

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**FESTUS K. MBANDEKA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**THE COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF
NAMIBIA**

DONATION FOR THE SCHOOL OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

28 JULY 2016

- **Director of Ceremony,**
- **Mrs. Merlize Fransman, Principle of the School of the Visually Impaired**
- **Connie Campbell Chief Control Officer: Finance and Procurement**
- **Alfie Visser: Community Activist for the School of the Visually Impaired**

- **CRAN colleagues,**
- **The learners from the school of the Visually Impaired,**
- **Members of the media,**
- **Ladies and gentlemen,**

Good morning and thank you for joining us to witness the official handover of 17 computers, sound equipment and specialised software packages to the computer laboratory of the School of the Visually Impaired.

Ladies and gentlemen

The relationship between CRAN and the School of the Visually Impaired began two years ago when our former Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Mr. Lazarus Jacobs, had a fruitful encounter with the learners and teachers of the School during the official visit by the Deputy Secretary General of the ITU, Mr Hauolin Zhao, and other dignitaries at the school.

After witnessing the deplorable condition in which the school's computer laboratory was in and the urgent need for fit-for-purpose modern specialised IT equipment; Mr. Jacobs indicated that CRAN would offer assistance to the school in bringing its computer laboratory to a standard, which will enable learners to form part of the knowledge-based society.

Ladies and gentleman

According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), there are around one billion people worldwide who live with some form of disability and can only use "*accessible*" information and communication technologies (ICTs). This means that if someone cannot see a typical computer screen, ICTs need to provide a way for a blind person to access

information. This can be done through software such as text-to-speech functionality. If a user is deaf, ICTs through captioning on television or speech-to-text software can enable them to read on a mobile phone for example. Likewise, if someone cannot input a command on an ICT device with their hand, there are alternative technologies or software to enable them to communicate effectively.

CRAN, the regulator of the ICT industry in Namibia, is working tirelessly in formulating regulations that will ensure that ICTs in Namibia are accessible for persons including those with disabilities and that barriers to ICT accessibility are eliminated.

Today is indeed the day we are delivering on the promise of our former Chairperson. Our donation comprises of 17 computers audio equipment and software, valued at a total of N\$235 000.

Ladies and gentleman

The donation is in line with our corporate social investment policy, which aims to give back to the community in which CRAN operates. At CRAN, we believe that ICT plays a pivotal role in creating a knowledge-based economy and enhancing socio-economic development in Namibia for all. Therefore, through its mandate and CSI policy, CRAN is at the forefront of creating and implementing a framework which will ensure that all Namibians enjoy the full socio-economic benefits of ICTs.

The core of every knowledge-based economy is a population which is technology savvy. This is the reason why we believe that the small

donation we made today will go a long way in equipping the current and future learners of the school with practical skills on “how to fish” for themselves in the ICT world. We hope the learners will be able to use Microsoft Office programmes such as Word to type letters, Outlook to send and receive emails, Powerpoint to create presentations, to acquire the skills that will assist them towards employment or aid in them becoming self-employed.

Ladies and gentlemen, director of ceremonies

ICT is one of industries that has made great strides over the years in being inclusive to people living with disabilities. Indeed, the computers we donated today come with advanced features and software packages that will enable accessibility for the visually impaired learners.

Ladies and gentlemen, director of ceremonies

In closing, I implore the learners and teachers to fully utilise the equipment to remain relevant and updated with what is happening in the world, and to empower themselves as they prepare to enter the job market

I would fail in my duty if I did not recognise my colleagues for their hard work behind the scenes, which enabled this event to take place. Most of all I wish to thank Mrs. Fransman and her team, for affording CRAN the opportunity to host this event today and for allowing our technicians to at times disturb their schedule whilst installing the computers.

With these few words, I thank you and wish the learners and teachers of the school only the best in all their endeavours!