

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 15th GRADUATION
CEREMONY OF THE POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA**

15 OCTOBER 2010

WINDHOEK

**Check Against Delivery*

Director of Ceremonies and the Rector of the Polytechnic of Namibia, Dr Tjama Tjivikua,
Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Honourable Governor of Khomas Region,
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Mr Johannes !Gawagab, Managing Director of Old Mutual African Operations,
Chairperson and Distinguished Members of the Council of the Polytechnic of Namibia,
Faculty and staff of the Polytechnic of Namibia
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Dear Graduands,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have come to join the family of the Polytechnic of Namibia in witnessing the 15th Graduation Ceremony at this institution of high learning. This is the second group of graduands for 2010 to graduate, in addition to the group that graduated in April.

I am pleased to witness this happy occasion to celebrate success after years of hard work. As for the Polytechnic of Namibia, you have done it once again. You have produced yet another crop of young and dynamic graduands ready for the job market. Since its inception in 1995, the Polytechnic of Namibia has steadily produced thousands of graduates, who are armed with knowledge and skills, ready to make their contribution to the socio-economic development of our country.

Dear Graduands,

As we celebrate your academic success and anticipate the exciting opportunities and new beginnings that await you, allow me to join your loved ones, sponsors, and the Polytechnic community in extending congratulations to you. From here, you will start exploring future opportunities either in terms of employment or further education. Yes, there will be challenges. However, I encourage you to remain focused, determined and committed to the realisation of your dreams to lead successful lives and make meaningful contribution to our country.

As you enter the job market, I encourage you to fully apply the knowledge and skills you had acquired. You should explore ways to find solutions to problems facing our country today, including the problem of unemployment. We are, indeed, very proud of you and look forward as a nation to seeing you *unleash* the potential within each of you.

Director of Ceremonies,

I wish to congratulate the Polytechnic Council, the Rector, Administration, Deans, and faculty members for their professional tutelage of our graduands. We recognise the important role you play in the socio-economic development of our nation. I am informed that today's graduates bring the total number of students who have received degrees and diplomas at the Polytechnic in 2010 to more than 2 000. This is almost equal to the total number of students registered at its inception in 1995. It demonstrates your continuing hard work and how the institution has grown over the years.

I am also informed that your graduates are well received in the labour market, a testimony to the value our business community attaches to the education and to the relevance and quality of programmes offered by the Polytechnic of Namibia.

I have learnt about the strategic partnerships between this institution and the private sector. In this context, I wish to single out the establishment of the Harold Pupkewitz Graduate School of Business. This partnership is vital to the continued growth of this institution and to the provision of tertiary education in our country.

Director of Ceremonies,

Tertiary education must be aimed at achieving the higher objective of national socio-economic development. Thus, in order to maintain our development trajectory and global competitiveness we need to regularly assess whether our priorities, strategies and actions are appropriate, efficient, and responsive to the challenges we face. Our higher education institutions such as the Polytechnic of Namibia must play an important role in this assessment, especially in the areas of science and technology.

Namibia must identify, deploy and harness appropriate technologies that can contribute to the development of skills for our work force and the creation of new employment opportunities through value addition to our natural resources.

As part of its mandate, the Polytechnic of Namibia has the responsibility to undertake technological research. Thus, I encourage you as an institution to do your part in identifying the type of technologies that is appropriate for our developmental requirements. Even better, you should invent these technologies.

The establishment of the Namibia Business Innovation Centre (NBIC) as a national centre of excellence for innovation and technology, together with various Ministries and other partners, is a major step forward in this respect.

In this context, I welcome the close working relationship between the Ministry of Mines and Energy and the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Institute at the Polytechnic of Namibia. Renewable energy is essential for the future development of our country. However, it must be introduced in such a way that it is integrated with existing technologies in order to generate maximum benefits.

Director of Ceremonies,

An estimated 60 percent of the Namibian population lives in rural areas. I believe that the success of strategies to reduce poverty and unemployment depends on finding innovative ways of bringing socio-economic development to those areas by, for example, eliminating the constraints to provision of services, investment and economic growth in those areas.

I am pleased to learn that the Integrated Land Management Institute (ILMI) in the School of Natural Resources and Tourism provides support to the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement in the areas of land use planning, land allocation, tenure and related issues. I am also pleased to note that the Polytechnic of Namibia is contributing to the creation of rural-based industries and income generating activities that will prevent the degradation of the environment and preserve community social value systems.

I am informed that the Polytechnic of Namibia has done valuable work in the promotion of community-based tourism and rural conservancies. We look forward to the intensification of those efforts to benefit more rural communities.

Director of Ceremonies,

Allow me now to conclude with a few words to the graduands. In a few minutes time, you will receive the qualifications you have worked hard for, and for which you and your families have made many sacrifices. You are poised for success, and eager to pursue your dreams.

You have also reached a point in life where you can pursue goals which will benefit our country, your communities and your families. This is our expectation from you. As you stand at the threshold of an exciting new chapter in your lives, I wish you all the success.

Congratulations to all of you on this important milestone.

I thank you.