



KEYNOTE ADDRESS
BY THE MINISTER OF SPORT, YOUTH
AND NATIONAL SERVICE

HON. ERASTUS A. UTONI

ON 25 JUNE 2019

AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
121 RURAL YOUTH ENTERPRISE
TRAINING WORKSHOP

Thank you, Director of Ceremonies Dr. Inaani Kahikuata –
Kaiko, Director of Youth

- Hon. Elia Irimari, Governor of the Oshana Region;
- Honorable Councillors Present here today;
- Mrs. Emma-Kantema-Gaomas, Executive Director of the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service;
- Mr. Mandela Kapere, Executive Chairperson of the National Youth Council;
- Professor Kenneth Matengu, Vice Chancellor of University of Namibia (UNAM);
- Mr. John Mbango, Head of Lending at the Development Bank of Namibia (DBN);
- Dr. Adalbertus and Dr. Uugwanga of University of Namibia (UNAM);
- Mr. Mally Likukela, Namibian Economist
- Respective participants from all 121 Constituencies;
- Distinguished Invited guests;
- Members of the media;
- Ladies and gentlemen;

It is with great joy that I stand before you this morning at this very important occasion that marks the official opening of the 121 Rural Youth Enterprises Training Workshop.

It is a well-known fact that Namibia together with the rest of the world, is faced with a global jobs crisis that demands a bold response. To help meet this challenge, Entrepreneurship can be a part of the solution by transforming unemployed young people into major employers.

Director of Ceremonies;

Entrepreneurship is about innovation, breaking down barriers, taking risks and showing that new business models can tackle longstanding problems.

You will all agree with me that many large companies existing today have once started small in either someone's kitchen or backyard. A number of those companies as we speak, are now major corporations giving back to communities and many individuals are also making important contributions in helping to advance the Millennium Development Goals.

Therefore, our Government continues to place significant emphasis on the young people and as a result, the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service have implemented several programmes to support our youth.

Thus, as one of the envisaged goals and outcomes in the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP), the Ministry of Sport Youth and National Service was tasked to establish youth owned enterprises in all one hundred and twenty one (121) constituencies by the year 2020.

This particular training therefore, is just one of the Ministry's numerous initiatives and we are extremely pleased with the overwhelming response from the youth of the nation.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Competitive Businesses are important to any developing nation's drive and for sustained increase in the quality of life; there must be an increase in productivity. The real growth which can then be translated into higher wages, will mostly originate from innovation and competition. This means that, business enterprises must become more involved in the communities in which they operate and contribute meaningfully to the lives of their fellow citizens.

The selection of four hundred and eighty four (484) young people from all 121 constituencies participating in this training, was done through the offices of councilors within their respective constituencies. These young people identified the types of businesses in manufacturing, construction, artisan, agriculture, hospitality and many others. They structured themselves in groups of 5 to 10 members and have registered their youth enterprises with business certificates from BIPA.

Therefore, in order to make this vision a reality, the Development Bank of Namibia responded positively by contributing to the capacity building in entrepreneurship. DBN thus contributed massively to the realization of this training to a tune of one million Namibian dollars (N\$ 1 000.000.00) while the MSYNS contributed or availed transport and allowances to the young people. This training is thus aimed at giving the participants a better understanding in business principles to enhance the management of the youth owned enterprises.

Director of Ceremonies, Distinguish Invited guests;

Young people possess many of the characteristics of the modern entrepreneur that have been identified by leading economists and social scientists. These include vision, enthusiasm, passion, flexibility, determination and resilience.

The challenge ahead of us now is for the regions and constituencies alike to ensure that their respective youth owned enterprises become successful. More importantly, a successful entrepreneur must be confident and should never, ever retreat or 'give up' at the first sign of difficulty. The spirit of the entrepreneur is unyielding and there are many fine examples of this spirit in our own history.

Success in business as in any other field requires courage and a commitment to work many long hours in pursuit of your dreams. Therefore, I truly believe and trust that the young participants will make the best out of the opportunity by showing commitment to making their enterprises a success story.

I am also informed that after this training, all participants will be expected go back to their respective constituencies and compile viable business plans for funding purposes. This I understand will be done with the assistance of DBN, UNAM, offices of constituency councilors and youth officials. The business plans if found to be viable, will help youth enterprises to convince or attract funding from financial institutions to avail the much needed funds for business growth.

Allow me now at this juncture, to thank the Development Bank of Namibia (DBN) for the funding and providing training to our young people. The Ministry of Sport Youth and National Service fully acknowledge your assistance as well as thank you in anticipation of your future commitment.

I would also like to thank UNAM for availing their venue and facilitators to provide training to the young entrepreneurs. I believe that the investment we are collectively making as a government and stakeholders will avail platforms for the development of our young people and will go a long way in keeping entrepreneurship worthy indeed.

Let me also wholeheartedly thank the Executive Director of the Ministry, Mrs. Emma Kantema – Gaomas and the staff for your commitment and sleepless nights towards making this event a reality. It was never easy from the onset but you were so determined to achieve the set goals. Again allow me to also thank the Constituency Councilors for their cooperation and assistance in this regard as well.

In conclusion, I wish to urge all the young people gathered here today and throughout the nation to become true entrepreneurs and to bring forward new ideas and innovative solutions.

Despite any challenges that we may face as a nation, the future of Namibia I strongly believe is very bright and exciting. The world is constantly changing with new opportunities emerging all the time and a true entrepreneur will make full use of them. You can be assured that the Government will provide the support and guidance that you need at all time.

The best wishes goes to you all in your efforts to become the most successful innovators and entrepreneurs. Thank you all for your support and May God bless you all.

And I thank you.

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