven itself on both counts, ably led by Dr. Tjama Tjivikua and the Council.

So significant and exemplary has been the impact the Polytechnic has had on the educational and business landscape of Namibia that it is hard to believe that the institution is celebrating only its 15th Anniversary this year. Tonight, I want to recognise the Polytechnic for being a truly outstanding champion of the challenge of transforming our country into a globally competitive economy.

I therefore congratulate the Council, Management, Faculty, Staff and Students for leading from the front in this regard, campaigning tirelessly for higher education to become more responsive to the needs of business, industry and civic society while facing the challenges of globalization, putting science, technology, applied research, innovation and entrepreneurship at the top of both your academic and national service agendas. More importantly, you have put your money where your mouth is.

Your commitment and determined response to this challenge is evident in the remarkable range of qualifications that you have managed to introduce in only 15 years of existence, in their relevance to the needs of industry and in the student enrolment. It is also an open secret that the quality, competence and skills-based training of Polytechnic graduates have made them the candidates of choice of most Namibian job employers today.

Another notable aspect of your many efforts as true champions of the transformation of the Namibian economy for future global competitiveness is the effort you have put into the establishment of various centres of excellence to address key areas of need or concern to Namibia's socio-economic development. In this regard I would like to single out the Centre for Entrepreneurial Development and the Namibia Business Innovation Centre, both being of cardinal importance to Namibia's future economic development. The CED has become Namibia's leading provider of non-formal training and development programmes for both established and emerging businesses and entrepreneurs in Namibia.

As regards the NBIC, I can assure you that the Namibian business community is waiting eagerly for the Innovation Centre to come on stream here at the Polytechnic and to become the dynamic driver of innovation, technology, business incubation, research and entrepreneurial development that Namibia must have if it is to aspire to global competitiveness.

Director of Ceremonies,

I also want to applaud the Polytechnic's choice of theme for this academic year, *"Rethinking Competitiveness for Socio-Economic Development"*. Not only is it consistent with your institution's status and traditions as champion of socio-economic transformation in Namibia, but it serves as a reminder to us all of the need to review and re-adjust our strategies and tactics if we want to compete on the global stage in the so-called *"New Economy"*.

It is also a happy coincidence that this call coincides with the induction of a new parliament and a new cabinet of Ministers. One hopes that they – and, indeed all players in the Namibia economy – will heed the call to revisit the various models, pathways, strategies and ideas of development to which we subscribe.

For Namibia to achieve the ambitious goals it has set for itself in Vision 2030, we need the kind of exponential economic growth that has driven the transformation of developing countries such as China, India and Brazil into global front-runners. Their success was fuelled and continues to be driven primarily by sustained development of national technological and innovative capacity, productivity and entrepreneurship – all of which are priority teaching and development focal areas of the Polytechnic.

Director of Ceremonies,

The Polytechnic's sterling efforts to champion the changes we need for meaningful socio-economic development will come to naught if all stakeholders do not join hands in fostering a culture of innovation, promoting technology and, perhaps most importantly, building a cadre of competent and highly-skilled young entrepreneurs.

For example, we need financial institutions in Namibia to do more to support emerging businesses and entrepreneurs who do not have collateral or guarantees, no matter how bankable their business ideas and proposals may be, allegedly because of the high risk they present. Yet, every commercial bank has a "division" raking in profits from loans to people from the very same "high risk" category, namely the lower-paid workers and others struggling to make ends meet from day to day.

I would therefore like to urge our local banks to develop a new financing model that will support the new generation of well-prepared and talented young entrepreneurs that the Polytechnic and other stakeholders are now cultivating, but who do not know where to turn to for start-up finance.

I am convinced that an economic environment with the required human resources and capital will prove to be one of the critical catalysts for our future socio-economic development. I believe that our banks have the know-how and intellectual capacity to devise alternative, contemporary financing procedures and processes that are more in step with where we as a nation are today and with where we want to be in 20 years.

Therefore let me once again congratulate the high performers and winners of the various prizes won. Your achievements are an encouragement to us as parents, guardians, employers, government and society at large. We do need achievers like yourselves to drive Namibia sustainably into modernity.

Finally, I would like to thank all the sponsors for participating meaningfully in the development of human capital in Namibia. I do know that money is not abundant to everyone, but your gesture and participation in this event is a source of encouragement for all of us. Together as one, Namibia is a winning nation.

I congratulate the sponsors and winners and thank you for your attention.

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