WELCOMING REMARKS BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE NAMIBIA TRAINING AUTHORITY MARIA NANGOLO-RUKORO AT OPENING OF INDUCTION WORKSHOP FOR NEW INDUSTRY SKILLS COMMITTEE (ISC) MEMBERS.

EMBARGO: 22nd OF AUGUST 2012, 08:00.

CPD BOARDROOM, NTA Village, Rand Street, Khomasdal.
Good Morning

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Namibia Training Authority, a warm welcome to this Industry Skills Committee Induction Workshop.

Allow me to commend and thank each and every one of you for your proactive response to serve on our Industry Skills Committees. We are confident that your contribution will better equip the Namibia Training Authority to address the training needs in your respective industries, and in the country, at large.

Many times, starting any new assignment proves to be an anxious time. But, no matter how well matched an individual is to their new role, or how eagerly they are looking forward to a new task, they cannot be expected to perform well, unless they are fully informed and equipped to do so.

It is therefore of critical importance that a proper induction exercise is conducted, as we need to ensure that for you to add value to our mandate of establishing an efficient and effective Vocational Education and Training regime, that you become competent and effective members of the Industry Skills Committees, in the shortest possible time.

Today, here in Namibia, as in the rest of the world, there is a growing understanding that our economic growth and progress depend crucially on the availability of a skilled workforce.

There is a growing awareness that accelerated economic development depends on increasing the productive capacity of our industry and that this in turn depends on our developing a Vocational Education and Training system, which provides people with the skills which are needed by our industry, and which will provide our citizens with access to employment. This closer alignment of Vocational Education and Training
with the needs of the labour market was, indeed, a key objective of the establishment of the Namibia Training Authority in the VET Act (ACT 1 2008).

One of the major innovations set out in the VET Act was the mandate for the NTA to establish Industry Skills Committees as standing committees of its Board. Comprised of senior people from industry, the aim of the ISCs is to help us develop a Vocational Education and Training system, which is driven by the needs of industry.

However, designing any demand-driven training regimen always begins with an accurate assessment of your needs, what you do well, what needs improvement, and most importantly, who the role-players are.

Our lawmakers also took this into consideration when they drafted the Vocational Education and Training Act, which supports a tripartite approach to lead Vocational Education and Training in Namibia. This approach involves a collaborative partnership between the Namibia Training Authority, training providers and industry.

The wider industry is represented by the Industry Skills Committees. These committees, or ISCs, as we commonly refer to them, assist the Board of Directors of the Namibia Training Authority to meet the requirements of the industry.

The Terms of Reference for the ISCs dictate the following:

- To advise the Board as to current and likely future skills needs;
- To develop and implement action plans to meet such skills needs;
- To assess the adequacy of training provision per industry sector;
- To secure commitment by employers to invest in skills training;
- To raise awareness amongst employers of the value of certificates;
- To oversee the continuous updating of unit standards and qualifications for training programmes; and
- To make proposals to the SACC regarding the registration or deregistration of assessors as “accredited assessors” for its industry sectors; and
- Other matters which the Board might refer to it.

These are the expectations. And as representatives of your respective industry sectors, your mandate is to ensure that the current and future training needs of your respective sectors are indeed recognised and incorporated into our activities towards the establishment of a vibrant and sustainable Vocational Education and Training system.
At the conclusion of this exercise, we want you to leave with practical information to allow you to perform well from the start of your assignment; a thorough understanding of how your respective committees fit into the organization and its mandate; and an awareness of the Namibia Training Authority’s culture, values and strategic objectives.

• DIstinguished Industry Skills Committee Members;
• Ladies and Gentlemen

The Namibia Training Authority supports the view that our Vocational Education and Training system needs to be demand-driven. In this regard, industry has a critical role to play in determining training needs and the outcomes required.

However, it is not always that industry is well placed to make judgments on how best those requirements are met. This is an area where industry needs to work closely with educationists if the best results are to be achieved. We note as well that often industry tends to have a short-term focus in relation to training needs and that the prime consideration is ensuring that the immediate requirements for getting a job done are met.

This has meant that the more generic skills, which serve individuals and industry well in the longer term, are often forgotten. It has been a cause for major criticism of training packages. And as members of our Industry Skills Committees, it is important to take cognizance of this trend from the onset to allow you to address it adequately.

• DIstinguished Industry Skills Committee Members;
• Ladies and Gentlemen

We all have a shared responsibility to constantly find and explore ways to improve on our service delivery. There is ample evidence to suggest that if we value what we do and engage more enthusiastically in our work, we can make huge strides in developing a Vocational Education and Training system that will deliver the skills necessary for our country’s economic development.

It is therefore of utmost importance that we learn from the experiences of other countries, which have implemented arrangements designed to secure greater industry involvement in the development of their Vocational Education and Training systems.
The aim is not just to replicate what has been done elsewhere. We need to develop Namibian solutions to Namibian problems. But in doing so, we can and should learn lessons from similar developments elsewhere. Such experience can teach us much about what solutions are most likely to work and, just as importantly what are the mistakes we should avoid here in Namibia.

- **DISTINGUISHED INDUSTRY SKILLS COMMITTEE MEMBERS;**
- **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**

I cannot emphasise enough the importance of your inputs and involvement.

The priorities identified by the ISCs will prioritise the NTA’s programmes of action to develop the qualifications, unit standards and training programmes necessary to meet the skills needs in your industries.

The decisions of the ISC will be a driving force in our development programme and will help ensure that we develop the responsive and demand driven Vocational Education and Training system, which is so clearly envisioned in the VET Act.

The agenda before us today is therefore a demanding one and one that is absolutely central to our continued progress.

One of the most famous quotes in the world comes from the inaugural address of the late American President John. F. Kennedy when he took the oath on Friday, 20 January 1961. Kennedy said and I quote: “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country”

These words have inspired Americans to develop their country into an international economic powerhouse. Let us also draw inspiration from these words and become patriots in the fight for the economic empowerment of our young people through the establishment of a relevant and sustainable system of skills delivery, aligned with the needs of industry.

In conclusion: We are indeed honoured by your acceptance of our invitation to serve on our Industry Skills Committees and we are confident that it will develop into meaningful and sustained ties of cooperation between the NTA and its industry stakeholders.

I thank you.