STATEMENT BY ACTING CEO OF THE NAMIBIA TRAINING AUTHORITY, MRS ESTER ANNA NGHIPONDOKA AT THE SIGNING OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE NTA AND PEACE CORPS NAMIBIA

CEO’s Boardroom, NTA Village, Rand Street, Khomasdal

Monday, 21st July 2014, 10:00 am
• Peace Corps Namibia Director of Programmes & Training, Mr Daniel Rooney
• Peace Corps Namibia Associate Director for Community and Economic Development, Ms Linda Shiimbi
• Members of the NTA Management
• Members of the Media

Good Morning

Today, the Namibia Training Authority enters into an agreement with Peace Corps Namibia. This agreement is in line with our Strategic Plan, under which our Board of Directors envisions the NTA as the port of call for vocational skills in Namibia. Under the same Strategic Plan the Board set one of the Key performance areas to be Entrepreneurship development with the objective to enhance self-employment and employability in Namibia by fostering entrepreneurial attitudes and skills among VET graduates.

It is also in line with the Implementing Technical Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Namibia, through the National Planning Commission and Peace Corps Namibia.

• Ladies and Gentlemen

It is on occasions such as these that I appreciate the value and message of the Namibia Training Authority's corporate logo. It seems as if, like the “path of the just” as indicated somewhere in the Bible, the NTA’s sun keeps on shining brighter and brighter each day, “more and more into a perfect day”. I’m saying this ladies and gentlemen because I’m seeing a lot of achievements being recorded at the NTA and some of which I’d like to share with you:

- In April this year, the NTA introduced the Vocational Education and Training Levy. The participation of our levy-paying employers has indeed been encouraging and we look forward to making a tangible impact with the resources now at our disposal;
- We are soon going to stage groundbreaking ceremonies for three very important infrastructure development projects – The expansion of the Rundu Vocational Training Centre and the Eenhana Vocational Training Centre, and the construction of a new Vocational Training Centre at Gobabis in the Omaheke region; and
- Just last week we signed a recognition and procedural agreement with labour unions aimed at the establishment of harmonious labour relations at our Head Office and the public vocational training centres under our supervision.

• Ladies and Gentlemen:

The NTA has a responsibility not only to train and regulate but very importantly to inculcate in all VET graduates, entrepreneurial skills and attitudes to make them independent and able to employ themselves and create employment for others.
The agreement we sign today is the outcome of an interaction between an NTA VTC Transformation Officer, Mr Felix Muka sa and Linda Shiimbi, the Associate Director for Community Economic Development at the Peace Corps.

Ms Shiimbi, after a visit to some of our centres called the NTA in a bid to explore possible cooperation between ourselves and Peace Corps Namibia. Fate had it that she ended up speaking to Mr Mukasa, who coincidentally, has been very involved in finding ways to address the need for our VTC trainees to be exposed to entrepreneurial training.

Today, the Namibia Training Authority and Peace Corps Namibia join hands towards equipping our VTC trainees with entrepreneurial skills and prepare and empower them to start and grow their own businesses, upon completion of their training.

The assignment of the Peace Corps Volunteers does not fall far away from the objectives of the Entrepreneurship Development Concept that the NTA has crafted, which is aimed at the development of entrepreneurial skills in VET graduates in the following areas:

- Business Planning and Development;
- Tendering;
- Financial Literacy;
- Management and Project Management; and
- Product Development and Marketing and Promotion.

**Director of Ceremonies:**

The agreement that we sign today, make provision for the following amongst others:

- For Peace Corps volunteers to be assigned for a period of 24 months to the Eenhana VTC; Nakayale VTC at Outapi; Rundu VTC; Okakarara VTC; Valombola VTC at Ongwediva and Zambezi VTC at Katima Mulilo;
- For volunteers to begin their assignments on the 25th of September 2014;
- The Namibia Training Authority to provide volunteers with an orientation of the project and its activities and the community in which they are to serve;
- The Namibia Training Authority to provide housing to Peace Corps volunteers in line with pre-agreed standards and requirements;
- For the supervision of Peace Corps volunteers to be shared between the CEO of the Namibia Training Authority and the Peace Corps Namibia Country Director.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Allow me to focus briefly on the concept of entrepreneurship which will bring out the significance of this agreement. Entrepreneurship refers to an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action. Entrepreneurial skills are used widely, from planning your life at home and in society, to booming you knowledge and grasp of business concepts.

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of any economy, and our Namibian economy is no exception. Wealth and a high majority of jobs are created by small businesses started by entrepreneurially minded individuals, many of whom go on to create big businesses. People exposed to entrepreneurship frequently express that they have more opportunity
to exercise creative freedom, higher self-esteem, and an overall greater sense of control over their own lives.

A well-known example is Mr Ben Hauwanga, local entrepreneur and businessman, who started his journey at the Valombola Vocational Training Centre at Ongwediva, where he qualified as in automechanics. Today, Mr Hauwanga is a leading entrepreneur and his BH Group of Companies has branches across Namibia. In 2011, Mr. Hauwanga received an honorary master's degree in Entrepreneurship (honoris causa) from the International University of Management.

Many other examples exist of graduates from our centres who have achieved entrepreneurial success. If you talk to them, they all agree that fostering a robust entrepreneurial culture maximises individual and collective economic and social success on a local, national, and global scale.

It is with this in mind that the Namibia Training Authority prioritises entrepreneurial development to prepare our young people to succeed in an entrepreneurial economy.

- **Mr Daniel Rooney:**

The NTA is looking forward to a long and healthy relationship with your esteemed organisation. We look forward to receiving your volunteers and we look forward to them sharing their entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and expertise with our trainees.

I am sure that in a few years from now we will have the pleasure of reading about individual success stories of VTC graduates who have established themselves as independent and innovative entrepreneurs and job-creators. What a proud moment that will be! Rest assured of our commitment to true partnership, transparency, effective administration and open communication at all times.

- **In conclusion, a message to our budding entrepreneur trainees at our Vocational Training Centres who stand to benefit from this agreement:**

I encourage you to be receptive to the entrepreneurship training to be rendered under this agreement. It is true that skills training is not the only thing you require to one day become successful business people. You will also require additional support in terms of access to capital and collateral to start your own businesses. However, do not be discouraged by the challenges you face.

Remember that in order to succeed, your desire for success should be greater than your fear of failure.

I thank you