



Hon. Ester Anna Nghipondoka, MP
Minister of Education, Arts and Culture

Keynote address
at the
Handover Ceremony of the Two Chinese Aided Rural
Schools in Kavango West
(Satotwa C.S and Simanya C.S)

28 October 2024

- **Hon. Sirka Ausiku, Governor of Kavango West Region,**
- **H.E Zhao Weiping, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Namibia,**
- **Hon. Lukas Sinimbo Muha, Chairperson of the National Council, and Mankumpi Constituency Councillor,**
- **Hon. Joseph Sikongo Sivaku, Chairperson of Kavango West Regional Council, and other Hon. Councilors Present here**
- **Mr. Egidius Nambara, the Acting CRO,**
- **Mr. Pontius Musore, the Kavango West Regional Director**
- **Esteemed Traditional Authority Leadership present,**
- **Senior Officials and Staff of Distinguished O/M/As,**
- **School board members and parents present,**
- **School Principals and your staff members,**
- **Beloved Learners,**
- **Members of the Media**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Director of Ceremonies,

Today, we gather here in a spirit of gratitude and optimism as we celebrate a significant milestone in our commitment to improving educational infrastructure in Namibia. We are honoured to receive a generous donation of essential education facilities for Satotwa and Simanya Combined Schools, including hostels, teachers' houses, administration blocks, classrooms, ablution facilities, libraries, and beds. This donation, made possible by the Government of the People's Republic of China, through the Agency for International Economic Cooperation, will undoubtedly transform the educational landscape for our learners and educators alike.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The bond between Namibia and China has deep historical roots, dating back to the 1960s when China stood firmly with us in our struggle for independence. This friendship has blossomed over the past 34 years, marked by mutual support and a shared vision for progress. As we acknowledge this significant contribution today, we also honour the enduring spirit of South-South cooperation, a principle that guides our collaborative efforts. Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, China has demonstrated unwavering commitment to assisting Namibia in our socio-economic development.

Dear Invited Guests,

As we all know, educational infrastructure remains one of the challenges we face in our Ministry. However, as a Ministry, we are resolute in our mission to provide accessible, equitable, and inclusive quality education. Our Accelerated Infrastructure Development Plan (AIDeP) is a testament to this commitment. This plan identifies the immediate infrastructural needs required to maintain low learner-to-teacher ratios, reduce travel distances, and address the needs for hostels, WASH facilities, and IT infrastructure.

The AIDeP has been integrated into the 2022 National Conference on Education Implementation Plan (NCE-IP), which will guide our efforts from 2023 to 2030. This plan is crucial in driving educational transformation in Namibia, and infrastructure development is one of its key levers of change.

We believe that conducive educational environments are crucial for enhancing teaching and learning, and for achieving better educational outcomes for our children. The importance of accommodation facilities, such as hostels and teachers' houses, cannot be overstated. By providing these essential resources, we are addressing the critical issues of accessibility and retention. No longer will our learners have to endure long, exhausting journeys to and from school, and our teachers will find greater stability and support in their roles. This, in turn, will reduce dropout rates and enhance teacher retention—factors that are vital for a thriving education system.

Director of Ceremonies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Ministry of Education, Arts & Culture, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Government of the People's Republic of China for their steadfast commitment to improving the lives of the Namibian people. Your support is invaluable as we work together to fulfill our socio-economic agenda and create a brighter future for all Namibians.

As we celebrate this momentous occasion, I call upon other Friendly Nations, Development Partners, Private Sector entities, and individuals, to join us in this noble endeavour. Education is a collective responsibility, and together we can ensure that every Namibian child has access to quality, inclusive, and equitable education. Our mission is clear: to cultivate a tolerant, skilled, productive, and competitive nation, while promoting and preserving our rich arts and culture.

Dear Learners,

I encourage you to seize this opportunity. The conducive environment created here is your launching pad to academic excellence. Embrace your studies, challenge yourselves, and aim for greater heights. Remember that your success today will contribute to a prosperous Namibia, and a brighter future for Africa as a whole.

Lastly, I urge everyone to take pride in these new facilities. Let us safeguard them against vandalism and ensure they are well-maintained for many generations to come. It is our shared responsibility to create an environment that fosters growth, learning, and creativity.

Together, let us embark on this journey towards educational excellence, united by our vision for a better tomorrow.

Having said the above, it is now my singular honour to officially receive this donation on behalf of Satotwa and Simanya Communities, Kavango West Region, and indeed on behalf of the government of the Republic of Namibia.

I thank you.