



WELCOME STATEMENT

BY

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RECTOR: POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA

***AT THE LAUNCH OF THE FIRST DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE
FORUM***

07 JULY 2011

POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA

WINDHOEK

Director of Ceremonies

Hon. Isak Katali, *Minister of Mines and Energy*

Dr. Neil Boyer, *Resident Representative of the UNDP*

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Captains of Industry

Distinguished Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and gentlemen

All protocol observed

The Polytechnic of Namibia believes that national and international development is based on knowledge and knowledge management.

Therefore, institutions of higher learning have always been key agents in the dissemination of knowledge. With the advent of the Internet, the spread and management of knowledge have taken on a new meaning and intensity of globalization is very much the result thereof.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sustainable development, a major concern in globalization, requires the participation of all of us - rich and poor, young and old, educated and uneducated. Development is about improving people's lives through economic, social, political and technological change.

It is a transformation that certainly requires incomes to grow, but it is also about reducing poverty and inequality, building individual skills, having access to social services, and raising the quality of life. And economic growth and development both depend on *distributive* politics – how society deals with vested interests and social conflicts.ⁱ

More than sixty years of development experience tells us that the pathways to development are varied, guided by different visions, different strategies, and different definitions of progress. If sustained growth is the measure, then progress has also been mixed. Between 1990 and 2008, the developing countries have grown nearly twice as fast on average as the developed countries.ⁱⁱ But over the past decades, only a dozen countries have sustained their growth for twenty years or more because of frequent shocks, redistributive conflicts, and difficulty in sustaining reform efforts over time.

The number of people in developing countries who live in absolute poverty (less than \$1 a day) dropped from 40% of the population in 1981 to 18% in 2004.ⁱⁱⁱ However, the largest reductions have been in China and India, countries with high growth rates; the smallest in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. But inequality has been on the rise world-wide. This goes to show that the benefits of development have not reached the neediest.^{iv}

In the 21st century one of the development challenges facing mankind is the water crisis; and this is critically so given the fact that the viability of all life on earth is determined chiefly by the presence of water. Experts tell us that within twenty years, due to climate change and population growth, water demand in many countries will exceed supply by 40%.

Therefore a new way of thinking about water is needed as looming shortages threaten communities, agriculture and industry. In the next two decades, a third of humanity will have only half the water required to meet basic needs. Agriculture, which soaks up 71% of water supplies, is also likely to suffer, affecting food production.^v

Director of Ceremonies,

Given these development challenges, our pre-occupation should be the integration of all in our society by means of education and training, science and technology, research and development.

This explains why the Polytechnic has embarked on a path to constantly modernize the institution by making vast investments in curriculum development and the infrastructure; and at the same time, maintaining a state of the art environment for new and innovative ways of teaching and learning, research and service. In a nutshell, the institution is your gateway to opportunities all over the world in this millennium.

Replications of Silicon Valley elsewhere in the world are coming through the model of science parks. Institutions of higher learning are again playing an important role of being the focal point of convergence, networking and outgrowth, as evidenced by our NBIC.

In the process, the institution undertakes, amongst other things, basic and applied research that will contribute to the social, economic, cultural and political development of Namibia.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Sustainable energy development is undoubtedly the primary focus of all global economies; especially with respect to climate change due to human-induced green house gas emissions, energy insecurity and socio-economic upliftment demands. Energy is a key driver in socio-economic development and its importance cannot be over-emphasised. The Polytechnic of Namibia does not only understand the importance of this resource, but has decided to lead the way in its development. A partnership agreement with the Ministry of Mines and Energy in establishing the Renewable Energy and Efficiency Institute which is promoting the development and use of sustainable energy in the country; that is already bearing fruit.

The Institute's mandate is to:

- facilitate and conduct research in renewable energy and energy efficiency;
- develop materials and standards, reports and disseminate information and materials on renewable energy (RE) and energy efficiency (EE); and
- facilitate cooperation between MME and the Polytechnic, as a public institution, primarily responsible for RE and EE as well as other stakeholders.

In fulfilment of its mandate, the Institute has developed and is managing several programmes/projects with local and international partners such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). These programmes/projects include:

- Namibia Energy Efficiency Programme in Buildings (NEEP) with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and UNDP;

- Piloting of Concentrating Solar Power Technology Transfer for Electricity Generation in Namibia with GEF and UNDP;
- National Wind Resource Assessment with NamPower, MTC, and Energy and Environment Partnership for Eastern and Southern Africa;
- Energy Regulatory Framework with the Electricity Control Board;
- Solar Thermal Training Programme with the Austrian Development Agency; and
- Coordination of the Off-grid Energisation Master Plan, to name but a few.

Director of Ceremonies,

The **objective** of the Development Dialogue Forum is to create a platform for debate on pertinent issues around sustainable development in Namibia. Namibia is endowed with all the natural energy resources such as gas, uranium, solar, wind and biomass. The presence of renewable energy resources in the country is well known and the technology to harvest these is there and always improving. The debate amongst the electricity supply industry stakeholders and society at large is always on what role renewable energy can play in Namibia's energy mix. Today's discussion will help us share insights on how government, regulators, industry experts, consumers, investors and everybody else believe our vastly untapped renewable energy resources can contribute to the country's socio-economic development. The outcomes of this workshop will inevitably contribute to the Polytechnic's research and service themes.

I thank you for your attention.

References:

- i Development Outreach, April 2011, World Bank Institute.
- ii Development Outreach, April 2011, World Bank Institute, Washington, DC.
- iii Ferreira and Ravalion as cited in Development Outreach, April 2011, the World Bank Institute, Washington, DC.
- iv Development Outreach, April 2011, World Bank institute, Washington, DC.
- v www.worldwaters.com.