



**CLOSING REMARKS DELIVERED BY HONOURABLE ESTER-ANNA
NGHIPONDOKA, THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND
CULTURE**

**AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE 3RD
NATIONAL OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING CONFERENCE**

On the theme:

***PROMOTING LIFELONG LEARNING IN OPEN, DISTANCE AND
ELEARNING THROUGH INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY
EDUCATION”***

20 OCTOBER 2016

STRAND HOTEL, SWAKOPMUND

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

- **Director of Ceremonies;**
- **Eminent Keynote Speakers and Presenters;**
- **Distinguished Delegates;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

I feel honoured and privileged to be part of this closing ceremony. It is also my pleasure to join the Director of Ceremonies in welcoming you all to the closing ceremony.

Today we have reached the end of a very fruitful conference. The Namibian Open learning Network Trust (NOLNet) have proved itself to be a main role player within the context of Open and Distance Learning and Teaching in SADC, but more specifically, made its mark well within the ODL fraternity of Namibia. Before coming here, delegates, presenters and academici have had their own expectations of the conference. As far as growth is concerned, you came here as vessels to be filled with knowledge and best practice, experiences and new innovative tried and tested methods in ODL.

Dear Director of Ceremonies, ladies and gentlemen,

The onus is up to us to go and implement the new acquainted knowledge in our own institutions, given our own unique context within each country

and Institution. One good advantage of platforms like this is the networking on issues of mutual concern. The education fraternity will never be able to survive without a successful networking structure, and that is why I want to commend NOLNet.

The impact made to contribute to the knowledge- based economy can never be underestimated for the development of education on mother soil. There is no doubt that the conference has proven that open and distance learning is an essential component of quality education. We therefore need to promote and enhance Open and Distance Learning as an important component and driver of our education system. There is no doubt that Open and Distance Learning contribute to poverty alleviation and economic development of our country. Throughout the conference you have learnt how ODL can be used to facilitate better and quality learning outcomes. We are well aware of the pressing need for more secondary schools in Namibia to accommodate all learners which cannot be accommodated by the formal system. UNESCO has repeatedly argued that the number of places for secondary and post-secondary learners must increase worldwide, with large-scale growth already being documented over the past decade. In the emerging economic powerhouses of the world, increased access to knowledge and education is crucial to

guarantee continued growth for any nation. In our context, it is virtually impossible to build the number of educational institutions to keep up with the increase in demand. Traditional universities represent a tremendous ongoing financial commitment when physical campuses classrooms need to be built, maintained, heated, cooled and secured. It is therefore argued that through distance learning, these costs are significantly less. This translates to more resources being spent on course design, development and student support services. This in turn leads to better student outcomes linked to the higher quality of instruction. Distance learning is also:

- uniquely flexible,**
- allowing for studies to be combined with working and family life,**
- it is taken at the correct pace for the student,**
- it is in tune with what they can afford,**
- it has also proven itself able to react quickly to specific economic and societal needs.**

The aforesaid is but one of the issues pertaining to the cost-effectiveness of ODL given our own African context. There are more, and I am sure through presentations many options have been exhausted for possible implementation in our respective Institutions.

I understand that during these two days of the conference delegates have brought up a number of issues to consider further and ideas that will be useful for future research and experimentation. By hearing the summary of the conference deliberations I am impressed and happy to note that you were able to formulate your position and am making a contribution to educational challenges in your respective regions. It is now necessary for all of us to work together and put into practice what we have been discussing here. Therefore, where the conference ends, it is where our work begins.

Director of Ceremonies, ladies and gentlemen,

I want to conclude by saying: “The dictionary is the only place success comes before work. Hard work is the price we must all pay for success. I think we can accomplish anything if we are willing to pay the price”, by Vince Lombardi. This saying holds a lot of truth: so, in order to do justice to this conference, we have to commit ourselves to improve the quality of educational outcomes through the increased use of best practice processes, procedures and successful implementation of strategies which was discussed here in Swakopmund.

I would like to convey my appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to the sponsors of this conference, the keynote speakers, presenters and session chairpersons and the conference organising committee for bringing us together. I am convinced that the outcome of this fascinating conference provides us with a sound basis for gradually learning to measure the contributions that open and distance learning is making to providing quality education to our citizens across the region and in Africa as a whole, and I would like to wish you all the best with this work. Let us join hands, heads and resources to be an excellent example to demonstrate the impact made by ODL in the world.

On behalf of the Ministry of Education, I would like to once more congratulate all here for a job well done.

God bless you all.