



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

**KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY:**

**DR. RICHARD N. KAMWI, MP**

**MINISTER OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES**

**AT**

**THE 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY  
OF THE MINISTRY'S TRAINING NETWORK,**

**SAFARI HOTEL**

**24 APRIL 2008**



Programme Director  
Hon. Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Petrina  
Haingura  
PS, Ministry of Health and Social Services  
Mr. Kahijoro Kahuure,  
Deputy P.S. Ministry of Health and Social Services, Dr. N. Forster  
US, Mr. P.K. Ndaitwa,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps  
Senior Government Officials  
Development partners  
Delegates from other Ministries  
Senior officials and staff members of the Ministry of Health and  
Social Services  
Members of the Media  
Distinguished Guests  
Dear Parents  
Graduates  
Ladies and Gentleman

I am honoured and privileged to address you on this auspicious occasion: the 11<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony of the Ministry's Training Network. First and foremost, I would like to congratulate and applaud the graduates for making our Ministry proud by successfully having completed their courses of study; this is indeed a great achievement.

Namibia, just like most sub-Saharan countries, is faced with challenges related to human resources for health. Indeed, if these challenges are not addressed promptly and effectively, they pose a significant stumbling block in meeting the Health-related Millennium Development Goals.

The challenges include: shortages of health workers; an imbalance in skills among the available and currently practicing health workers; equity distribution of available health workers resulting in urban concentrations with rural shortages. In addition to this, we are challenged with poor working environments, heavy workloads, managing resources, and the lack of an established framework for incentives. As a result, there is a general lack of motivation and low morale among health workers.

**Director of Ceremonies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

In order to address these challenges, and for us to meet the goals of Vision 2030, Government, through the Ministry of Health and Social Services, has put in place some strategies.

Of particular importance to this gathering today, is the Ministry's move to accelerate the training of health professionals with increased student intake both locally and internationally. Indeed, this is evidenced by the gradual increase in the number of students in health-related fields under training during each academic year.

I am delighted to inform you that currently there are a total of **709** students enrolled at the Ministry's Training Centres. **634** are pupil enrolled nurses, **34** are training as Pharmacist Assistants, **16** as Environmental Health Assistants, **10** as Radiographic Assistants and **15** as Medical Laboratory Technicians.

It is equally pleasing to note that **879** students are enrolled in health-related studies at the University of Namibia during this academic year. From this number, **666** are pursuing Nursing Science, **164** are pursuing their degrees in Social Work, **10** are doing a Diploma in Radiography, and **39** are enrolled in the Premed/Pharmacy programme.

I am pleased to announce that through the Polytechnic of Namibia, we have established a B-Tech degree/diploma in Environmental Health of which **28** students are currently enrolled, and a B-Tech degree/diploma in Med. Lab. Technology, with **29** students this academic year.

It is encouraging to note that further to this, many more Namibian students are pursuing health related studies at foreign academic institutions in countries such as Cuba, Russia, Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania and South Africa. Among these students, **117** are studying Medicine, **38** Pharmacy, **9** Clinical Engineering, **30** Environmental Health and **30** Med. Laboratory Technology.

### **Director of Ceremonies**

I am pleased to inform you that a total number of **379** students were trained and qualified from the Ministry's Training Centres, and are graduating today. We welcome **362** Enrolled nurse/midwives, **10** Pharmacy Assistants, **6** Radiographic Assistants, and **1** Environmental Health Assistant to the field of health care professionals.

We are indeed proud to welcome the group of **23** new medical interns who are expected to commence with their first year internship this year. At the same time, a total of **23** Medical interns commenced their second year of medical internship at Katutura and Windhoek Central hospitals. This is an achievement of great significance.

I am also pleased to announce that a total of **113** Registered Nurses successfully completed their studies at the University of Namibia this year. Of this number, **100** have taken up employment with the Ministry of Health and Social Services. We look forward to improved quality health care service delivery.

**Director of Ceremonies**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Accelerating the training of health personnel is not the only strategy my Ministry has put in place to address human resources challenges. There are many more strategies in place, such as the provision of financial assistance to students in health related fields. During the financial year 2007/08, the Ministry financially assisted 525 health related pre-service students to the tune of N\$ 3,927,679.

I also wish to inform you that we are currently in a process of conducting a health systems review. This review will result in the development of the Ministry's Strategic Plan and other relevant strategies including those of human resources management and development. A key aim will be to address the challenges faced by health care personnel.

Furthermore, the Ministry is working on other initiatives to have accurate, and readily available human resource information for planning and decision making purposes. An important example will be to determine workload-based staffing requirements for health facilities and the implementation of a computerized Human Resource Management Information System.

**Director of Ceremonies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

We remain grateful to our development partners who include among others, Centre for Disease Control, International Training and Education Centre on HIV, Global Fund, Management Sciences for Health etc for their continued technical support in human resources development.

In the same vein I wish to express our gratitude to our stakeholders in training, the University of Namibia, Polytechnic of Namibia as well as the National Institute of Pathology. Indeed, we remain grateful to the Ministry of Education for the financial support provided to students through the Namibian Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) to enable them to pursue their fields of studies at ease.

### **Director of Ceremonies**

#### **Dear Parents**

Allow me to address the graduates. This day will always be remembered in your biography for the marked achievement made in your lifetime. Your hard work and dedication has proven the value in the service-oriented professions you are embarking upon. Indeed, we have a reason to join you in celebrating this day.

A special note for nursing graduates; I consider the oath which you will take today as being of the utmost importance and you should regard it as such. This oath underscores your commitment and dedication to serve the Namibian population, describes to the rules and regulations that govern your noble profession.

## **Dear Graduates**

Today is the beginning of another chapter in your life. This chapter entails that you assume your rightful place, with responsibility and accountability, in the national and international workforce. You will be expected to be there when needed the most. Furthermore, I wish to remind you that in addition to the Clinical and Theoretical knowledge you acquired during your training, you are also expected to possess the following important personal attributes as health workers:

- Good communication and listening skills
- Caring, compassion, humanity, humility, empathy and honesty
- Commitment, loyalty towards the patients, clients, colleagues and entire public.

**Director of Ceremonies**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

In conclusion I would like to thank my officials-Mrs. Sam and your colleagues at the National Health Training Centre and Regional Health Training Centres. I also commend the Directorate for Policy, Planning and HRD, for meeting up with the intended objective. Thank you for commitment and dedication to National duty.

Finally, allow me, on behalf of the Ministry, and indeed myself, congratulate you as you made us proud and confident about the future of the Namibian nation. I wish you all the best in your career development and progress.

**I thank you.**