REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBA, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA AND
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA,
AT THE OCCASION OF THE GRADUATION
CEREMONY OF UNAM NORTHERN CAMPUS

22 MAY 2014

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Director of Ceremonies,
Honourable Dr. David Namwandi, Minister of Education,
Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Distinguished Prof. Fillemon Amaambo, Chairperson of UNAM Council and all Members of UNAM Council,
Distinguished Prof. Lazarus Hangula, Vice Chancellor,
Prof. Osmund Mwandemle, Pro Vice Chancellor: Academic Affairs and Research,
Dr. Boniface Mutumba, Pro Vice Chancellor: Administration and Finance,
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Esteemed Deans, Directors, Professors and all Staff Members of the University of Namibia,
Parents, Guardians and Relatives of our Graduands,
Dear Graduands,
Members of the Students’ Representatives Council,
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Members of the Media,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  

I am delighted to witness the graduation ceremony of the Northern Campuses of the University of Namibia, which include the Ogongo Campus, the Oshakati Campus, the Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus and the School of Engineering at Ongwediva.

This special event signifies the realization of the aspirations of our young people, who worked with dedication to obtain tertiary qualifications. It also demonstrates our Government’s success in expanding access to education by building tertiary education facilities in the areas where they did not exist in the past. This is part of our Government’s commitment to bring tertiary education closer to the people.
Firstly, I take this opportunity to congratulate all of you, the graduands for your perseverance, which enabled you to successfully obtain tertiary qualifications. This is an important step in the development of your careers as professionals in different fields. As the Chancellor of the University of Namibia, I would like to express my deep appreciation for the good work done by the parents, guardians and all stakeholders in the education sector in supporting these graduands, which culminated in this graduation ceremony today.

I am informed that a total of three hundred and sixty seven (367) students will be awarded with certificates, diplomas, and undergraduate degrees in various disciplines today. This number represents students from our three Northern Campuses namely, the Ogongo Campus, Oshakati Campus, and the School of Engineering at Ongwediva.
I am informed that following the phasing out of the Basic Education Teachers Diploma in 2011, students who were enrolled at the Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus, Rundu Campus and Katima Mulilo Campus, will only graduate next year.

I commend the University of Namibia for continuing to equip our young people with knowledge, and thereby build a stronger foundation to accelerate the social and economic development of our country. The development and strengthening of our human resources through education and training is an important ingredient towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of Vision 2030.

Director of Ceremonies,

As Government, we recognize that the success of our education system should be rooted in strong and strategic partnerships.
We believe that as a young country, we need to work together with friendly countries, organizations and individuals in order to modernize our education sector. We need to learn from the experiences of others and to adopt best practices that can enable us to do better as we forge ahead with the socio-economic development of our country.

In this context, we welcome and applaud the support and assistance that has been rendered to our Government and to the University of Namibia by local stakeholders and by our many friends from different parts of the world in order to expand and modernize tertiary education in Namibia.

Director of Ceremonies,

We are encouraged by the steady progress that our University has made over the years, as manifested by the establishment of new faculties such as the School of Engineering and the School of Medicine.
Through these modern facilities, Namibia is now in a position to educate and train professionals such as engineers and doctors who will contribute to the development of our country.

We are aware that the growth of our University since its establishment in 1992 was realized, not only through our own efforts, but was complemented in a substantial manner by such partnerships. It is pleasing that our friends from Africa and other parts of the world are continuing to assist us as reliable partners in education.

At this juncture, I would like to welcome two special friends and guests of our University. They are Professor Mabel Imbuga, the Lady Vice Chancellor of Jomo Kenyata University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) in Nairobi, Kenya; and Professor Adebiyi Daramola, the Vice Chancellor of the Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA), Nigeria.
I would like to commend these noted academics who have committed themselves to assist our young Faculty of Engineering.

Since UNAM did not have sufficient academic staff in the field of engineering, the two Vice Chancellors availed academic staff members of their respective Universities to come and assist at the Unam Faculty of Engineering. Madam Vice-Chancellor Imbuga, and Mr. Vice Chancellor Daramola; we thank you wholeheartedly for this invaluable support.

Our gratitude also goes to the University of Siegen and the GIZ, which are represented by Prof. Semar today. Similarly, we thank other German Universities that have been assisting our young Faculty of Engineering and the School of Medicine, amongst others.
Director of Ceremonies,

I am pleased to learn that Namibia’s private sector is playing an increasingly positive role as a partner in the provision and expansion of tertiary education in our country. This is a welcome development because tertiary education is a critical component of strengthening our work force and indeed our industries.

I am informed that the University has joined hands with local companies to construct accommodation facilities for students. I encourage other private sector companies to join hands with the Government in order to further develop and modernize our education institutions such as Vocational Training Colleges and Universities.

I would also like to encourage more private sector companies to open their doors to students who need internships.
This is important as it will provide the students with practical training and thereby prepare them for the world of work. Furthermore, the feedback that the University receives from companies hosting students during their internships will enable the University to identify any gaps in its curriculum and to make the necessary adjustment and improvements.

In this context, I commend the MediPark Private Hospital, which has collaborated with our University in providing much-needed space for the training of our future Medical Doctors. Once again, I call upon other private entities in the country to follow this good example of integrating our students in internship programmes.

Director of Ceremonies,

In order to achieve the industrialization of our country, Namibia needs a strong foundation for Mathematics and Science subjects.
It is, therefore, commendable that the University of Namibia has decided to transform the Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus here at Ongwediva, into a Centre of Excellence for the training of Mathematics and Science teachers.

It is vital for the University to make maximum use of the resources at its disposal in order to achieve its stated goals. This should include the utilization of the available information and communication technology resources that may be harnessed in order to reach more students.

In this regard, I am pleased to learn that the University of Namibia has been using video-conferencing as a teaching method. This has enabled UNAM students to benefit from the experience and expertise of lecturers from other Universities in different parts of the world. I commend the Vice Chancellor and his team for this initiative.
Dear Graduates,

This is a special occasion for you who will receive tertiary qualifications after many years of hard work. I congratulate you on your achievement. The qualifications you are about to receive will serve as keys to open doors to a better future.

However, you should not view your undergraduate degrees as the end of your academic careers. I encourage you to study further in order to equip yourselves with more knowledge and skills in your chosen professions. Namibia needs educated professionals whom we can call upon to use their skills to exploit the natural resources that our country is endowed with, and to develop our country.
I also encourage you, dear graduands, to be innovative. Do not only become job seekers, but also aim to become entrepreneurs who create job opportunities for yourselves and other Namibians. Never stop shooting at the moon, because even if you miss, your arrow will land amongst the stars.

Once again, I take this opportunity to congratulate all of you, our graduands, on your magnificent achievement. I wish you all success in your future endeavours.

I thank you.