



**Republic of Namibia**

**Vote of Thanks**

**By**

**Dr Richard Nchabi Kamwi, MP  
Minister of Health and Social Services**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE GROUND BREAKING  
CEREMONY FOR THE UNAM SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

**Windhoek  
11 MARCH 2010**

**P**rogramme Directors

**H**.E. the President of the Republic of Namibia -  
Cde. Hifikepunye Pohamba

**H**on Minister of Education - Cde. Nangolo Mbumba

**T**he Director General, National Planning Commission,  
Prof Peter Katjavivi

**H**on Minister of Finance – Cde. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila

**D**istinguished Vice Chancellor, University of Namibia,  
Prof Lazarus Hangula;

**H**on Ministers, Deputy Minister, Members of Parliament and  
the National Council here present;

**D**istinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

**C**hairperson of the University of Council - Prof. F. Amaambo

**V**ice Chancellor of the University of Namibia –  
Prof Lazarus Hangula

**P**ro-Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs and Research –  
Prof. Osmund Mwandemele

**R**epresentatives of the Medical and Dental Health Professional  
Council

**S**taff Members of UNAM School of Medicine

**D**istinguished Invited Guests

**M**embers of the media

**D**ear Medical Students and Parents

**L**adies and Gentlemen

First and foremost, I wish to acknowledge the invisible hand of God the Almighty Who makes all things possible. I remain grateful that my term of office end with a bang, and herald the realization of a dream through the Ground Breaking Ceremony for the UNAM School of Medicine. This is indeed a milestone not only in the history of the Namibian public health sector but also for the tertiary education sector.

Your Excellency Cde. President, our presence here this morning is clear testimony that education is indeed priority number one and health is second priority for the SWAPO Party led Government. A first school of medicine in any country remains a national project. It is for this reason, that I wish to thank you, Your Excellency that you found time to grace and officiate at this Ground Breaking Ceremony for the University of Namibia School of Medicine.

I also wish to thank the Founding President and Father of the Namibian Nation, the Chancellor of the University of Namibia, Dr Sam Nujoma for his remarkable vision, and relentlessness in pursuit of national goals.

I recall that when I joined the Ministry of Health and Social Services now ten years ago the dream of one day having our own Medical school was on the cards. Under the able leadership of then Hon. Minister for Health and Social Services, Dr Libertina Amathila; we came up with a Pre-medical

Programme which laid a foundation for where we are today. I want to therefore thank Dr Libertine Amathila and Dr Kalumbi Shangula who made immense contribution to the forerunner to this Project. We now have a number of young Namibian medical doctors who graduated following the Pre-medical Programme.

Similarly, the successful feasibility study to realize our dream was funded through technical and financial support of the World Health Organization (WHO). It is thus appropriate that we thank the WHO through the WHO Country Representative, Dr Magda Robalo for the WHO continued commitment to Namibia.

The idea of setting up this medical school would not have come without the guidance, commitment and support of the Council of The University of Namibia. We therefore thank the Council for their continued guidance and support throughout this journey.

Once an idea has been mooted and adopted, the next logical step is to implement it. We have embarked upon this journey to deliver a fully fledged School of Medicine. This journey calls for financial and human capital, firm and wise leadership.

Your Excellency, fellow Namibians, invited guests, collaborative partners, ladies and gentlemen; in this regard, I wish to acknowledge the special role played by Prof Lazarus Hangula who energetically spearheaded this Project culminating in this Ground Breaking Ceremony. Please join me in congratulating the Vice Chancellor of the University of Namibia together with his able and efficient team for a job well done. Please give them a generous applause ..... Omake!

Usually when a new product hits the market some people have a “wait – and – see attitude”. The big question is: Will it work? Ladies and gentlemen, this was clearly not the case with our medical school. The enthusiasm with which parents and medical students welcomed it was indeed remarkable. This school was long overdue, we therefore wish to thank you for the trust and confidence you placed in us.

In addition, the presence this morning of members of the Health Professionals Council and distinguished medical practitioners, some of who are members of the Medical School Steering Committee speaks volumes of your commitment to this important national initiative.

We are equally grateful for all the support we received from our collaborative universities, namely, University of Cape Town; University of Stellenbosch; University of Berlin, the University of Oulu in Finland as well as the University of Washington and others in developing the curriculum and setting up laboratories.

The University of Washington through I-Tech has provided equipment, books, and staff for the School of Medicine, Nursing and Public Health as well as for the soon to be established School of Pharmacy. They have also made a commitment to link the new School of Medicine with the rest of the University of Namibia campuses via video conferencing equipment. For this, we are truly indebted to the University of Washington.

Many thanks also to the Government of Finland for their commitment to fund the collaboration between UNAM and the University of Oulu. I also wish to thank the Ministries of Works and Transport and Health and Social Services for providing the land on which the School is to be build. The National Planning Commission and the Ministry of Education also deserve special mention for the invaluable support and advice throughout this journey.

I would fail in my duty if I will not extend a vote of thanks to the Hon. Minister for Finance for her all round financial support to priority programmes such as this one. I wish to also thank all the Government senior officials, in particular Mr. Kahijoro Kahuure, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Health and Social Services and all those who made a contribution in one way or another to the success of this Project and all of you for accepting our invitation to this event.

**O**ur long awaited and cherished baby is now born. We all have a responsibility to see to it that the School is well nurtured. This is indeed the beginning of a long journey which require all of us to remain focused and committed to the growth and prosperity of the Namibia School of Medicine

**I** thank you!