

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA ON THE
OCCASION OF THE PRIZE GIVING
CEREMONY FOR BEST PERFORMING
GRADE 10 AND 12 LEARNERS OF 2011**

20 JANUARY 2012

WINDHOEK

**Check Against Delivery*

**Directors of Ceremonies, Honourable Deputy
Minister, Dr David Namwandi,
Honourable Governors,
Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councillors
Esteemed Permanent Secretary and Under Secretaries
of the Ministry of Education
Esteemed Sponsors,
Distinguished Regional Directors of Education,
Esteemed School Principals and Teachers,
Dear Parents and Learners,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a great honour for me to have been invited to be part of this Awards Ceremony. The purpose of this occasion is to acknowledge, congratulate and reward the Grade 10 and 12 learners who performed exceptionally well during the 2011 National Examinations.

Today, the Ministry of Education and its partners will hand over prizes to the winners for their outstanding academic performance. This is part of our Government's efforts to promote academic excellence and to encourage our learners to perform well in their studies.

I commend the private sector companies that provided resources and made it possible for the Ministry of Education to award these prizes today. I encourage you to continue with your generosity to the field of education and training in the interest of the Namibian child.

Director of Ceremonies,

I encourage the schools that will receive prizes in various categories here today to invest the money in the improvement of the teaching and learning conditions at their schools.

The prizes that will be awarded to you today demonstrate your dedication, sacrifice, hard work, commitment and focus on your school work. Your achievements also demonstrate that with hard work and dedication, our education system can deliver good results and produce learners who are top performers in different subjects. This should encourage other learners to emulate your good work so that we can see higher levels of academic achievement in all our schools.

I, therefore, encourage all teachers and learners to follow the examples of these achievers who are receiving the awards today.

I urge you to recommit yourselves to hard work in order to achieve better education and learning outcomes in 2012.

Director of Ceremonies,

Our Government has been and continues to be committed to improving the quality of education at all levels. It is for this reason that we have designed programmes and provided financial resources for the youth and adults alike to obtain quality education. As part of this commitment, Government spends 23 percent of the annual national Budget on education.

Last year, a *National Conference on Education* was held in Windhoek. Its aim was to enable stakeholders to analyse our education system, to identify weaknesses and propose remedial actions aimed at improving academic outcomes. The Conference adopted a number of important resolutions on Education that were submitted to Cabinet for consideration. The Ministry of Education and all relevant stakeholders should work hard to implement these resolutions as directed by Cabinet.

Director of Ceremonies

Education is a vital component in the social and economic development of our country. It is through education and training that we can create a competent and effective workforce that can meet the demands of the modern economy. In this regard, I believe that our country should create a strong general education base for our students, particularly in Science and Technology-related subjects. Such a system should enable learners with enquiring minds and an orientation for critical thinking to continuously learn through their own initiatives.

This will enable us, in the final analysis, to ensure that education and training outcomes at all levels beyond basic education, directly relate to employment creation, skills development and wealth generation. It will also promote both the internal and external efficiencies of our national education system.

Our Government has a responsibility as enshrined in Article 20 of our Constitution of ensuring that every school going Namibian child receives quality education. In order to achieve this, we must continue to promote equity and quality education in all parts of the country.

Thus, the allocation of resources must take account of the challenges faced by different schools and education regions in different parts of our country.

Director of Ceremonies,

The allocation of the national budget to the education sector has grown over the years. For example, the allocation has grown from N\$1.8 billion during the 2000/2001 Financial Year to N\$8.3 billion during the 2011/2012 Financial Year. This significant increase demonstrates our Government's commitment and recognition of the importance of education. These resources are directed at improving physical facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and administrative amenities at our schools, as well as to procure textbooks and other instructional material.

The 2011 academic year was a difficult period for our teachers, learners, school administrators and indeed the entire education sector in Namibia. Delivery of Education in some parts of our country was adversely affected by the floods. We also experienced lack of teachers in some subjects, shortage of teaching materials as well as inadequate classroom space. However, our government is committed to addressing these difficulties and improve academic performance in all our schools.

Despite of these difficulties, we appreciate the hard work of our Regional Education Directors, Education Inspectors, teachers, school administrators and all stakeholders in our education system for preparing the learners for the 2011 examinations.

Our Government highly appreciates the support provided by our partners in education, including the private sector, in the transformation of the Namibian education system. I believe that as a nation, we can do better for the Namibian child. Let us face the difficulties head on and together help to transform our education system.

Director of ceremonies,

I would like to encourage the parents to continue guiding, supporting and preparing the learners in their academic work. I urge the parents and members of the public to continue to be actively involved in the education of our children. Your support and guidance is vital to the academic success of our learners.

To the Namibian learners who did not win prizes during 2011 examinations or pass the examinations, I encourage you to remain focussed and work harder in the learning streams that you will take up.

I encourage you to work hard during the 2012 academic year. Focus on the future. It determines your destiny.

In the same vein, I urge the learners to maintain a high sense of discipline and respect for the teachers and school administrators. Focus on your studies and stay away from the distractions that can jeopardise your academic success. It is my strong belief that every Namibian child must have the opportunity to develop to his or her full potential, and those of us who are entrusted with noble tasks of education should not betray this trust.

Once again, congratulations to all our winners today. I wish you and all Namibian learners the best in your future academic endeavours.

I thank you.