



STATEMENT BY:

**HONOURABLE DR. DAVID NAMWANDI,
MINISTER OF EDUCATION,**

AT THE OCCASION OF:

**HIGHER EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS' CONSULTATIVE
WORKSHOP**

ON:

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SAFARI HOTEL, WINDHOEK

Director of the Programme

Skill Factor Consultants

Distinguished Stakeholders

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

The post-independence policies of the Government of the Republic of Namibia have been guided by a national reconciliation drive, land reform, strong efforts in education and job creation in the public service and state-owned enterprises sectors.

The Government remains committed to stimulating economic growth, eradicate poverty and income inequalities and improving the living standards of its people to the level of a developed country by 2030.

Our long term objective - Vision 2030 - describes a future Namibia where “prosperity, harmony, peace and political stability” are achieved through progress in education, science and

technology, health, sustainable agriculture, peace, social justice and gender equality.

Furthermore, Vision 2030 also calls for rapid economic growth accompanied by equitable social development. These twin goals of growth and equity are to be pursued within a broader strategic framework of transforming the economy into a knowledge economy through the development of more middle and higher levels skills.

In addition, the detailed Action Plan of NDP4 directs, inter alia, the following two strategic initiatives for education and skills: “Address the mismatch in the demand for and supply of skills” and “promote the establishment of additional institutions of higher learning.”

Dear Participants

An effective higher education and training system is fundamental to generating the skills and knowledge that are critical for the country to prosper and compete in the international arena.

It is against this background that Cabinet commissioned a comprehensive and holistic

review and reform of the entire higher education system be conducted in order to principally determine whether the higher education system in Namibia, in its current form, contributes and will adequately contribute to the achievement of Vision 2030.

The review was subsequently undertaken and a good number of its recommendations were approved by Cabinet at the end of last year.

The Review confirmed many of the challenges that we face in Namibia, such as the skills deficit, weak linkages between higher education and the private and business sector and the unpreparedness of Grade 12 school leavers for further studies, among others.

One of the Cabinet directives to me, as the Minister of Education, was to engage technical assistance with required knowledge and skills in the governance of higher education to spearhead the implementation process. The first activity identified, was the development of a costed implementation plan for the higher education reform in Namibia.

This Implementation Plan with detailed time lines was to also contain monitoring and evaluation guidelines to assess the impact and achievement of the implementation process.

The very reason why we are gathered here today, is to provide input into the draft implementation plan.

This costed implementation plan is very crucial. We need to start working on the implementation of some of the recommendations of the report with immediate effect.

In fact, some of the recommendations, such as the Public Higher Education Institutions Fee Policy, the Higher Education Management Information System, and the transformation of the Polytechnic of Namibia into a university of science and technology are already underway.

We do not want the Report with its valuable recommendations to collect dust in our offices. We also do not want to implement only the recommendations with which we are comfortable. We need to address the recommendations in a systematic, sequenced and phased fashion. The challenge here is to take

the correct steps at the correct time and dedicate the correct level of attention to each Cabinet directive.

Naturally the implementation of some of these recommendations will require more time as appropriate policies and systems should first be developed. However, there is a number of recommendations that requires less effort and could be implemented henceforth.

Your presence here today is a testimony to your wholehearted support of the higher education reform. Your inputs and recommendations will be valuable to the consultants to produce:

- An Implementation Plan that would be acceptable to Cabinet;
- an Implementation Plan that would be implementable;
- an Implementation Plan that would be affordable;
- an Implementation Plan that would have strong guidelines and manageable, yet challenging time lines;

- an Implementation Plan that would clearly assign responsibilities to the different role players;
- an Implementation Plan that would reform higher education landscape in the country;
- an Implementation Plan that would bring about a series of impressive reforms to ensure that the higher education system will support the realization of our national development goals and steer the country towards a knowledge economy.

I trust that these discussions will be constructive and contribute to these objectives.

I wish you success in your deliberations; we are looking forward to the outcome of this workshop.

I thank you !.