

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND
FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION, ON THE OCCASION OF THE NAMIBIAN
BUSINESS HALL OF FAME, 2009

11 MARCH 2010

SAFARI COURT AND CONFERENCE CENTRE
WINDHOEK

Director of Ceremonies;
Honourable ministers;
Honourable Members of Parliament;
Honourable Regional and Local Councillors;
President of Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
Laureates of the Namibian Business Hall of Fame;
Chairperson of Junior Achievement Namibia, Mr. Brian Rubinstein;
Junior Achievement Board Members;
Junior Achievement Country Director, Mrs. Johanna Cloete;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I feel deeply honoured for the invitation extended to me to come and attend this auspicious event where we honour young business people of our country who have excelled in improving their business operations and thereby contributing to the socio-economic development of our country. The Junior Achievement is a global association that moulds young entrepreneurs into successful business men and women.

The association is active in 117 countries and has membership of about 9 million young business people around the world. Here in Namibia, the association was established in 2004 with a clear purpose of preparing and inspiring young people to succeed in the global economy.

It has now become customary to award outstanding young Namibian entrepreneurs who have made great strides in growing their businesses. Therefore, in our midst this evening, we have business leaders who have made outstanding contributions to the Namibian economy. We congratulate the newly inducted Laureates to the Namibian Business Hall of Fame, namely Dr Tjama Tjivikua; Ms Monica Kalondo; Mr. Desmond Amunyela; and Mr. Lazarus Jacobs. We congratulate them for their achievement that greatly serves, as a motivation to young entrepreneurs of our country to work hard and improve their business focus and productivity.

Dr. Tjama Tjivikua serves as the Rector of the Polytechnic of Namibia. Because of his able and visionary leadership, he has transformed the Polytechnic of Namibia into an institution of excellence delivering quality higher education to thousands of young Namibians. Through his leadership, the Polytechnic of Namibia has diversified its academic programmes, responding to the challenges of nation-building.

Ms Monika Kalondo has over the years distinguished herself as an outstanding entrepreneur. Her company, Stimulus that she co-founded has grown into a reputable black majority owned investment company which is contributing significantly to the growth of our SMEs in the country. In 2007, Ms Kalondo was recognized as an example of achievement in entrepreneurship and innovation and was a recipient of the Most Innovative Entrepreneur Award in that year.

Messrs Desmond Amunyela and Lazarus Jacobs co-founded Paragon Investments (Pty) Ltd and transformed this company into one of the successful business entities in Namibia.

Today, Paragon Investments is a leading private equity and business management company with intentions of expanding into international services, trading and distribution. Paragon's management brands include numerous speciality companies in investments, real-estate, retail and media advertising.

Indeed, our newly inducted laureates have worked hard and defeated all odds to achieve the success that we witness here this evening. They became successful business men and women by adopting an aggressive entrepreneurial spirit and determination. Tonight they receive the honour of Laureateship to the Namibian Business Hall of Fame. We wish them the success that they deserve through their hard work, dedication and visionary leadership.

Director of Ceremonies;

Success in the global economy, of which Namibia is an integral part, is based on knowledge as well as the capacity of a country's business leaders and managers to conceive and implement sustainable competitive strategies.

Therefore, we can only succeed when we enhance the boundless potential of young people and encourage them to embrace creativity and becoming entrepreneurs.

I am pleased by the concerted efforts by Junior Achievement Namibia for scouting talented hard working young Namibian men and women and providing them with basic business skills. Some young Namibians who underwent this mentorship have become successful SMEs who are contributing enormously to the growth of our national economy today.

Indeed, over the years, our SMEs have contributed to more than 20 per cent of employment opportunities in the country. It is projected that given more opportunities and their capacities strengthened, our SMEs will complement our national efforts that are aimed at the acceleration of economic growth through value addition and beneficiation to our natural resources and thereby create job opportunities for thousands of unemployed Namibians.

Director of Ceremonies,

It is a well known fact that Namibians consume what they do not produce, while the great percentage of our natural resources are exported in raw form without adding value to them. Therefore, efforts must be made to encourage our entrepreneurs to embark upon industrialization and add value to our natural resources, including our agricultural produce. In that manner, we will be able to produce finished products for local consumption and export them to other countries.

One of the challenges facing our SMEs is the acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills that will enable us to convert ideas into practical reality. It is therefore imperative that we encourage our SMEs to keep themselves abreast of the new modern technology and design strategies in order to enhance production and add value to their outputs.

I would like to encourage the Junior Achievement Namibia to continue and expand the mentorship programme to encourage more young Namibians to seize business opportunities in the country.

Dear Laureates, we trust that you maintain setting an example to emulate, inspiring young people as you continue to achieve business and personal success through diligence and perseverance.

It is a pity that some business men and women in our country harbour an illusion that success in business comes easily on a silver platter. I would like to emphasise that to succeed in business one should embrace hard work, proper planning as well as noble values of integrity, honesty and ethical business principles. Dishonesty and unethical business conduct may earn you quick bucks but such success is short-lived and causes you to be on the wrong side of the law.

You should therefore work hard and stay away from intoxicating substances and to remain focused on what you wish to achieve and set realistic objectives to achieve.

These are the ingredients of a successful entrepreneur and Namibia needs such determined business personalities in order to fight hunger, poverty, ignorance and underdevelopment.

I once again take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Junior Achievement Namibia for their noble endeavours of providing assistance to our young entrepreneurs and in the same vein extend my congratulations to the Laureates inducted tonight.

I wish you success in your future endeavours. Enjoy the evening.

I thank you!