

**REMARKS BY TOM K ALWEENDO, DIRECTOR GENERAL, NPC  
NATIONAL ACCOUNTING TALENT SEARCH AWARD CEREMONY  
WINDHOEK, 3 DECEMBER 2012**

I would like to thank the organizers of the National Accounting Talent Search Award Ceremony for inviting me to officiate at this event. Today I want to talk to you about the significance of economic growth and the importance of education in it. I will also try to impress upon you that development requires our collective efforts and that through proper planning and implementation we will be able to overcome our challenges.

*The need to grow the economy*

Talking about challenges Namibia faces many development challenges. Our biggest challenge is the inadequate and volatile economic growth we have experienced so far, and the lack of employment opportunities available in the country. Yes, it is true that over the past twenty two years our economy has been growing at an average rate of 4 percent. This is undoubtedly higher than many of the countries have achieved, however, considering the fact that the majority of our people are without employment and still poverty stricken indicates that it has not been sufficient.

International experience has shown that the best way to permanently address poverty is not through social safety nets, but through sustained and high economic growth. We have for that reason resolved to do all that is necessary to transform our economy into one that is more robust and able to generate these essential employment opportunities. How do we plan to do that? In our recently launched 4<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan (NDP4) we have decided to prioritize our activities. We have taken a conscious decision to focus our energy and resources on areas with the greatest potential to impact our development challenges. Hence our 4<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan (NDP4) has only three goals, namely faster and sustainable economic growth, the creation of employment opportunities and enhanced income equality. We are certain that if we succeed in addressing these goals we would have put our country on a sustainable development path that will serve us well in addressing other equally pressing development challenges in the future.

Going forward we shall concentrate on putting in place certain basic economic development enablers such as creating an enabling environment, improving education and skills management, and establishing a quality health system. These enablers will assist in addressing extreme poverty and upgrade the public infrastructure we need for

our industries to perform at the required level in order to increase our economic growth. In order to achieve higher growth will also require from us to improve our institutional environment to ensure that it is easier to make business and become more competitive as a country. In other words we need to address the high cost of doing business in Namibia, address the low level of skills as already mentioned, create more opportunities to access finances, and improve our productivity as well as labour relations in the country.

### *Importance of education and how it affects growth*

Namibia aims to become an industrialized nation by the year 2030. This industrialization should preferably also be brought about by our own human resources. It hence becomes clear that education is the alpha and omega of true development.

This is so because education has been acknowledged to be the single most important aspect of human development, and a critical success factor for economic advancement and increased equality. By now it has been established that those most hit by unemployment in our country are those that possess very little education and skills. We can therefore rightly say that education is the key to open most, if not all, doors in life. This is the age of competition, irrespective of the fields of activities, and hence calls for education and skills to remain competitive. It would be inconceivable for a person to appreciate the meaning of life and living itself without education. It would even be impossible for a person to utilize his God-given gifts without the right education. Therefore everyone, regardless of his circumstances, should always strive to learn.

### *Relevant and quality education*

In order for us to achieve Vision 2030, we need skills in the right quality and quantity. However, for some time now it has been suspected that our supply of skills does not match the demand from the economy. Both the 2009 and 2011 Namibia Business and Investment Climate Surveys confirmed the skills mismatch between what the economy needs and the skills being supplied. The recent 2011-2012 Global Competitiveness Report rated Namibia as 134<sup>th</sup> out of 142 countries for “availability of scientists and engineers” and stated that an inadequately educated workforce was the most problematic factor for doing business in the country.

In your invitation letter to me you indicated that Namibia has a meager number of 300 Chartered Accountants after 20 years of independence. I get the impression that in your case there is indeed a skills mismatch between what your profession needs and what is being supplied. It then holds truth that we need to find the right balance between the skills that our economy needs and what we supply.

To rectify this imbalance the National Planning Commission embarked on a process of developing the National Human Resource Plan through undertaking a

comprehensive assessment of current available human resources in the country, the demand by the economy and the capability of education and training institutions to produce the required skilled.

With this precise knowledge about specific labour market imbalances, the Government will be in a better position to plan more effectively for the future and focus on industries where the needs are most pressing. For example, using the results from the model, we can make better decisions as to which training programs should be offered, which ones should be expanded, and which ones should be phased out in order to fit the needs of an evolving employment market. So, yes, we are indeed in the process of addressing the current skills mismatch.

*It is all of us responsible for our success*

The implementation of our national plans requires the participation of all Namibians; men, women, boys, and girls. Too often I get the impression that people think it is someone else's responsibility to ensure that our country develops and that we live prosperous lives. As a matter of fact, there seems to be a general consensus that the Government is the one that is solely responsible for our well-being. However, I would like to impress upon you the view that Government alone cannot effectively solve all our development challenges. We will have to walk this difficult path together as partners who have everything to lose in equal measure if we do not succeed. I am aware that this will only happen if we form true partnerships with all stakeholders, partnerships that are rooted in our collective desire to prosper as a nation.

It is only through our collective and inclusive action that we can ensure that all our people, especially the less well-off among us, have the necessary support to achieve their full potential.

We need to challenge everyone with an interest in development, which should be just about everyone in this country, to have a say in what we want to achieve, what the goals for our development should be and how our scarce national resources should be used most effectively. We can look to other countries to get ideas and to develop a vision of what we want to achieve, but if we are to develop and meet the needs of our people, then the decisions on what we do, how we do it and what our priorities should be, must be made by all Namibians. No one else can do it for us.

*With proper planning and the will to implement, it is all possible*

Our progress as a nation further depends on our ability and commitment to implement our plans. Going forward we need to do everything possible to remove the various constraints that hinder us from implementing many of our goals. Therefore, our actions need to be characterized by certain principles. Among these principles is the need to be steadfast in our beliefs that it is possible to overcome our current challenges. Let us

believe that we can transform our economy into a dynamic economy. Let us believe that indeed we can improve our lives. Let us, most importantly, believe that it is indeed possible to be a nation with a happy and content population.

Let our actions be guided by the knowledge that our people are counting on us to help them realize their dreams. We cannot and may not let them down. Let us each play our part and make Namibia a winning nation.

I thank you