



PUBLIC LECTURE

THE HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE IN NAMIBIA WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO “INCREASING ACCESS, WHILE IMPROVING QUALITY” AND “INCREASING INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY”



**29 October 2013
Windhoek, NAMIBIA**



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BETD	Basic Education Teacher Diploma
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHET	Centre for Higher Education Transformation
CoE	Colleges of Education
ED	Executive Director
FET	Further Education and Training
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HE	Higher Education
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HR	Human Resources
IUM	International University of Management
NAMCOL	Namibian College of Open Learning
NANSO	Namibia National Students' Organisation
NBC	Namibia Broadcasting Corporation
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NHEC	National Higher Education Commission
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
NPC	National Planning Commission
NUST	Namibia University of Science and Technology
NQA	Namibia Qualifications Authority
NZ	New Zealand
ODL	Open and Distance Education
PG	Post Graduate
PoN	Polytechnic of Namibia
Prof	Professor
PVC	Pro Vice-Chancellor
R&D	Research and Development
SA	South Africa
SET	Science, Engineering and Technology
TE	Teacher Education
T&L	Teaching and Learning
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCT	University of Cape Town
UK	United Kingdom
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNISA	University of South Africa
USA	United States of America

On 29 October 2013, the Secretariat of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) organised a Public Lecture on the theme: **The Higher Education Landscape in Namibia with particular reference to “increasing access while improving quality” and “increasing institutional diversity”**.

The public lecture examined the state and prospects of Namibia’s higher education sector in relation to its contribution to the achievement of Vision 2030. It drew higher education practitioners, consultants, students and members of the public. The keynote speaker was Professor Rolf Stumpf, a distinguished academic from South Africa (SA) who has over 40 years of experience in higher education. The lecture also featured a panel discussion by leading experts from the academia and the sector in general. The panel comprised Mr. Timotheus Angala, President of the Namibia National Students’ Organisation (NANSO); Mr. Heroldt Murangi, Director of the Namibia College of Open Learning (NAMCOL); Mr. Victor Kaulinge, Human Resources (HR) Policy Adviser at the National Planning Commission (NPC); Professor Tjama Tjivikua, Rector at the Polytechnic of Namibia (PoN); and Professor Osmund Mwandemele, Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) for Academic Affairs and Research at the University of Namibia (UNAM).

Mr. Lesley Tjueza, a leading Journalist and Television Sports Presenter at the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) skillfully steered the programme.



Mr. Lesley Tjueza, Journalist and Television Sports Presenter, NBC

2. WELCOMING REMARKS

Mr. Mocks Shivute, Executive Director (ED) of the NCHE Secretariat, welcomed the keynote speaker, panelists and the invited guests to the Public Lecture.

He reminded the gathering that on 17 October 2012, the NCHE Secretariat organised another Public Lecture in Windhoek, under the theme: “**Higher Education and the Labor Market**”. He said that the lecture was a resounding success, judging from the large turnout, the quality of deliberations, as well as its overall organization.



Mr. Mocks Shivute, Executive Director, NCHE Secretariat

Mr. Shivute was optimistic that participants would grab the opportunity to exchange ideas and share experiences with a view to addressing the challenges facing higher education in Namibia. He mentioned some of those challenges being the higher education institutions that are struggling to cope with social and political pressures to admit more students than they could accommodate; coping with uneven students' entry qualifications leading to drop outs or repetition; coping with stagnant or even

decreasing government funding compelling them to apply cost-recovery measures, such as tuition and user fees; forging with industry to build good relations; expected to produce quality graduates with the relevant skills for the industry and making do with insufficient physical infrastructure, such as libraries, student accommodation and sports facilities.

He further said that added to those was the fact that higher education institutions were expected to be more accountable to government, donors and private funding agencies. With jobs fewer and far between, higher education institutions had to introduce quality assurance mechanisms. In line with global trends, higher education institutions in Namibia were expected to become international and admit foreign students, as well as staff. This came with other challenges, among them immigration policies and related legislations, accommodation, foreign languages and others.

Mr. Shivute then introduced the keynote speaker, Professor Rolf Stumpf, a distinguished academic from SA. Professor Stumpf has an impressive academic and professional profile. He has held various senior positions in research and teaching, as well as in the higher education policy environment. His immediate past service has been a member of the National Higher Education Commission (NHEC), a member of the Council on Higher Education (CHE), a chairperson of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) and a trustee of the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) in SA.

Currently, Professor Stumpf is a member of the University of South Africa (UNISA) Council and an independent higher education consultant having done wide-ranging consultancy work in higher education in SA, Finland, Namibia and Botswana.

3. KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

In setting the tone for his keynote address, Professor Stumpf stated that the challenges facing the Namibian Higher Education system were similar to those faced by other developing countries.

International trends in Institutional Diversification in Higher Education

Professor Stumpf premised his lecture on institutional diversification in relation to increasing higher education access; improving quality; and improving efficiency and effectiveness in the context of the review of the Namibian higher education system against the goals and objectives of the country's development blueprint, Vision 2030.



Professor Rolf Stumpf, Keynote Speaker

He said that all over the world, there was a growing recognition of the role of diversified higher education systems in achieving national and institutional goals. However, diversification and differentiation were not synonymous.

He explained that diversification refers to the variety of entities in a higher education system at any given time, while differentiation refers to the process by which new

entities emerged or by which diversity is achieved. There was an increasing recognition of need for strengthening Further Education and Training (FET) college systems that include technical and vocational training systems. Another growing trend was the strengthening of linkages between Higher Education (HE) and FET systems, especially in countries, such as Australia, the United Kingdom (UK) and New Zealand (NZ).

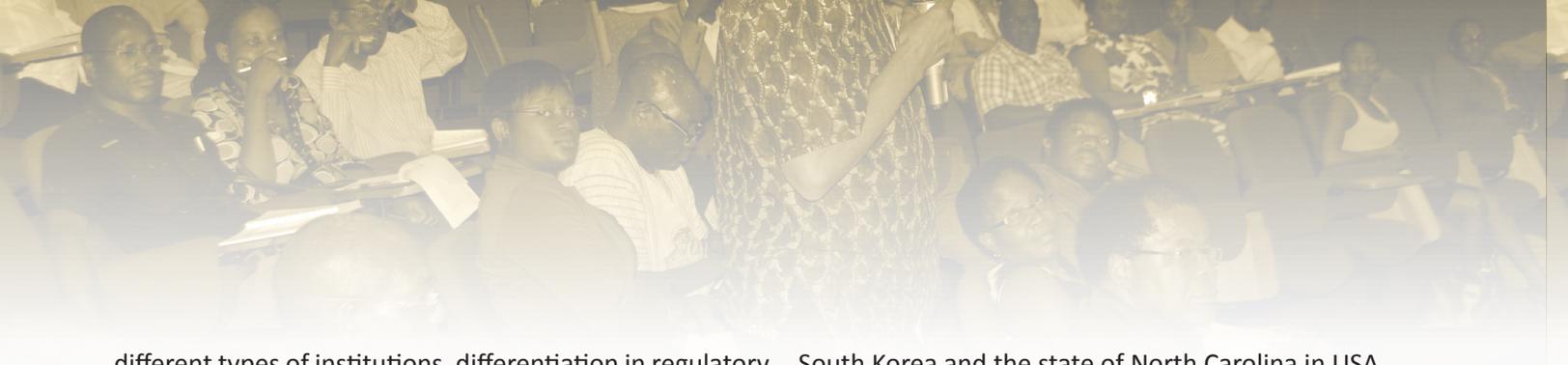
Arguments in favour of institutional diversification

Prof. Stumpf stated that institutional diversification advocates opined that a diversified system provides more differentiated access to higher education and was better suited to meeting the diverse needs of students in developing countries. Proponents believed that it provided far better for student mobility from one type of institution to another and from one kind of study to another. Proponents argued, also, that such a system was better equipped to meet the needs of the labour market and it permitted both so-called 'elite' and 'mass' higher education, the former emphasizing advanced degree students, the latter entry level degree studies. It also increased institutional effectiveness and provided opportunities for innovation and experimentation in Teaching & Learning (T&L) and research.

Prof. Stumpf mentioned governance & control, programme profiles, research orientation and knowledge or disciplinary emphasis as some of the factors in institutional diversification.

Types of institutional differentiation

Prof. Stumpf explained that institutional differentiation could be put into hard and soft categories. Hard institution differentiation was normally based on a structural classification system such as the one found in universities in California in the USA. It normally comes with criteria for



different types of institutions, differentiation in regulatory frameworks governance systems, differentiated policies for levels of institutional autonomy and different types of institutions. The proponents of hard institutional differentiation argued that it was an effective way of dealing with institutional drift and that it enabled the public to understand the higher education sector better.

He said that soft institutional differentiation, on the other hand, was based on allowing and recognising the evolving identities of institutions as they grew and matured. Such differentiation was characterised by a permeable framework for institutional types and the possibility of an institution to change from one type into another. It made assumptions on role of distinctive institutional visions, missions and values in shaping institutional behaviour. It further made assumptions on institutional self-regulation and it suited a developmental framework.

Prof. Stumpf further explained that there were different types of institutions from small, medium to large with respect to their academic activities and corresponding student enrolment. He added that programme profiles, as well as the teaching and learning approaches, the undergraduate or postgraduate emphasis, the intensity of research undertaken, the mode of education delivery ranging from classroom focused face-to-face delivery to technologically-mediated distance learning; geographical location ranging from urban to rural-based institutions, as well as HE originating sectors ranging from fully public funded universities to fully private institutions were important factors in differentiating higher education institutions.

South Korea and the state of North Carolina in USA.

In each case there was evidence of a strong, closely-connected relationship between education and economic development in general and higher education and economic development in particular.

Prof. Stumpf mentioned that common to all three cases was a strong and mutually agreed-upon framework for economic development aimed at realising an advanced, competitive knowledge economy, and explicit recognition of the important role of HE in this regard. He mentioned the following conditions for harnessing HE in promoting economic development as exhibited by the three cases:



Professor Stumpf

Review of Namibia's HE system

Prof. Stumpf touched on the 2011 Review of Namibia's higher education system in relation to its contribution to the achievement of Vision 2033 that was carried out using the framework of the Study done by CHET in 2011 in SA in order to get a better understanding of the relationship between HE and development. He mentioned that the CHET study interrogated three cases namely Finland,

- HE systems built on a foundation of equitable quality schooling with an emphasis on achieving high quality HE;
- Very high participation rates in HE;
- Diversified HE systems characterised by high levels of institutional differentiation as part of achieving human capital, Research and Development (R&D);



- and innovation objectives for economic development;
- A close link between economic and high education planning;
 - Effective partnership and networks between government, HE institutions and the private sector to ensure that effective education and training took place and to stimulate appropriate research and innovation;
 - Higher education systems with strong academic cores in terms of quality and quantity;
 - Active government involvement in a number of other areas including adequate public funding for HE, using funding to steer the HE sector to appropriate responses to labour market requirements and incentivising research and innovation in the HE sector; and
 - An understanding between core socio-economic actors on role of higher education in development.

Those core conditions, Prof. Stumpf said are critical to any country to realise the linking of economic development to HE and for HE to contribute successfully to sustainable development-knowledge economies.

HE participation rates

Prof. Stumpf stated that with respect to higher education participation rates, it emerged that the gross enrolment rate (GER) for Namibia, which is defined as the proportion of 20 - 24 year olds in higher education over the proportion of people in higher education aged between 20 - 24 years, was 10,5 % in 2011.

He argued that if Namibia set a gross enrolment target of 19% by 2030 – the tentative end date of Vision 2030 – it would require a 5% growth in enrolment per annum for the next nearly 20 years - plus minus 3 000 new students in the system per year. And if the target GER was 48% by 2030, then it would require a 10% growth in enrolment per annum for the next nearly twenty years, plus minus 10 000 new students per year. His view was that the sustainability of such growth rates given Namibia's present expenditure of 0.6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on higher education was "questionable". The implications

were that the government would have to spend more on higher education.

Diversity of HE system

With respect to academic programmes, Prof. Stumpf stated 3 types of academic programmes; general formative academic programmes that seek to give students a solid grounding in the knowledge and theory of a one or two disciplines; professional oriented academic programmes that equip students for entry into specific professions and the vocationally-oriented programmes that are directed at equipping students with knowledge and theory within a specific vocational context and teaching the specific vocational skills required by the field in question.

He said that the HE Review showed that in terms of programme Namibia has close to 49% of students enrolled in vocationally-oriented programmes, 36% in professionally oriented programmes and about 16% in general formative programmes. He opined that it was not a bad distribution.

He noted that if one looked at the total distribution on qualification levels (certificates, diplomas, Bachelor's degrees, Honours degrees, Postgraduate diplomas, Masters degrees, Doctoral degrees) in Namibia, it becomes apparent that the country would need to move much more strongly into masters and doctoral degrees. Some entry level degrees would need to be transformed into advanced degree studies.

His view was that the many certificates and diplomas being offered by UNAM should ideally be reflected on the postgraduate side. As for PoN, which is aspiring to transform into a University of Science and Technology, Prof. Stumpf's considered view was that it was "far too light" in the certificate and diploma sides.



He opined that there was no need to offer entry-level higher education programmes such as certificates and diplomas at high cost institutions.

He further opined that higher education institutions created at independence were expected to do everything during that time. “It is understandable that UNAM has a high degree of certificate and diploma programmes because there was nothing else apart from PoN. However, there is no need for a developing country to be on this path forever” he argued.

He said that the mandates of higher education institutions in Namibia should be revisited as UNAM and PoN drifted away from their respective missions, while the incorporation of CoEs and agriculture into UNAM has contributed significantly towards diminishing public HE’s institutional differentiation.

Turning to the knowledge fields, Prof. Stumpf said that data from the Review revealed that Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) was at 25,5%, Business and Economic Sciences at 49%, Education at 15% and Humanities and Social Sciences at about 11%. That distribution, he said, was not uncommon in many developing countries, with many of them struggling to increase enrollment in the science, engineering and technology fields. The Review showed, also, that UNAM had a higher enrolment in these fields than PoN.

“For PoN that is a challenge. The distribution in SET is quite low because of the very high proportion in business and management areas.”

On mode of delivery, the Review showed that direct face-to-face contact was at 75% while distance education was about 25%. Prof. Stumpf stated that it should be borne in mind that a considerable number of Namibians likely study via distance education through UNISA in SA, where its correspondence courses make up approximately 35% of all HE enrolment (including public as well as private institutions). He opined that Namibia could expand its delivery of HE through open and distance education.

As far as centralised and decentralised provision of higher education is concerned, the Review showed that four out of every five higher education students received their high education in Windhoek and one out of every five in the regions. Thus, he said, is evident that significant inequalities exist in HE participation across Namibia and it is undoubtedly linked with the varied availability of HE study opportunities in the country’s urban and rural areas.

“This seems to be a major challenge for Namibia to take a greater level of higher education into the various regions in the country.”

Stressing that masters and PhD studies were important in transforming a country into a knowledge economy, Prof. Stumpf remarked that Namibia needed to “do some real work” in its higher education system in relation to knowledge products required by a knowledge economy as visualized by its development blueprint Vision 2030.

Prof. Stumpf said universities with more staff members with masters and PhD qualifications tended to be ranked highly. He held out the example of the University of Cape Town (UCT), where 91% of faculty held Masters or PhD degrees.

“There is no way you can build sustainable, viable PhD and Masters programmes without having qualified staff to do that,” he warned, adding that Namibia needed to appoint more “homegrown” academic staff”.

“The present system is not equitable. There should be improved higher education capacity in the country and more certificates and diplomas but not at UNAM, which needs more enrolments in general programmes, especially in research-based postgraduate study”.

The country’s higher education sector, he said, needed greater institutional differentiation in various areas including curtailing mission drift of institutions, new institutional types and the country should consider re-establishing teacher education colleges, even in limited form.



“You need a strengthened open distance education, a non-urban provision of higher education, a strengthened academic core in terms of increased PhD and research outputs and a greater but planned policy-supported role for the private sector.”

He said failure to do so would result in the private sector growing in an un-coordinated way.

Prof. Stumpf highlighted the following features that Namibia’s HE system should display to improve its contribution to realising a knowledge economy:

- Expanded access to HE;
- Equitable funded HE system;
- Improved HE capacity in the Ministry of Education and NCHE;
- More certificates and diploma enrollments in vocational programmes but not at UNAM;
- More enrolments in general programmes and research-based PG studies;
- Increased enrolments in SET especially PoN;
- Greater institutional differentiation - new institutional types;
- Curtailing mission drift of institutions;
- Establishing new institutional types;
- Re - establishing of TE Colleges;
- Strengthening open distance education;
- Strengthening non-urban provision;
- Strengthening academic core;
- Increased PhD and research outputs; and
- Greater but planned private sector role.

Prof. Stumpf presented four options that he said Namibia could consider in establishing a differentiated HE system that would strengthen the system to enable it to fulfil its role in steering the country towards a knowledge-based economy;

The first option, which he called ‘the easy way out’ scenario entails simply targeting UNAM and PoN to absorb the additional student enrolments required per annum.

UNAM has to pay particular attention to enrolling more students in the humanities and to advance postgraduate research at masters and PhD degree levels. UNAM would then begin to phase out some of the certificate and diploma programmes. PoN would have to introduce more certificate and diploma students and emphasise more SET enrolments. The two institutions would also have to decentralise their educational delivery. He noted that this option is weak.

The second option, was the ‘between a rock and a hard place’, would involve a partial re-establishment of the colleges of education for primary teacher education.

“The secondary teacher education training can be left at UNAM because subject knowledge is quite crucial at that level.”

The second option would entail, also, expanding NAMCOL’s open distance learning mandate considerably to allow it to offer lower higher education qualifications, certificate and diploma programmes via ODL. NCHE would develop a quality assurance support system for the teacher education colleges and NAMCOL. The rest he said are as in option 1. According to Prof Stumpf, this option is moderate.

The third option, which he referred to as ‘all eggs in one basket’, would entail consolidating all public open distance learning in one institution like NAMCOL. The rest he said are as in option 1. According to him, this option is moderate like option 2.

The last option, ‘many eggs in many baskets’ combines the best elements of options one to three. It would also entail establishing two university colleges outside Windhoek, FET colleges for TVET, CoEs for Grade 1 - 5 teachers and expand NAMCOL’s mandate to offer HE certificates and diploma programmes via ODL. He said contrary to widespread misconception, a university college is not a university. It is a teaching institution with no research mandate. It offers certificate, diploma and first-degree studies in some areas.



Research shows that setting up university colleges acts as a very powerful developmental stimulus as it attracts business and institutions. Furthermore, PoN would be renamed as Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) and to expand UNAM and NUST intake and outputs.

Prof. Stumpf viewed that after careful analysis, the only option that would give Namibia increased access to higher education is the fourth option. That option would also allow for a wide variety of different kinds of institutions that would meet the diverse student needs of the Namibian population.

Conclusion

In his concluding remarks, Prof. Stumpf stated that Namibia was at a very exciting point in its time. The country he said, had an opportunity to 'get it right' in strengthening its higher education system and warned that opportunity does not knock twice and that Rome was not built in one day.

Prof. Stumpf emphasised that access, quality and HR requirements of Vision 2030 mean that "Diversification is no longer a choice for Namibian higher education system. You have to go that route. He concluded."

Prof. Stumpf emphasised further that diversification should be accompanied by a very sound cost principle.

"Higher education institutions are very expensive and especially postgraduate studies because of the research emphasis," Prof. Stumpf said.

Prof. Stumpf further remarked that if Namibia wanted to move forward with a diversified system or not it needed a higher education management information system that had consistent, validated information that could be used for planning.

"You will not succeed in surviving in a globalised, internationalised economy without a higher education management information system."

He concluded by emphasising the role of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in determining similarities and differences between qualifications thus promoting articulation of qualifications and credit portability.

4. PANEL DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS

Following the keynote presentation by Prof. Stumpf, a panel of experts held a discussion based on the issues raised by Prof. Stumpf.

Mr. Heroldt Murangi, Director of NAMCOL concurred with Prof. Stumpf that there was indeed need to expand access to higher education through delivery of open and distance learning.



Mr. Heroldt Murangi, Director, Namcol

“I think we should learn from the examples of other countries that include SA, Zimbabwe and Botswana. If we want to increase access to education we should expand through open and distance learning,” Mr. Murangi said.

He said statistics indeed showed that out of the five learners, four were in Windhoek.

“That is a worrying fact that needs to be addressed,” he said.

Mr. Murangi further said the solution to limited access to education could be found in open distance learning. He conceded that ODL had its own challenges such as quality, through-put rates, recognition, drop-out rates but quality assurance systems could solve those challenges.

Mr. Murangi opined that there was need for a change of mindset among service providers in the HE sector.

“We have the tendency of owning institutions. What we should understand is that these are public funded institutions and we are here to serve the nation.”

He said Namibia faced a major challenge around the mobility of students from one institution to another.

“It is easier for me to work with UNISA, the Open University of Tanzania and Zimbabwe Open University than with our own universities. That should change,” he said.

He explained that NAMCOL students were finding it difficult to enrol in the Namibian higher education institutions, such as UNAM and PoN. In frustration, such students turn to South African universities at great financial costs.

Mr. Victor Kaulinge, HR Policy Adviser at NPC agreed with Prof. Stumpf that diversification was the best option



Mr. Victor Kaulinge, HR Policy Adviser, NPC

GALLERY







for Namibia’s high education sector.

He provided statistics with respect to students’ enrolment in the education sector.

“In 2013 there was more than 200 000 lower primary enrolment. Upper primary was 163 000, while secondary was about 40 000, giving an overall of 600 000,” he said.

He pointed out that the drop-out rate among Grade 10 learners was at about 32%, Grade 12 at 10%, while repetition rates in Grade 12 were at about 20%. Mr. Kaulinge explained that out of 33 000 learners who wrote Grade 10 examinations in 2012, about 10 000 dropped out. “This tells us that within our education system there is need to create opportunities for our learners who are not able to proceed.”

He said diversification was the way to go. Since diversification was still very low, not many learners were well equipped when they left formal education at Grade 10.

Based on the Grade 12 results for 2012, Mr. Kaulinge said that 1 218 learners passed with a minimum of 25 points, needed to enrol into higher education institutions.

He said it was not known for certain if those numbers were sufficient to meet human resources development needs for the country to become a knowledge-based economy.

Mr. Kaulinge lastly pointed out that there was need to strengthen the country’s pre-primary education, as well as primary education. That would lay a strong foundation for learners that would eventually qualify to enter higher education institutions.

On his part, **Professor Osmund Mwandemele, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research at UNAM**, congratulated Prof. Stumpf for his stimulating lecture and for leading the consultancy that produced the Review report on Namibia’s higher education system.



Professor Osmund Mwandemele, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research, UNAM

Prof. Mwandemele, however, lamented the fact that the Report was never thoroughly discussed before it was taken to Cabinet.

“If the Report on the higher education sector had been discussed, there would have been a lot of issues which could have been discussed and ironed out,” Prof. Mwandemele said.

He said contrary to Prof. Stumpf’s assertion, UNAM had 72% of its academic staff as holders of Master or PhD degrees. Prof. Mwandemele said there was a misconception in the Report Prof. Stumpf quoted in that it claimed that UNAM had drifted from its mandate.

“This is not correct because the Act that established UNAM states that UNAM should offer degrees; master’s degree, diplomas and certificates.”

He said people should not forget where Namibia came from. He explained that at independence Namibia had a backlog of people who needed to be upgraded and assisted academically.



“Many people you find today in government and many other institutions with degrees are the ones who started with certificates. If UNAM did not respond to societal needs, we would not be where we are now,” Prof. Mwandemele said. He added that UNAM was still offering some certificates and diplomas but at the request of the government or other organizations.

Turning to calls for the reintroduction of diplomas in teacher education training, Prof. Mwandemele said such a move would be retrogressive.

“In 2007/8 there was a Consultancy which was commissioned by the Ministry of Education. It was on the basis of recommendations from that Consultancy that BETD was phased out.”

His view was that at time when the rest of the world was walking away from diplomas, it would not be prudent for UNAM to go back to them.

“Vision 2030 requires us to have a strong foundation of education.”

Professor Tjama Tjivikua, Rector at PoN, started by thanking the late Namibia’s Minister of Education Dr. Abraham Iyambo for initiating the review into the country’s higher education sector in relation to its contribution to the achievement of Vision 2030.



Professor Tjama Tjivikua, Rector at PoN

“This study was overdue. Every decade or so I think there should be a periodic review of the system, even if we think that things are alright. Obviously we would discover that things are not right,” Prof. Tjivikua said.

Prof. Tjivikua expressed concern over the fact that vocational and higher education did not “speak” to each other. Also throwing his weight behind diversification, he said it would be ideal if NAMCOL transformed into an open university.

“These are recommendations that we should consider but sometimes there are personal interests at stake, so it is always very different to strike a balance,” he said.

He said the recommendations made in the Review and by Prof. Stumpf required commitment and resources, as well as collaboration among stakeholders to maintain diversity.

“I think we have arrived here not to turn back but to agree that we move forward.”

He stated that the recommendations made in the Review and repeated by Prof. Stumpf were not new. They were just in a different form.

“I stood here in August 1999 and I said PoN should be renamed a University of Science and Technology. There was an uproar and applause. Fourteen years later we are engaged with that process,” he said.

He called for further analysis and planning to guide systematic implementation soon. Prof. Tjivikua dismissed the view that Namibia lacked resources to implement the recommendations.

“The resources to implement” are there. The question is: where do we place the resources? I contend that Namibia is not a poor country... We have the capacity to invent and reinvent the (higher education) system.”

He said there was need for monitoring and evaluation to enable the country to measure the outputs following investment into given initiatives.



“Much more can be done and much can be achieved if resources are equitably distributed and placed in the right way, in the right systems.”

He would like to see incentives being given to systems that are performing. His assessment of the report on the higher education sector is that it presents a socially acceptable solution to the lower level of education and the college sector, where some people think vocational education and training does not make sense.

“I think it is time we revisit and rethink that philosophy to see how vocational education and training links with higher education.”

He said research and development for any economy could only happen with diversification of higher education with a specific focus on science and technology but there was need for clear benchmarks to guide students’ mobility across institutions.

Prof. Tjivikua called for the strengthening of NCHE through providing it with the relevant human resources it needs to implement its mandate.

“For a long time they don’t even own a building of their own. You are working from a corner for how many years, for goodness’ sake? How much autonomy do they have?”

Mr. Timotheus Angala, President of NANSO, concurred with Prof. Stumpf that Namibia was better advised to take

Option Four as it strives towards the goals of Vision 2030.

“I agree because (Option Four) enables students to enrol at all levels to ensure that even the under performers enter higher education,” Mr. Angala said.

He expressed concern over the fact that the mandates of some higher-level institutions were not “very clear”.

“State institutions are offering almost the same courses. The issue of mandate must be well defined.”

Turning to costs, Mr. Angala said some students could not afford to enrol at some institutions, which he said were increasing their fees by 10% annually.

“NCHE must look into the funding so that tuition fees are relaxed.”

He called for greater collaboration between higher education institutions and the private sector so that the former can produce fit for purpose graduates.

“Last year we heard our labour market saying our higher education institutions were producing half-cooked graduate. The private sector should collaborate with higher education so that the graduates are in line with expectations.”

He called for specific time frames in which recommendations to improve the higher education sector are implemented. Postgraduate students should be assisted to conduct research that props the country’s development agenda, he concluded.

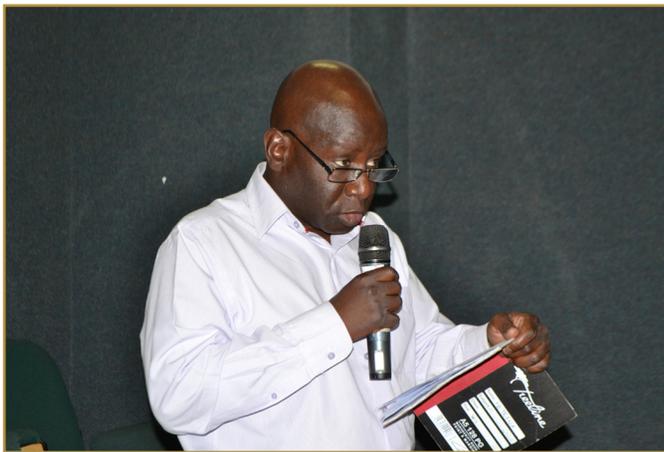


Mr. Timotheus Angala, President of NANSO

5. OPEN DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS

At the end of the well-articulated and powerful presentations by Prof. Stumpf, as well as the thought provoking debate among the panelists, the audience was also given the opportunity for questions and comments.

Mr. Medusalem Nakale from UNAM cautioned against embracing recommendations and suggestions without carefully examining them.



Mr. Medusalem Nakale from UNAM

“It’s good for us to get all these excellent ideas but there is also a problem in this country. Sometimes we just take without really thinking about the underpinning beliefs.”

He cited the example of cooperating with the private sector, whose underpinning philosophy he said was not known for certain. He said there was need to question why there was a gap in terms of what academia was producing and the needs of the market.

Mr. Nakale said there was no marriage between theory and practice in Namibia.

“Some of the knowledge is not in the classroom. It’s outside there in the workplace. A lot of learning takes place there. Unfortunately some people are not aware of that.”

A member from the audience said when people discuss higher education institutions in Namibia they must desist from creating the misconception that UNAM, IUM and PoN were the only higher education institutions in the country.

He alleged that the higher education sector in Namibia was to be blamed for the labour unrest in the country.

“When you go to the higher education institutions and ask them for statistics of graduates trained over the years for us to prove beyond reasonable doubt that we have lack of skills they are unable to provide them.”

Professor Rehabeam Auala from UNAM emphasised that pre and upper primary education was important.

“Primary education is the foundation of further education. Therefore, would like to see primary education being taken care of by qualified teachers.”

He said in the past less qualified people were allowed to teach in primary school, with disastrous consequences.

“When you have a foundation which is shaking, further education will also be shaking,” he said.

He said vocational education was the backbone of an industrial country and should be strengthened.

“Vocational education and training needs to be emphasised in this country if Vision 2030 is to be realised,” he said, adding that there was need for a clear plan on how to deal with the vacuum that will be created when PoN is transformed into a university.



Professor Kingo Mchombu from UNAM said there was need to spare a thought for the countless children who were doomed because their parents were too poor to take them to good schools.

Ms. Hertha Pomuti, the Director of National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) wondered if the NQA had any role to play in diversification of the higher education sector.



Professor Kingo Mchombu from UNAM

Another member of the audience said NCHE should ensure greater access to higher education for people with disabilities.

Mr. Peter Fane said he had read a speech by a former Minister of Education in which he alleged that UNAM and PoN had created new programmes without going through the proper process as laid out in legislation. Prof. Tjivikua dismissed those claims as misleading.

A law student at UNAM expressed the view that diversification was ill timed in Namibia given that the country was grappling with unemployment among graduates. She said there was no emphasis on internship in higher education institutions leading to employers shunning graduates who lacked experience.

“In looking at the higher education sector, one needs to look at the feeders to that sector which would influence the quality of what we have in the higher education sector,” Prof. Mchombu said

“Diversification would mean us producing more graduates that do not have experience.”

He also said that there was need for strategies to ensure that the economy grew fast enough to absorb the products of higher education institutions.

Professor Errol Tyobeka from PoN, presented the last thoughts. His view was that stakeholders in the higher education sector were not “talking to each other” enough. For that reason he commended NCHE for organizing the Public Lecture.

Professor Hippolyte Mwyingi from PoN called for a relook at the types of graduates that higher education institutions were producing.

“If we want to succeed we need a strong base. The statistics told us where the weak link is: pre-tertiary and we need to focus on that.”

“Worldwide, if we consider the shrinking job market, we still continue to say we should guarantee jobs to graduates. Why not think the other way round and produce graduates who should create jobs?” Prof Mwyingi asked.

He said while there was general consensus that diversity was the way to go, it needed to be planned carefully lest it brings about confusion.



“In the end you can have many units sitting all over and we say that is diversity. Unless we begin to work as a system of higher education, we will not be able to remove blockages in the system,” he said, adding that articulation was “critical”.

“We should also remember that higher education is part of a broader system; a national system of innovation. For it to function and lead to economic development, higher education needs to work within a system of innovation.”

In general the audience calls for:

- More public lectures to be organised to engage the public more in higher education related issues;
- UNAM and PoN to produce more job creators and less job seekers; and
- Physical facilities at higher education institutions to be improved in relation to inclusive education.

6. CONCLUSION AND CLOSING



Mr. Mocks Shivute, Executive Director, NCHS Secretariat

After a spirited discussion around the topic of the Public Lecture, Mr. Shivute, took the floor and thanked the Keynote Speaker, Prof. Stumpf for making time available off his busy schedule and for delivering a very well-thought and well-researched presentation. He then expressed a special word of gratitude to the panelists, the moderator, as well as the audience for their active participation. He promised that the report on the Public Lecture would be printed and shared with all stakeholders.

Public Lecture Programme

Director of Programme

Mr. Mocks Shivute, Executive Director, NCHE Secretariat

17h30 – 18h00

Registration

18h00

Welcoming Remarks: Mr. Mocks Shivute

Keynote Presentation: Prof. Rolf Stumpf

Discussions

Moderator: Mr. Lesley Tjiueza, Journalist and TV Presenter, NBC

Panelist 1: Mr. Timotheus Angala, President, NANSO

Panelist 2: Mr. Herold Murangi, Director, NAMCOL

Panelist 3: Mr. Victor Kaulinge, HR, Policy Adviser, NPC

Panelist 4: Prof. Tjama Tjivikua, Rector, PoN

Panelist 5: Prof. Osmund Mwandemele, PVC, UNAM

Open Discussion and Comments

Conclusion and Closing: Mr. Mocks Shivute, Director of Programme

APPENDIX 2

Public Lecture Participants

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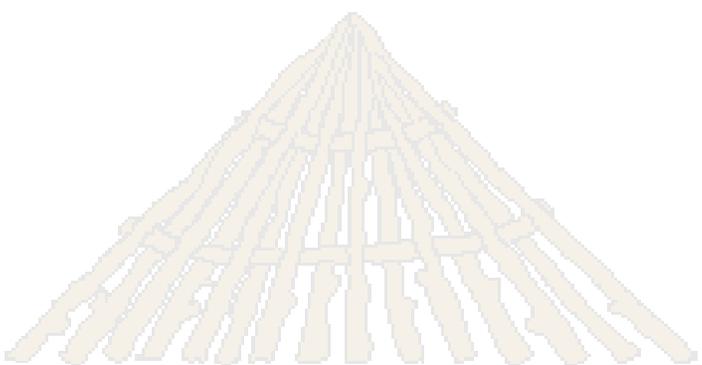


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