



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. SAM S. NUJOMA, FOUNDING  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, FOUNDING CHANCELLOR OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA AND PATRON OF THE UNAM FOUNDATION, ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE STAKEHOLDER LUNCHEON

30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2017

SWAKOPMUND

ERONGO REGION

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Directors of Proceedings;

Allow me to join the Vice Chancellor Professor Lazarus Hangula in welcoming you to this great and historic event. In the same vein, I am extremely happy to see that you could respond to my invitation to be here today.

This shows your commitment and resolve to address some of the major economic challenges which are affecting the overall socio-economic development of our country.

I strongly believe that it is only when we stand and work together as development partners, that we will be able to solve these challenges, be they in the fishing or mining sectors of our economy.

Director of Ceremonies;

Since becoming independent 27 years ago, Namibia has made great strides in providing quality higher education to its citizens, the latter being critical to attaining a knowledge-based economy status to ensure inclusive development of all our people.

Through the University of Namibia (UNAM), Namibia has been able to train its own Teachers, Economists, Lawyers, Agronomists, Fisheries Scientists, Biologists, Chemists, Geologists, Mathematicians, Nurses, Medical Doctors, Dentists, Engineers, and many other professionals and experts.

Despite all these achievements and more, Namibia still lacks some critical skills to propel the sustainable and effective utilization of our natural resources.

Against this background, we are gathered here today, at the beautiful coastal town of Swakopmund, to officially launch two major initiatives of the University of Namibia.

These initiatives will help our country build its own human resource capacity in terms of high level skills that are needed to meet the increasing demands for efficient and effective operations of our industries if at all we are to remain competitive.

In this regard, I am reliably informed that these initiatives, which seem to be greatly supported by the relevant government ministries as well as key industry stakeholders, are: (1) the establishment of an Institute or School of Marine Engineering and Maritime Studies at Walvis Bay, and (2) the establishment of the Centre for Mining Research and Training at the town of Arandis.

Both of these projects are about two of the main lifelines of the Namibian economy, contributing enormously to the country's GDP and the socio-economic development of our country.

As some of you may have observed from the brochures about these initiatives, Namibia is a maritime nation, with a rich ocean due to the upwelling Benguela Current system. Similarly, the South Atlantic Ocean is an important resource for fisheries, tourism, transport and logistics as well as mining.

It is recognised worldwide that maritime nations like Namibia need to embrace the blue economy concept as an approach to sustainable development.

For this reason, in Namibia, we acknowledge and accept the importance of the blue economy in the country's sustainable development and growth. This involves industries and resources such as fisheries and aquaculture, water resources, shipping and transport, tourism, marine energy, minerals, genetic resources, blue carbon trading, biotechnology and general sea products.

It is important to underscore here that the fisheries sector in Namibia is the third largest income earner after mining and tourism, and contributes 15% of the country's exports. This sector also employs more than fifteen thousand people, while, thousands more are indirectly employed in fisheries related activities.

The above notwithstanding, I strongly believe that it is possible for the blue economy to contribute even more to the achievement of Namibia's sustainable development goals, but only if accompanied by massive requisite human resource capacity building through skills development and upgrading.

Although UNAM currently provides education and training in the field of fisheries and aquatic sciences at its Sam Nujoma campus at Henties Bay, there are no academic programmes related to marine engineering and maritime studies at UNAM and in the country at large.

In order to address this big developmental gap UNAM has decided to fill this strategic gap by establishing an Institute or School of Marine Engineering and Maritime studies within the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology of the University of Namibia to be based at the Coast.

The envisioned Institute will play an important role in providing quality higher education and training beyond what is currently being offered by the Namibian Maritime and Fisheries Institute (NAMFI).

The Institute will also promote research and development strategies as well as activities focusing on optimisation of operations and services, while at the same time playing an important role in human resource skills development through in-service training and tailor-made courses to address existing skills gaps in the fishing sector and maritime related industries.

Directors of Ceremonies;

Earlier I mentioned about the major contribution made by mining sector to our economy. As we all well know, science and technology education as well as research are the engine that would drive socio-economic development and growth through sustainable and responsible utilization of the country's mineral resources.

With this in mind, UNAM has decided to establish a Centre for Mining Research and Training at the Town of Arandis, here in Erongo Region, again after consultations with several key stakeholders, most of whom are present here today.

The proposed centre would provide skills upgrade to mining personnel and become a centre of excellence in research towards mining and metallurgical engineering and technology with a particular focus on mineral beneficiation, materials handling and transport systems in mines.

In addition, the centre would provide mine geology, mining health and safety, recycling and waste disposal in mines. Furthermore, it is envisaged that the centre would focus its studies on mineral processing and value-addition; land ecosystems and rehabilitation of degraded land; impact of mining operations on the environment; to mention but a few.

Thus, the Centre will provide trans-disciplinary research and training for human resource capacity building that is needed for our country's sustainable industrial development and growth.

The Centre has also the potential to enhance employment opportunities of young Namibian graduates by providing them with opportunities to qualify further, and become engaged in a sector that is projected to grow even more in the future.

Directors of Ceremonies;

You will now fully agree with me that the establishment of the two institutions, that is, the Centre for Mining Research and Training, and the School of Marine Engineering and Maritime Studies, are crucial to the sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development and growth of our country.

I thus look forward to your kind support and generous contributions towards these two noble initiatives which may be in the form of financial donations or material/physical infrastructure and facilities.

As I truly look forward to your unwavering support to these two initiatives, may I then in my capacity as the Patron of the Resources Mobilisation arm of the University of Namibia - the UNAM Foundation - take this opportunity to declare that the two projects are now officially launched and open for your kind contributions and donations.

I thank you