



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS & CULTURE

MINISTER'S OFFICE

SPEECH FOR THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, ARTS & CULTURE, HONOURABLE, FAUSTINA NAMUTENYA CALEY, AT THE PRE-LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL READATHON MONTH (SEPTEMBER)

Date: 5 SEPTEMBER 2024

VENUE: NATIONAL LIBRARY FOYER

TIME: 10h00-11H30

Director of Ceremony; Ms. Sarah Negumbo, Director for Namibia Library and Archives Service (NLAS),

Dear Students, Teachers, Parents, Book Lovers and all staff members present here today;

Members of the media,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning,

I am deeply thrilled to be here today, to inaugurate this exciting month-long celebration of reading, learning, and imagination—our Readathon Month. In Namibia, we consider September as a reading month where everyone is expected to pause, reflect, and explore new ideas through reading.

This year's Readathon will be observed under the theme ***“Read Namibia: Discovering the Strength of Arts and Culture through Reading”***. This theme aligns well with our ministry's strategic objective, which is to "Promote arts and culture for sustainable development". Furthermore, it resonates with the goals outlined in the fifth National Development Plan (NDP), emphasizing the significance of arts and culture in the nation's socio-economic development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Readathon is not just an event; it is a movement aimed at nurturing a lifelong love of reading in our community. Whether you're picking up a book for the first time or you're an avid reader, delving into poetry, textbooks, historical records, or even just a newspaper, you are exploring the minds and souls of creative individuals.

This month offers a unique opportunity to discover new stories, explore different genres, and challenge yourself to read more than ever before.

Reading is not just about acquiring knowledge; it is about expanding our horizons, developing empathy, and understanding the world from diverse perspectives. Through reading, we can travel to far-off lands, delve into the depths of history, and even envision the future. This is the power of reading—it opens doors to endless possibilities. Like *Dr. Seuss once said “The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the most inspiring ways to discover and appreciate society is by exploring the world of arts and culture through reading. Reading helps us understand talents, cultures and experiences. It opens our minds to new ideas, challenges, and possibilities that drive positive change and create a more inclusive society. Through reading, we can develop an understanding of the human condition and encourage a sense of connection and unity.

By engaging with literature, singing, dancing, acting, sculpturing or painting, people can develop their understanding and views and contribute to the growth of socio-economic development within communities.

In that regard, I am encouraging every citizen to participate fully in this Readathon. Set personal goals, share your favourite books with friends and family, and most importantly, enjoy the journey that reading provides. Remember, every book you read is a step towards a brighter future.

Mastering the reading skills cannot also be overemphasized. As many of us may be aware, success and achievement in our careers and employment opportunities come to reality through the ability to transfer written knowledge into relevant and meaningful application in real-life

situations, and this can only happen if our reading skills are well-developed.

Dear teachers and parents, your role in nurturing this habit is invaluable. Your encouragement and support will make a significant difference in the lives of our young readers. Let's work together to create a culture where reading is celebrated every day, not just during this special month. Parents should not leave the task of reading to the teachers only; reading should start from home.

At this point, I would like to notify the public that our ministry has organised a variety of interactive events at different libraries throughout the month of September. These activities include read-aloud sessions, quizzes, and author meet-ups. Additionally, these events are in support of the main readathon, scheduled to take place in Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region.

I urge all parents to prioritize taking children to libraries and organize reading dates. Let's invest in books and share them with less fortunate children to contribute to nation-building.

In conclusion, I am reaching out to the public and inviting those who are passionate about reading to children, crafting engaging stories, or skilled in painting and drawing, to join hands with our Ministry in this noble cause. I urge you to connect with our librarians in different regions and get involved in the various activities happening at the libraries. Your involvement is crucial, and we wholeheartedly welcome the participation of members of the public.

Happy reading, everyone!