

Ministry of Environment and Tourism



Young Professional Research Grants Handover Ceremony

Honorable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah

Minister of Environment and Tourism

**Venue: Polytechnic of Namibia, School of
Hospitality and Tourism**

Monday, 04 April 2011, 19:00

UN Resident Representative, Mrs Kari Egge,
Permanent Secretary, Dr. Kalumbi Shangula,
Ministry of Environment and Tourism Staff,
UNDP Staff members,
Representatives of Partners Ministries and other Organizations,
Grant Recipients,
Distinguished Guests,
Members of the media,
Ladies and gentlemen

I thank you all for honoring our invitation to attend this milestone event, and I am indeed honored to have this platform to share a few words of reminder and encouragement. The Country Pilot Partnership programme for Integrated Sustainable Land Management in its mandate to enhance individual capacity at all levels established the Young Professional Research Associate as a means of funding research for Namibian students undertaking a Masters or PHD courses within the parameters of sustainable land management.

Today's ceremony is a happy moment and we should celebrate. Before I deliberate on the Young Professional Research Associate, allow me to thank the Global Environment Facility (GEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and all other stakeholders for their financial and technical support which has bared fruits of this initiative.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is the start of a new year. As we continue counting our blessings and look forward to a fruitful 2011, we should also continue to remind ourselves of the commitments towards developing Namibia as per

our guiding policies of the NDP3 and Vision 2030 among others. Having said that, I would like to congratulate all our grant recipients of the Young Professional Research Associate, you are the future leaders of Namibia. I applaud your hard work and creativity; and I encourage you to continue to pursue your interests in natural resource management.

Director of Ceremonies,

As we all know, Namibia's capacity to address issues of natural resource management still presents multiple challenges. Our Country is in dire need of skilled individuals in the environmental sector as it faces various challenges such as floods, drought, unproductive lands and animal health to train and advice our communities and farmers on new ways to adapt to changing environments.

We have limited specialists in many areas of sustainable development, for example, we need to fill gaps within the legal framework of environmental management (Environmental Lawyers), there is a shortage of qualified experts in climate change area, limited specialists in environmental geophysics, shortage of soil scientists to improve our land productivity, etc. In order to succeed in today's challenges in the face of climate change and other environmental problems, we must equip our nation with advanced skills beyond literacy to application on the ground. This will lead to enhanced management of our natural resources and create alternative opportunities for our production systems, both local as well as global environmental benefits.

The little contribution made is a step forward in capacitating our nation in achieving our Millennium Development Goals. I am even more pleased to see that women have also been granted this resource to further their studies, as the saying goes, when you educate a woman you educate a nation.

Director of Ceremonies,

Education is the foundation of individual capacity, of national systems and of competitiveness. Education is the most important factor in sustainable development, for it is the acquisition and utility of knowledge that drive nations. In all cases of rapid economic growth observed in the late twentieth century, such as in Finland, China, Brazil, South Korea, Malaysia, and Singapore, education was and is the driver of competitiveness, and that coupled with technological capabilities became the yardsticks of modern development. Sustainable development is driven by the capability of nation to improve livelihoods, sustained economic growth, and maintain environmental sustainability. All these require new knowledge and technology.

While we emphasize that education is paramount in sustainable development, we all know that most students are not in a position to pay for their education because of their challenged family backgrounds. I am therefore, pleased to note that the Country Pilot Partnership Programme has awarded 11 more research grants to the value of **N\$ N\$426,500.00**. Since the inception of the Young Professional Research Associate in 2009, the CPP Programme has

awarded research grants to 14 Namibians totaling **N\$ 538,010.00**. I am informed that the first graduates of the CPP Young Professional Research Associates will be graduating this year, two at Masters Level and one PhD candidate.

Director of Ceremonies,

You might wonder why the Ministry of Environment and Tourism is handing over research grants instead of the Ministry of Education. In the spirit of partnership created by the CPP Programme, the screening process of applicants has always been participatory and involves a committee of qualified personnel from the University of Namibia, Polytechnic of Namibia, Ministry of Education, United Nations Development Programme, and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. This committee ensures that research grants are allocated to critical areas identified to be addressed. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members for availing their time as well as ensuring coordination in this process.

In conclusion, once again, I would like to thank GEF and UNDP for their support to Namibia and I urge the grant recipients to make the best use of this golden opportunity and stand out in their academic excellence. I would also like to call upon the Private Sector to play an important role in building the nation. We can only achieve more if we all join hands.

I thank you and wish you all the success!