Republic of Namibia

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

ADDRESS TO TEACHERS BY
HON. KATRINA HANSE-HIMARWA, MP
MINISTER
DURING THE OMUSATI REGIONAL VISIT

5 JUNE 2012
Director of Ceremonies;
Honourable Governor of Omusati Region, Erignus Endjala;
Honourable Deputy Minister of Education Anna Ester Nghipondoka;
Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councillors;
Distinguished Acting Director of Education, Arts and Culture;
Distinguished Deputy Directors of Education, Arts and Culture;
Distinguished Traditional, Spiritual and Community leaders;
Distinguished Inspectors of Education and Education Officers;
Distinguished Chairpersons of Schoolboard;
Distinguished School Principals;
Distinguished Heads of Departments and Teachers;
Distinguished Business Community;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Members of the Media;
Dear Learners;
Ladies and Gentlemen
I feel honoured and privileged for the invitation extended to me to deliver the keynote address on this special day to Omusati Region.

Today, we consider it imperative to celebrate this prestigious event of Prize Giving and Awards Ceremony in the sense that it gives our schools a chance to reap the fruit of our labour. It is a showcase of the efforts and achievements of our learners, teachers and community members alike throughout 2014 and at the same time for us to reflect on our work.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to congratulate you all on your well-deserved awards, which is the main aim for the gathering here today. Education is the backbone of our country and its people. Education is basic necessity for an individual’s success in life. It provides our learners with mental and physical skills that prepare them for the world of work in later life.

Education is also seen as the foundation of society which brings socio-economic prosperity and political stability. Government pays serious attention to education and supports it financially, thus the Government of Namibia has, committed itself to education, and as a result for the past twenty – five years since Independence the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture received the largest portion of the national budget, for we believe that it is the best investment for the masses since educated people have more opportunities to get better paying jobs and become self-reliant. Such returns on any investment are key to economic emancipation.

I would like to Congratulate Omusati Education Directorate on the splendid performance in JSC 2014 results were 52 Schools have achieved the 70% Regional target, in the face of the fact that most schools do not have electricity and have limited resources.

Moreover, we are going to embark on a massive campaign to improve the results of the Senior Secondary School phase, together we have to
work hard to change the attitude and perception that our learners cannot do better at this level. We urgently need to develop and implement strategies to improve the NSSC results.

Of late, there is a great emphasis on higher education and this message goes out to the Grade 12 learners. You cannot perform bad and expect to get admission to an institute of high learning, let alone getting a good job. You have got to sweat for it! Your future lies in your own hands. What you make of your education will decide nothing less than the future of this country. The future of Namibia depends on you.

What you are learning in school today will determine whether we as a nation can meet our greatest challenges in the future. You will need the knowledge and problem-solving skills you learn in Science and Mathematics to cure diseases like AIDS, and to develop new energy technologies and protect our environment. You will need the insights and critical thinking skills you gain in Geography and other Social Sciences to fight poverty, homelessness and crime and make our nation fairer through equal wealth distribution.

I am well aware of our key challenges in our education system ranging from dilapidated classrooms, inadequate learners’ chairs and desks, unequipped libraries and laboratories, teachers’ houses, dilapidated hostels etc.

While those are legitimate challenges, the wheel cannot stop to turn, it is, in the midst of all these, expected from all of us to make do with what is at our disposal and shape a Namibian child’s life, regardless of these hurdles. I want to therefore stress it here that those challenges cannot be used as a blanket excuse for neglecting your school work or portray a bad attitude towards your responsibilities or perhaps drop out of school. Where you are right now does not have to determine where you will end up. That is why today I’m calling on each one of
you to set your own goals for your education and to do everything you can to meet your goals. So do not let us down, make us all proud.

To Senior Education Officers and Inspectors of Education; Schools need to be visited for assistance and evaluation. Constantly strategize and change if what is there is not working.

Principals, Heads of Departments and Teachers; you urgently need to initiate strategies based on what you have at your disposal.

In the end, the region needs to increase the number of learners who qualify for further studies at institutions of higher learning. A drastic turnaround is needed in our NSSC performance, to ensure the development of an educated and skilled workforce that will aid our country to compete with major economies of the world, and in tandem realize our national dream ‘Vision 2030’.

I would like to congratulate the Region for launching its second Regional Performance Improvement Strategy (RPIS II) which is aiming at improving work ethics and job performance. I urge the Region to continue pushing for outstanding performance outcomes. I am aware of the strategies the region has been adopted incontextualizing RPIS II and derive envisaged outcomes. I hope finding ways to implement the Professional Standard for Teachers in Namibia and ensure that automatic transfer policy is interpreted and implemented through learning support to eventually build the capacity needed to successfully uplift the education system. I was also made to believe that encouraging more Senior Secondary Schools to offer NSSC Higher level and developing strategies to improve the English proficiency of learners and teachers will certainly strengthen the regional capacity to better performances. Exposing learners to Vocational Education and facilitating support for School of Production will definitely propel Namibia towards a skill-based society. Hence, continuing with vacation symposiums and holiday classes remain top priority.
Omusati Education Directorate is the first to pilot and implement Namibia Novice Teacher Induction Program (NNTIP) in Namibia. This Mentoring Program is a nurturing process in which a more skilled or experienced teacher encourages a less experienced mentee. Mentoring process not only enables teachers to grow and develop as professional, but also contributes to a more collaborative culture within our Schools. This program will motivate novice teachers to focus on their personal best, reduce incompetence and direct them to find pleasure in teaching as a profession. The Region should continue to implement the program, I urge for the program to be a success for the other Regions to come emulate.

Basic literacy and numeracy will generate excellent returns in labour markets, especially in developing countries. The implementation of Grade 5 to 7 Standardized Achievement Tests (SATs) will ensure that our learners have basic literacy and numeracy skills at lower grades, which will benefit them at the upper grades. This test has brought change in literacy and numeracy development in our schools. I am delighted to hear that we have a category were the best performing Grade 5 & 7 schools and most improved Grade 5 & 7 schools in SAT’s will be awarded trophies, I would like to see more awards of this nature being awarded in order to boost our learners from the lower grades, specifically lower primary grades to see the implementation of the new curriculum.

I would like to express gratitude for the fact that in Omusati Region it does take a whole village to educate the child. Indeed, parents take active role in their children’s education which produces the willingness in children to learn. Our parents sacrifice their time and money and sometimes even their health to raise educational level because they realize that education is the passport of their children’s future. I would like to recognize our sponsors; all your efforts motivate and prepare our youngsters for adulthood so that they may
form the next generation of leaders. Remember that today they are the youth, tomorrow they are the leaders.

As I conclude, allow me Directors of Ceremonies to take this opportunity to congratulate all recipients of the different categories who will be receiving their awards today. You have done us proud. You defied all odds and made things happen under difficult circumstances. We are really proud of you.

For all those who won’t be receiving awards today do not despair because, in our book, you are also winners. The best way to motivate ourselves is through focusing on our personal best and by finding satisfaction in everything we do. By virtue that you are changing the lives of the Namibian children for the better out there, you are a winner.

My gratitude also goes to all the parents who assisted schools during the flood period. Your passion to lend a helping hand is astonishing. All that I can say is that, soldier- on, do not give up the good work and always think of what you can do for your region and your country rather than what your region and your country can do for you.

I thank you!!