



WELCOMING REMARKS BY MR. HEROLDT MURANGI

AT THE NOLNET 3rd OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING CONFERENCE

On the theme:

**“PROMOTING LIFE LONG LEARNING IN OPEN, DISTANCE AND E-LEARNING
THROUGH INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION”**

19 OCTOBER 2016

STRAND HOTEL, SWAKOPMUND

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

- Honourable Itah Kandjii- Murangi- Minister of Higher Education, Innovation and Training,
- Dr Hertha Pomuti, Chairperson of the NOLNet Board of Trustees, in her absence,
- (Her worship, the deputy Mayor of Swakopmund, Honourable Anna Elago,
- Other Board Members Present,
- NOLNet Management Committee,
- Heads and representatives from NOLNet Partner Institutions and other, ODL Providers in the region and beyond- from as far as Germany,
- Professor Bisanda from the Open University of Tanzania,
- Professor Makoe from Unisa,
- Ms Victoria Amakali — NOLNet Executive Secretary,
- Ministry of Education Officials,
- Distinguished invited guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,
- Members of the Media,

I take pleasure in delivering the welcoming remarks on the 3rd Open and Distance Conference in the coastal town of Swakopmund. Thank you for taking time off your busy schedule to be here this morning.

Let me pause a while to share a quote with you by Vivienne Forrester, a famous renowned international writer:

"Life is a learning process; learning is a life-long process, you can't separate them- unquote.

With having in mind lifelong learning, allow me to share some information with you on NOLNet, our umbrella body that advocates lifelong learning. The Namibian Open Learning Network Trust aims to bring together all the Open and Distance Education providers within Namibia to share resources, expertise and best practice in pursuit of development and capacity building. NOLNet was called to life in 2001, to further serve and pursue the goal of the Government's EFA (Education for All) and have the following member Institutions:

- The Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL)
- The University of Namibia – Centre for Open and Distance and eLearning (UNAM-CODEL)
- Namibia University of Science and Technology – Centre for Open and Lifelong Learning (NUST-COLL), and
- The Ministry of Education, Arts & Culture (NIED & DAE)

Director of Ceremonies,

NOLNet is strategically placed to facilitate communication amongst all its members on their activities and plans in relation to ODL. It aims to coordinate the development of new courses and facilities to avoid duplication. There is a saying that *“you do not have to invent the wheel”*.

Another aim is to collaborate in the provision of services for Namibian students such as the Resource Centres, of which there are 54 spread

across Namibia, in major towns. In the same vein, NOLNet can proudly boast on the eLearning training rendered to SADC countries. The most significant contribution is the Education Radio Project which includes a variety of inter-ministerial education programmes on NBC and community radio stations.

Director of Ceremonies,

According to the 3rd UNESCO Global Report on Adult learning done in 2015, Levels of literacy among adults remain very low. Around 757 million adults, 115 million of whom are aged between 15 and 24, still cannot read or write a simple sentence. Most countries have missed the Education for All target of achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015; only 39 countries met the target. The majority (63%) of adults with low literacy skills are women. The Sustainable development Goals that were adopted by education Ministers worldwide, sets targets for improving the lives of these people- our national Harambee plan sets the same targets- that no one is left behind.

The question in everybody`s mind is: HOW? In order to end poverty, education levels should first be improved with increased access- worldwide, in Africa and on local soil- Namibia. This is where Open and Distance Learning bridges the gap to include all those who either fell out of the system, or those who want to pursue their education without the confinement of four walls. The value of education in the attainment of our national plans can never be underestimated, nor can it be overemphasized. It remains at the core of our progress.

This conference comes at a time where crucial decisions need to pave the road for the birth of our very first Open University. This dream of establishing Namibia`s Open University was conceptualised in 2006, during the 1st Open and Distance Conference held in Windhoek. That was 10 years ago, and much has happened to prepare the open and distance learning landscape in Namibia. I believe that the timing is perfect to send this goal through the prepared goal posts so that we can turn statistics around with regard to illiteracy and unemployment in our communities.

Director of Ceremonies,

Allow me at this point, to briefly make reference to the theme: ***“Promoting Lifelong Learning in Open, Distance and eLearning through Inclusive and equitable quality education”***. a Number of sub-themes on ICT`s, learning resources, quality and resource mobilisation wil set the scene for the presentations and discussions that will take place over the next two days.

Our participants are drawn from all the member Institutions, as well as from international states such as Germany. Locally, we have drawn expertise in the region from Tanzania, Botswana, South Africa and Zambia.

Over a two-day period, local scholars from member institutions will participate actively by sharing their experiences, research findings, best practice and methods in ODL.

Our line Ministerial leaders, Hon. Itah Kandjii- Murangi and Deputy Minister of Education, Arts and Culture, Hon. Anna Nghipondoka are part of the conference to rubberstamp our sentiments and dedicated efforts on cabinet level.

Director of Ceremonies,

It is our task as education providers to keep the ball rolling for the progressive growth of the country`s welfare, and to this end, ascertain the achievement of our National Development Goals. Education can no longer be reviewed simply as a means of raising political and social consciousness. It is an integral component of an overall development effort. On the basis of the recognition that the development of a country`s human resources is essential to its prosperity and growth, many successes have been recorded, but there is still room for more to be done.

Director of Ceremonies,

It is on this note that I would like you recognise the effort to improve our lives, homes, communities and a country at large, by tackling the bull by its horns. Let us deliver on the promise of Ubuntu in safeguarding our nation; in laying the foundations for improved education delivery in open and distance education, and in making sure that no one is left behind. Be assured that the table has been laid with an enticing menu of topics covering a wide variety of issues in education, but ODL in specific.

I thank you