Namibia continues to be hampered by a scarcity of skilled labour. This was said by the Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Namibia Training Authority, Jerry Beukes, at a ceremony held at the NamWater Human Resource Development Centre outside Okahandja on the 25th of August, where technical training equipment valued at about 725-thousand Namibia dollars, was handed over to the centre’s management.

“Our country continues to face a big challenge in expanding access to technical and vocational skills training to increase employment opportunities. It is a significant challenge, because all of this must be achieved, whilst ensuring that technical and vocational training remains equitable, relevant and of good quality”, Beukes stressed.

The donation forms part of the Namibian Chapter of the ‘Better Education for Africa’s Rise’ (BEAR) Project, which is a joint initiative between the United Nations Scientific, Education and Cultural Organisation, (UNESCO) and the Republic of Korea. BEAR chapters have been established in four other Member States in the Southern Africa Development Community, SADC, namely the Democratic Republic of Congo, Botswana, Malawi and Zambia. The overall objective is to design and implement specific country objectives aimed at improving local responsiveness and relevance of vocational education systems to individual and labour market needs. More specifically, the local

BEAR Project is aimed at developing training programmes in the Mining and Construction sector, through revised and updated training curricula, increasing the number of trained instructors, and enhancing capacities to deliver quality training.

Beukes also thanked the Vice-President of the Korean Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (KRIVET), Dr. Jin Mi-Sug, for her organisation’s assistance under this innovative project. As part of the BEAR Project, South Korea’s Global Institute For Transfer of Skills (GIFTS) also supported Namibia’s maiden participation at the WorldSkills International competition, which took place in São Paulo, Brazil from the 11th to the 16th of August. Three of Namibia’s four competitors attended a month-long training session in South Korea before the competition. GIFTS is also to support the NTA in the staging of Namibia’s first National Skills Competition in 2016.

The Chairperson of NamWater’s Board, Ester Akwaake, received the donation which included lathes, mortising machines, electric sanders, spindle moulders, saws, drawing boards and wood planing equipment. It also includes the installation of a dust extraction system in the centre’s joinery workshop.
The NTA’s National Training Fund Department is making good progress in investing in the training of young Namibian men and women, under the Key Priority Training Grant Funding Window of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Levy.

Speaking to The Stakeholder at a recent employer briefing session at NTA Village, Mighty Katulo, Manager: Training Advisory Services (photo), said local training institutions accredited by the Namibia Qualifications Authority have already started to deliver training programmes in Crane Operations, Hospitality and Tour Guiding for 108 unemployed young Namibians.

“The three local institutions have also been approved by the NTA Board of Directors to assess and certify about 500 candidates as having received prior learning through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) service, which credits individuals after demonstrating their competence in already gained knowledge and skills through a series of assessments specifically designed to assist them to display their competence”, Katulo explained. “We have also invested in a range of short-term interventions in the areas of Agriculture, Hospitality and Tourism, Logistics and Manufacturing, aligned with the development of sector priorities, as laid out in the Fourth National Development Plan. The NTA is now to consider proposals from local accredited training institutions to provide training in other priority areas”, Katulo added.

Recent public notices invited proposals from such training institutions to provide technical and vocational training for occupations in high demand, as identified by the NTA’s various Industry Skills Committees, who have developed sector-specific skills development plans, called Sector Skills Plans, which highlight training needs and priorities.

Furthermore, a group of 63 young Namibians are to leave for South Africa in early September to benefit from further training on Levels 3 and 4 in the fields of Electrical General, Welding and Boilermaking, by two South African-based training institutions. Service Level Agreements have been entered into with the two South African institutions, namely Industries Education & Training Institute in Cape Town and Adcorp Technical Training Campus, operating as Capital Outsourcing, in Johannesburg.

Manager: Training Advisory Services
Mighty Katulo

Staff Stake-out

SH: Tell us more about Bernada Tjipita away from the office? There’s no difference really! I am just the same Bernada - a passionate mother and a loving friend. My two children, Kwame and Obama, are my whole life. Yes, by their names you’ll gather that I am a Pan-Africanist by heart. That’s it!

SH: What is interesting about your job as Marketing Officer? Marketing isn’t just a job for me, it’s a passion! I love the new people I meet every day, so I use it as an opportunity to network, network and network. In my role as Marketing Officer, I support the execution and management of the NTA’s marketing campaigns. I really enjoy working in the NTA’s Public Relations and Marketing Division. It is a creative, but deadline-driven environment.

SH: How would you describe the NTA work environment? I’ve not been here for long, but I am encouraged by what I have observed thus far. There seems to be a very strong sense of togetherness amongst colleagues.

SH: What do you enjoy most about your job? The fact that it is not predictable and monotonous. Every day comes with new challenges, new solutions, new successes. It is indeed gratifying!

SH: Apart from your work and family, what are you passionate about? I love reading, and I also love playing basketball and tennis. I am also a writer and I am aspiring to soon become a published author. I am also a budding entrepreneur. Yes, this girl does it all!

SH: What is the first thing you do in the morning? I am a good Catholic girl. So, the first thing I do when I wake up is to pray. I also keep a ‘Gratitude Journal’ in which I make sure I enter all the blessings God bestows on me. And then of course, strong black coffee.
The NTA is making headway towards a National Assessment and Certification Framework (NACF) for the local Vocational Education and Training (VET) system.

Local consultancy, TEN (Pty.) Ltd. has been commissioned, following a public tender process, to engage key stakeholders and to formulate a framework accordingly.

According to Mariane Hara-Gaes, Manager: Assessment and Certification (photo), the development of the NACF is aligned with the NTA’s rolling five-year Strategic Plan, under which it anticipates to improve assessment practices within the broader Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) system.

“As such, this activity is aimed at ensuring coherence, consistency and quality through the establishment of robust assessment standards. These standards may be in the form of requirements, obligations and responsibilities applicable to all national assessment and certification activities in the VET system, associated with CBET and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)”, she explained.

Hara-Gaes notes that TEN (Pty.) Ltd. has already conducted a series of interviews and consultations to source the input of key stakeholders. “A next step is now for the consultants to present their findings and to discuss what is currently still a conceptual framework, with stakeholders at an open stakeholder consultation workshop”, she explained.

The workshop is to take place at NTA Village in Rand Street, Khomasdal on the 18th of September 2015. Interested stakeholders are welcome to attend the session and are encouraged to confirm their participation via e-mail to info@TEN-namibia.org

Interested stakeholders can also contact TEN (Pty.) Ltd. Team Leader, Rudi Wolf at 061-252478.

INCLUSIVENESS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING – STILL A LONG ROAD AHEAD

The local Vocational Education and Training system needs to do more in freeing up equitable training opportunities for people living with disabilities. The NTA’s Acting CEO, Jerry Beukes said this when he officially opened a one-day ‘Inclusive VET’ Forum at NTA Village, on the 7th of August.

“Indeed, our lawmakers, when they crafted the VET Act of 2008, appreciated the potential of technical and vocational skills development in enabling and empowering people with disabilities to join the labour force. They appreciated that an inclusive approach to VET will free up accessible opportunities for Namibians to acquire high-quality and marketable skills. They also appreciated that individuals skilled under such an approach would be more likely to obtain decent and productive work, earn a living and contribute to economic development”, Beukes emphasised.

However, he added that the sad reality was that access to appropriate skills training is still not available to a significant number of people with disabilities - women and men - for differing reasons. “Locally, this challenge is further exacerbated by the fact that where indeed, training is provided at dedicated centres catering only to people with disabilities, training curricula and equipment are often and frequently outdated, and is less likely than the general training programmes, to reflect the requirements of the labour market”, Beukes noted.

The Acting CEO admitted that the NTA, as the custodian of VET in Namibia, is increasingly challenged to serve a diverse trainee population, including people with disabilities.

“The concern is no longer whether to provide inclusive education, but how to implement inclusive education in ways that are both feasible and effective in ensuring training success for all trainees. Indeed, we must ensure that all our trainees have equal access to quality training that meets their needs and enriches their lives. It is about being proactive in identifying barriers and obstacles, current and prospective trainees - able and disabled - may encounter in attempting to access opportunities for quality training, as well as in removing those barriers and obstacles that lead to exclusion”, he highlighted.

He encouraged the participants to explore new and creative ways to address the training needs of people with disabilities and support the establishment of an inclusive VET regime.

the right direction.

Beukes concluded by highlighting that disabled and differently-abled people are an asset when they can be converted into skilled human resources, but that they will continue to be deemed a liability for society, if their skills are not developed.

The meeting was organised by the Promotion of Vocational Education and Training (ProVET) Project. ProVET Expert, Marijke Overeem told The Stakeholder that she was very happy with the turnout and that the participants described the meeting as a step in the right direction.
Who is Paulus Haukongo?

Paulus Haukongo is a humble man, passionate about Technical and Vocational Education and Training and supporting the upliftment of fellow Namibians through skills.

I am the son of Willem and Silvia Haukongo. I was raised at Engela in the Ohangwena region and I am currently the Centre Manager of the Windhoek Vocational Training Centre (WVTC).

I consider myself an experienced and skilled VET trainer and administrator. I have been at the helm of WVTC for a number of years during which this institution has grown from strength to strength.

For me, TVET is a way of life. It is what drives me to continue doing what I do, which is to support the growth and development of young people and empowering them with the right skill sets to support themselves, their families, their communities and our country, at large.

This month, as part of our ongoing focus on the Vocational Training Centres and the people who lead them, The Stakeholder paid a visit to Paulus Haukongo (photo), Centre Manager of the Windhoek VTC in the Khomas region.

What makes your job rewarding?

My primary responsibility as the Centre Manager for WVTC is to ensure that the training services rendered by this institution meet the demands and expectations of industry.

It is not always an easy and straightforward task and it comes with a lot of challenges. However, I look at any challenge as an opportunity to improve and better our training services. As such, it is always rewarding to overcome such challenges and demonstrate to our industry stakeholders that we are indeed able to deliver against their expectations.

The training sector is a dynamic sector and industry expects relevance and quality, throughout. It is my job to ensure that WVTC meet these expectations.

Tell us about your team?

No team is ever perfect, but my team comes pretty close!

Indeed, we are a good group of skilled and experienced individuals. We believe in consultation and engagement. Collectively, we manage this institution to serve as a VET Centre of Excellence within the national and regional setup. As a team we have a shared commitment and belief that a knowledgeable and skilled workforce is the secret to economic success.

What challenges came with your appointment at Windhoek VTC?

Things are never perfect and challenges are constant. WVTC is an established centre and my predecessors have done a great job in establishing this institution and laying the foundation for its successes.

The true test is to always find innovative ways to overcome new challenges and maintain the support of all stakeholders, including your management, trainers, trainees, industry donors, the community and the Government.

A very current challenge is the introduction of the Competence-Based Education and Training (CBET) system, which require us to adapt current practices and embrace a new approach to technical and vocational training. Managing the change has proven challenging, but we are working together with the NTA to ensure its successful implementation.

In your opinion, how would the people around you describe you?

I would love to think that my colleagues find me to be friendly, quiet and reserved, but that they also think of me as someone who is analytical, methodical and professional.

Definitely, they know me as someone who is not impulsive, but who always thinks things through, before deciding on action. But, they also know me as a firm and fair leader.

What are your views on the public Vocational Training Centres (VTCs)?

The seven VTCs currently under the supervision of the NTA as per the VET Act of 2008 have played an important role in the development of local technical and vocational skills and should be commended for that. And whilst we welcome the establishment of more and more private training institutions, we still need to continuously invest in improving our own training services to free up more quality training opportunities for young Namibians who want to venture onto this career path.

We must continue to work hard. Laziness is not an option, at all!

In your opinion, what does the future hold for our VET sector?

VET is the future! Namibia’s economic growth is in the hands of its qualified and skilled artisans. Indeed, Vision 2030 and other macro-economic development programmes will remain but pipedreams without a qualified and skilled labour force.

However, VET needs first to be appreciated as such, before we can make real progress. Only when our lawmakers and decisionmakers really value the importance of VET and appreciate that we need to aggressively invest in the expansion of such training services, will we making progress.

A final message?

Only to invite young men and women with a keen interest in acquiring the technical and vocational skills necessary to make Namibia an industrialised country to enroll at WVTC and join the skills revolution. We link training to the world of work and will turn you into a skilled and qualified artisan. Many successful entrepreneurs trained at our centre and today they make a difference!
Namibia made a proud and memorable debut at the 2015 WorldSkills Competition, which took place in São Paulo, Brazil, from the 11th to the 16th of August 2015.

Although the four Namibian competitors, Rakel Amutenya (Bricklaying), Joseph Nakatunbe (Joinery), Fanuel Mathias (Electrical General) and Erkana Imene (Plumbing and Pipefitters) did not finish amongst the medal winners, they gave a good account of themselves and demonstrated that the skill level of Namibian Vocational Education and Training trainees is indeed on par with the rest of the world.

Imene's score of 453 out of 500 points bagged him the 'Best of Nation’ Award as the best Namibian contestant. He is enrolled at the Rundu Vocational Training Centre. The United Kingdom’s Gary Doyle and Germany’s Nathanael Liebergeld won gold in this category.

On her part, Amutenya, a trainee at the NamWater Human Resources Development Centre attracted a lot of international media attention as one of only two female competitors in the Bricklaying category. Italy’s Florian Hochgruber landed the gold medal in this category.

Nakatunbe’s final score in the Joinery category was 445 out of 500 points. He is enrolled at the Namibia Institute for Mining and Technology (NIMT). Si Shueh Hyi from Chinese Taipei was the gold medal winner in this category.

Namibia’s competitor in the Electrical Installations category, Fanuel Mathias, amassed 449 out of 500 points. He is a trainee at the NamPower Training Centre. Brazil’s Junior Carlos won gold in this category.

WorldSkills Namibia Technical Delegate, Sens Shoolongo also received a special recognition award for his excellent work as Jury President in the Electronics category.

NTA Acting Chief Executive Officer, Jerry Beukes, thanked the Namibian nation at large for their support to the team. “Our maiden participation in WorldSkills International has indeed been a proud and historical moment for the local technical and vocational training fraternity, and our country as a whole. Our team has done us proud. Not only did they showcase their technical and professional skills to a worldwide audience, but they’ve focused on honing the skills they need for the workplace”, he emphasised.

Host nation, Brazil’s impressive medal haul saw it crowned the overall winners. Namibia is not the only country that could not win a medal, as many established economic powerhouses, such as Russia and India also fell short. The United States of America could only land a single bronze medal.

WorldSkills International (WSI) is an international skills competition for youth that is held in a different member country every two years. Competitors from 17 to 22 years old demonstrate their excellence in a number of different skilled trades and technology contest areas. The competitions raise awareness about technical and vocational professions to encourage youth to explore such training and career opportunities. Altogether 1189 competitors from 59 countries took part in the 43rd WorldSkills Competition in São Paulo, Brazil.

(See pictures from the competition on the next page).
Our WorldSkills Namibia Competitors - Rakel, Joseph, Erkana and Fanuel - wish to thank all our esteemed stakeholders for their messages of support during the São Paulo competition.

THANK YOU!

**PICTURE FOCUS** – ***WORLDSKILLS SÃO PAULO 2015***

**VET CONCENTRATION**
Joinery Competitor, Joseph Nakatumbe hard at work.

**SOUTH KOREAN SUPPORT**
Plumbing Competitor, Erkana Imene joins Dr. Cho, who travelled all the way from South Korea to support the Namibian team, for a picture.

**SUPPORT!**
Permanent Secretary, Dr. Alfred van Kent supported the team despite his hectic schedule.

**NAMIBIA’S PRIDE**
Plumbing Competitor, Erkana Imene received the Best of Nation Award. Here he is with Higher Education PS, Dr. Alfred van Kent.

**GIRL POWER!**
Rakel Amutenya attracted a lot of international media attention as one of only two female competitors in the Bricklaying category.

**PROUDLY NAMIBIAN**
Erkana, Rakel, Joseph and Fanuel posing for a picture with Team Leaders, Mornay Louw and Veruschka McKay waiting to enter the Opening Ceremony.

**EXPERIENCING BRAZILIAN CULTURE**
Joseph, Fanuel, Rakel and Erkana joined other competitors on a cultural excursion before the competition started. They’ve made lots of friends.

**CHOOSE YOUR FUTURE**
VET is big in Brazil! Thousands of visitors, mostly school groups flocked to the competition venue at Anhembi Parque in São Paulo.

**CLOSING CEREMONY**
Joseph, Rakel, Erkana and Fanuel and Team Leaders, Mornay and Veruschka joined their Brazilian chaperone for a picture before entering the venue for the closing and results ceremony.
The Okakarara Vocational Training Centre were crowned overall champions after scooping gold in both the Ladies Soccer and Ladies Volleyball codes at the 2015 VTC Games, which took place at the Romanus Kampungu School Stadium at Rundu in Kavango-East in mid-August.

Valombola VTC took second place while Zambezi VTC finished third overall. Hosts, Rundu VTC disappointed in front of their home crowd and only managed gold in the Netball code. Zambezi VTC won gold in the Men’s Volleyball code, Zambezi VTC, while Valombola VTC finished in second place. Windhoek VTC scooped up the bronze medals in the category. Valombola VTC were crowned champions in the Men’s Soccer code, with Eenhana VTC and Okakarara VTC finishing second and third, respectively. Eenhana VTC also took second place in the Ladies Soccer category, while hosts Rundu VTC came third.

Spectators turned out in good numbers to support their teams and were wowed by the performance of soccer player, Caroline Kaitjizemine from Okakarara VTC who scored eight goals over the course of the tournament. Local scouts also predicted a bright future for the Rundu local, Mangundu Kutesa who played his heart out and finished the tournament with four goals to his name. Teams competed on a round-robin basis in all codes, with the top two teams in each code contesting the finals. The games took place under the theme, ‘Sport Adds to Healthy Lifestyles’ and were aimed at encouraging all technical and vocational institutions to incorporate sports into education. Teams from the National Youth Service (NYS) joined the seven VTCs under the NTA’s supervision at this year’s event.

The Chairperson of the VTC Sports Union, Kosmas Petrus told The Stakeholder that the tournament was a huge success. “We appreciate the support of the NTA. With the continued support, sport at our VTCs can only grow from strength to strength”, he said. However, he encouraged the private sector to join in and to consider requests to sponsor the event favourably. “Our requests for sponsorships seem to have fallen on deaf ears up to this point, but we remain confident that we will soon be able to sign up a big sponsor who will be willing to invest in this annual event and to support the VTC Sport Union in steering sport at our centres to greater heights”, he added. Petrus also thanked the hosts, Rundu VTC, under the leadership of Centre Manager, Erkki Tjandja for the excellent work in hosting the event. “The people from Rundu and Kavango-East received us well. We thank them for their support and hospitality”, Petrus noted.

The VTC Sport Union is to consider proposals from the various VTCs at its next meeting and will then take a decision as to who the hosts for next year’s competition would be. Windhoek VTC hosted the event last year, while Okakarara VTC played hosts in 2014.