SPEECH BY HON. LUCIA IIPUMBU (MP), DEPUTY MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION, TRADE AND SME DEVELOPMENT AT NASE WOMEN’S DAY.

FRIDAY, 29 MARCH 2019, NICE RESTAURANT
Director of Ceremonies Ms Ndeshi Ndivayele

Mrs. Veronica Tomeka – Motivational Speaker

Ms. Johanna Shipuata – Founder of Association for Kids in Excellence and Leadership (AKEL)

Ms. Hilda Nathnael – Namibian Society of Engineers (NASE) Treasurer

Coach Foreversun Haiduwah – Star for Life Namibia

Distinguished Invited Guest

Students and Learners

Ladies and Gentlemen

Members of the Media

I am very pleased that this venue does not only have graduates but also students and school learners who I believe will leave this room inspired. Often I get delighted in addressing events that has to do with women empowerment. The theme for this event is “Equality for Women is Progress for all”, though it was coined in relation to the International Women’s Day, it is a befitting term looking at the challenges women have been facing and continue to face, especially those in rural areas and sometimes even those in position of influence at the hand of the dominant men around them.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Namibian Society of Engineers (NASE) having being established only five years ago, is an evident proof of where we came from as a country. During our time when we were student at the University of Namibia, there was no engineering course being offered as a course and later on, a student desiring to study engineering could only register for a bridging course before they proceed to other countries. however just last week we had a meeting with the Vice Chancellor Professor Kenneth Matengu, he informed us that the University of Namibia Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology José Eduardo dos Santos Campus in Ongwediva which was established in 2009, has already produced over 250 engineering graduates. The Engineering Department in Polytechnic of Namibia what is known today as the Namibia University of Science and Technology, the Mining and Process Engineering Department was established in 2009. The Department started its journey as a traditional Mining Engineering department initially offering a Bachelor Degrees in Mining with two specializations, Mining Production and Mineral Processing. In 2012, the curriculum was revised which culminated in two separate degree programmes of study: Bachelor of Engineering in Metallurgy and Bachelor of Engineering in Mining, Chemical Engineering and recently introduced Marine Engineering which is aimed in getting Namibian professionals in our blue economy. Due to the above mentioned fact, one can
confirm that, the demand and job opportunities has grown. I recall when the founding President of Namibia Dr. Sam Nuujoma used to encourage young people to study Engineering amongst many courses when such opportunities were it was still not available, however the opportunities are now here, please make use of them.

With the notable successes of the two government institutions as elaborated earlier, we can safely say that 11 years ago, we did not have engineering being offered in Namibia. However within in a period of 10 years we have done so much that we can be proud off as a Nation. However, while we are celebrating our success we are also cognizant of the inequalities of treatment and opportunities within the engineering industry. As you may all know, the engineering industry is dominated by males, perhaps these resulted from the fact that most engineers are either employed in the Mining and Construction industries which are male dominated. You may all recall last year 2018 when Dr. Francis Smita became the first female President of Engineering Council, this was commendable news and was celebrated by many Namibians as it was another validation that women can take up positions that are usually perceived to be for men. In an interview, when she was asked what the position meant for her, Dr. Smita responded saying ‘I am honoured and it feels like ‘breaking the glass ceiling’ as Engineering is a male-dominated field’. I would like to believe that had it not been for her activeness in Women in Engineering Society, maybe such an achievement would have been delayed with few more years. I therefore, want to appreciate the efforts of NASE for organizing this event which aims at bringing women together, to encourage and create awareness on challenges facing women in the fight for equality.

**Dear Students and Learners**

This event is meant mostly for you, the organizers and lined up speakers who are here because of you, while we believe women should be empowered, we also do not want to be wheelbarrowed into positions. It is therefore, up to us to make sure that we are fully prepared to take up leadership and professional positions. Allow me to cite statistics of 2015, which indicate the potential percentage of graduates for this year, at the same time it shows us where we are and allow us to aim for a better equal statistics.

In 2015

- **At UNAM** 71 female and 224 male students registered in the Engineering field which translate to 24 % Female and 76% Male
- **At NUST** 277 female and 850 male students registered in the School of Engineering which translate to 25% Female and 75% Male
- **NamPower** had 9 female Qualified Engineers and 27 male Qualified Engineers in Nampower. Translating to 25% female and 75 % Male
- Mining companies are currently employing 41 female engineers across.
Using the statistics we can see that the percentage of registration of engineering students is almost the same and the trend is also similar at Nampower, a validation of high inequality within in the engineering industry.

**The questions are, who is the cause of the major difference or who is responsible for changing the trend?**

Thanks to Star for Life for ensuring that learners are present here, I want to communicate to them directly, allow me once again to draw you to statistics, using the MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ARTS AND CULTURE PRESS STATEMENT By Hon. Katrina Hanse-Himarwa, on the release of the 2017 grade 10 Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) and grade 12 Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate (NSSC) higher level results. Furthermore, a gender comparison of the top 50 National Performers in JSC full-time candidates was done. It revealed that thirty six (36) out of 50 top performers nationally in JSC full-time examinations are female constituting 72% compared to 28% (14) male candidates. Once again girls gave a sterling performance. When recognizing the top ten performers per region we note that there are more female candidates than male at 82 (58.6%) and 58 (41.4%), respectively. At regional level, females out-performed their male counterparts in the Grade 10 National Examinations, similar to 2016. With these statistics we can clearly see that female have the capacity to and we also know that many of our graduates are females, however we safely assume that most of our young ladies aspire mostly to be teachers and nurses, not to say that there is anything wrong with those career paths. However, our job today is to try an inspire you to desire to be engineers and reduce the gap currently in the engineering sector, nonetheless we cannot do that if you are not joining us in the dream we have for the future.

**Ladies and Gentleman**

The government continuously promote equal opportunity for all, in 1998, Affirmative Action (employment) Act, was passed and signed into law with a view to redress imbalances at the workplace, arising from the discriminatory socio-economic dispensation which had previously existed in Namibia. The legislation is intended to foster fair employment practices with regard to matters such as recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, and equitable remuneration for previously disadvantaged people more particularly, previously racially disadvantaged people, women and persons with disabilities. The Employment Commission was then established to inquire whether employers have implemented the Affirmative Action, I am pointing this to you to show you in what areas are women empowered through our constitution. Dear learners and students, the employment opportunities are limitless, the government will always notice when there is any inequalities and I am encouraging you all to take your education seriously, we need more female engineers in Namibia, however the challenge is only young females.

Additionally, for those who follow Namibian politics, the SWAPO Party took a stance on the gender parity, ensuring that every leadership position should be filled on a 50/50 basis. This decision by SWAPO Party should not only be seen a form of women empowerment, conversely
it should serve as an inspiration to young people that, the future is filled with endless opportunities and we should prepare ourselves so that when the opportunity present itself we will not be wheelbarrowed but we will be competent enough to take up positions based on merits and not only gender balance consideration.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Let us all draw inspiration from all the speakers present here today, I would like to sincerely thank them for taking the time from their busy schedule to make time to inspire young female , who are being encouraged to be serious with their studies and choose engineering as their first choice of career path. I would also like to use this opportunity to thank Star for Life for their work in Namibia and for working with learners from vulnerable community, your work in society is a true form of patriotism.

Additionally, I will also like to once again thank NASE for inviting me to this event to share a word of motivation to the learners and students, in the same vein I would also like to thank you for the work in encouraging young people, I recall the GALA dinner you had in Ongwediva last year, but I would also like to encourage that you have event of this similar nature in the rural areas and inspire as many young people as possible.

As I continue to address the colleagues from NASE I would like to use this opportunity to ask them on what they are doing so far with regards to the new frontier in world technology, the fourth Industrial Revolution. Not so long ago, we did not know that we could do so much with our cellphones, infact some of us remember the first time we saw a computer, that is how not so long ago computers became popular in Namibia. The whole world is now talking about the 4th Industrial Revolution, we need to prepare ourselves as country and weight the cost benefit analysis. Namibia as a developing country with high unemployment, we will be put in a difficult position in choosing between high productivity work being done by Robots or employing Namibians. I therefore want you as NASE to already start organizing events in educating the youth on the 4th Industrial Revolution, this has become the biggest topic in world politics however we see less participation from young people. Our President His Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob in his address as SADC meeting in Gaborone, Botswana, he said as much as the 4th Industrial Revolution would present opportunity for the youth, they would be challenged if new skills are not acquired. Dear NASE the obligation is on you to educate and research this technological monster awaiting the world.

Dear NASE engineering graduates and current engineering students, courses such as yours have an advantage because it teaches creativity or trains you to be or manage artisan. I would have appreciated to see some of the work you have done, we as government are ready to support you were necessary in you being creative and end up creating employment for other. NUST use to have FABlab Design and Technology Centre, I am not sure if it is still in full operation. The lab was established in partnership with the Ministry of Industrialisation, Trade and SME Development to enhance local product competitiveness, bridge the technological divide through access to
Information Communication Technology (ICT), new machinery, tools, knowledge, skills and equipment - ultimately to give rise to a technologically and creatively advanced local economy. As a ministry we are currently working on a few projects, that is aimed in assisting students in the area of innovation in particular technology, I would therefore invite NASE to make an appointment with our ministry so you can position yourselves to benefit from this opportunities.

Furthermore, if you may permit me, I will advise that you already identify young learners at school who will be NASE ambassadors in those school and you could mentor them and you could disseminate information through them even if its application forms and bursary opportunities. I would also like to thank the students and learners present here, the opportunities are limitless and it is up to all of you to decide on who do you want to be, stay away from any form of discouragement, relationship and parties should wait, the time will come when you can afford to host your own parties and have fun.

I thank you