TOWARD EDUCATION FOR ALL

A DEVELOPMENT BRIEF FOR EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND TRAINING

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Contents

Abbreviations

COST	College for Out of School Training
EMIS	Education Management Information System
HIGCSE	Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
INSET	In-Service Teacher Training
NIED	National Institute for Education Development
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community (successor to SADCC)
SADCC	Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIN	United Nations Institute for Namibia
VET	Vocational Education and Training

I. Preamble

A. From Elite Education to Education for All

1. Schooling in this country was once the privilege of the few. As the 20th Century closes, education is the right of every Namibian.

2. Education for all is an important goal, guaranteed in the Constitution and central to the national development strategy. Achieving that goal will require hard work, effective communication, cooperation, and compromises. In this third year of Namibia's independence, it is timely to think about what must be done and how to do it.

3. Before Independence, few children went to school. Of those who did go to school, most did not go far. Initially, education for Black Namibians was justified in terms of its vocational utility. For the most part, its task was to prepare people for the specific jobs that German and then South African rule required. Except for a very small number of people who were to become messengers, clerks, and other functionaries in the administrative system, basic literacy and numeracy was deemed sufficient. Over time, a few other Namibians managed to secure more advanced education, often in schools operated by missionaries or in other countries. The decolonisation of most of the rest of Africa in the 1960s saw increased spending on mass education in Namibia. A few schools sought to resist segregated education, and some educators supported progressive reforms. Still, most Namibians were limited to a few years of primary education that in general functioned to reinforce their subordinate role.

4. In the years immediately preceding Independence education opportunities for Namibians outside the country expanded. Some programmes were rudimentary, operating in makeshift facilities, while others were more substantial. Notwithstanding these efforts, education in exile was vulnerable to changing circumstances, short term contingencies, and recurring crises. Experiences in these programmes, however, did contribute to laying the foundation for developing a more general philosophy and strategy of education for independent Namibia.

5. Across the continent in Africa's initial years of independence, some advisers insisted that only when production and productivity had increased sufficiently to pay for it could education be significantly expanded. In that period, foreign assistance to education was limited to those programmes that had a clear and direct occupational utility. Because education was expensive, beyond those few whose skills were needed, schooling was considered a luxury.

6. Over time, it became clear that was a very short-sighted view. Expanding access to education increases productivity and economic growth. Education has come to be understood as an investment in human capital. Extending and improving education promotes development.

7. At the same time, in Namibia as in many other African countries education has come to be considered a basic human right, to be available to all people. Education is important not only because we expect it to be useful. It is important because we believe

that to participate effectively in the adult life of our society—to be part of our national community—all of us must be able to understand and communicate with each other. Like adequate nourishment and sound health, basic education is fundamental to our individual and social well being.

8. Article 20 of our constitution provides that

> All persons shall have the right to education.
>
> Primary education shall be compulsory and the State shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia, by establishing and maintaining State schools at which primary education will be provided free of charge.

9. Others, too, have recognised the fundamental importance of education. A distinguished group of educators and political leaders met in Jomtien, Thailand, in March, 1990, to declare their support for making education available to everyone on this planet. At the World Conference on Education for All, sponsored by UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank, some 1,500 participants from 155 governments, 20 inter-governmental bodies, and 150 non-governmental organisations adopted by acclamation a World Declaration on Education for All and a Framework for Action. The major theme of the conference and of the resolutions adopted by acclamation is that it is imperative that all people have access to basic education, both because [basic] education should now be considered a right of citizenship and because development, however we understand it, requires a literate populace.

> Therefore, we participants in the World Conference on Education for All, assembled in Jomtien, Thailand, from 5 to 9 March 1990: [recall] that education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men, of all ages, throughout our world . . . [know] that education is an indispensable key to, though not a sufficient condition for, personal and social improvement . . . [recognize] that sound basic education is fundamental to . . . self-reliant development . . . .[*World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs* (Jomtien, Thailand: Inter-Agency Commission [UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank] for the World Conference on Education for All, 1990), pp. 2-3]
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> Every person—child, youth and adult—shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. [p. 3]
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> Basic education should be provided to all children, youth and adults. [p. 4]
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> National, regional, and local educational authorities have a unique obligation to provide basic education for all . . . . [p. 6]
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> Meeting basic learning needs constitutes a common and universal human responsibility. [p. 8]
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> We, the participants in the World Conference on Education for All, reaffirm the right of all people to education. [p. 9]

10. *Education for all is our goal as well.*

11. But education for all does not simply mean more schools or more children in school. Nor does it mean that we simply start literacy classes or increase the number of places in programmes for out of school youth. Education for all requires that we develop a new way to think about our system of education and training and how we organise it.

12. When education was for a small elite, it made sense to understand schooling, even at the primary level, in terms of *selection*. After all, schools had a major responsibility for determining who was to be part of that elite and who was not. Since that elite became smaller at each higher level of education, the selection process had to become more and more restricted.

13. In practice, prior to our Independence our schools had to make a dual selection. First, they separated people on the basis of race. Then, within each group created by that segregation, there was a further selection of the few who would reach the higher levels of the separate education systems. The uneven allocation of resources ensured that a larger percentage of White than of Black children would be selected for further education. And the segregation of the society ensured that with very few exceptions the Black elite remained inferior to the White elite in terms of its education, jobs, authority, influence, and incomes. For Black women the situation was even worse.

14. Notwithstanding the reforms introduced just prior to Independence, in each of Namibia's segregated education systems selection remained a principal goal. Schools, and even some out of school programmes, functioned to determine who would proceed further and how far.

15. In that setting, it made sense to focus attention on which children were, and which were not, ready to begin primary school. It made sense to group pupils according to what seemed to be their ability to do well in school. It made sense to administer difficult tests that many students failed. When the goal was to educate an elite, there was a clear rationale for selective admission and promotion. And if admission and promotion were to be selective, then educators needed to spend a good deal of their time working out exactly how to do that selection and how to organise that promotion.

16. But when education is to be for all, then that philosophy appropriate to educating elites is no longer relevant. Indeed, it is quite inappropriate. That is why education for all means more than increasing the number of children in school and older learners in adult and nonformal education programmes. It also means replacing the philosophy and practices of education suitable for educating elites with a new philosophy and practices appropriate for providing education for all our citizens.

17. Since all children are to go to school, for example, we need not spend time or energy on pre-admission selection procedures. As educators, we must be prepared to deal with all children who reach school age, whatever their origins and experiences.

18. When education was for an elite, *readiness* referred to the children. Who was ready to begin school? Who was ready to proceed further? In education for all, *readiness* refers

to teachers and other educators. It is we who must be ready to work with our learners, from whatever backgrounds they come.

19. Similarly, since our goal is that all of our children remain in school throughout their Basic Education, there is no reason for selection procedures or organised tracking throughout that period. We need not be concerned with selecting pupils to move from, say, Grade 4 to Grade 5. We want *all* our children to reach Grade 5, and beyond.

20. The implications of this change in our philosophy of education are numerous. Examinations provide one example. Sometimes, we use examinations to determine who will proceed to a higher level of our schools. But since we are committed to providing basic education for all our children, we do not need our examinations for selection within Basic Education. Accordingly, we need to re-think the roles of examinations in our curriculum. Along with other measures, they will become a part of our broader system of assessment and evaluation. In some circumstances, we may wish to use examinations to provide feedback to learners on how well they have understood particular concepts or mastered certain skills. In other circumstances, examinations may help us assess the quality of a curriculum unit, or the effectiveness of teaching, or the utility of textbooks. In those settings, it will be the overall pattern of scores, rather than the individual marks, that is of interest. We shall return to examinations. The point here is simply that education for all requires us to re-think what we do in schools and how we do it.

21. Again it is useful to contrast education for elites with education for all. When education is designed to select an ever smaller elite, *failure* refers to individual students. Those who have low marks, or even those who have higher marks but who were not selected to proceed, have failed. When we are troubled by the rate of failure, we seek to understand why individual students have not done better and to help them improve their results. When education is to be for all, *failure* refers less to individual students than to teachers, schools, and the education system as a whole.

22. Here, our commitment to education for all insists that we all—learners, educators, the community at large—share responsibility for enabling learners to be successful. That will be a big change for many of us. We are used to blaming the learners when they fail to succeed in their examinations or to reach the objectives of their programmes. It is the case that some learners do not do well because they have not worked hard or applied themselves seriously. But if we are to develop an education system in which all learners can succeed, then we must also hold our educators responsible when they do not. When our assessment is that most learners have not grasped important concepts or adequately mastered skills, we must consider that primarily a failure of our teaching. When that occurs, we have failed to develop a satisfactory learning environment or failed to enable learners to succeed. Learners and teachers share responsibility for the learning process. When learners shirk that responsibility, they must be held accountable. But we will not improve our education system by blaming the victims of our failure to teach effectively. Instead, as educators we must hold ourselves accountable and work to improve our teaching.

23. It bears repeating that education for all means more than building new schools. Where formal education is primarily concerned with sorting and selecting students, it makes sense to concentrate on weeding out those who do not do well or who seem unlikely to do

well in the future. Where education is for all, however, schools and other programmes must focus on facilitating success. Pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment must all be designed to permit, encourage, and support successful learning. When more than a few learners do not succeed, we have failed as educators.

24. A third change in our thinking required by education for all concerns the practice of grouping students according to their ability. Although our policy does not require this practice, sometimes called tracking or streaming, informally it may be quite common. As educators, we try to be sure that the curriculum and methods we use are appropriate to the pupils in our classes. In part to achieve that, as children begin school we start putting them into different ability-level groups. We think the children who seem to acquire information more slowly should proceed at a slower pace that will help them learn better. At the same time, those who can work through the curriculum more quickly are not held back. These ability groupings, which may be formal or informal, often continue throughout school.

25. Yet, we may be achieving the opposite of what we set out to do. Children learn best when they are expected to do well. Identifying some children as slower learners leads us to expect less of them. Not surprisingly, they do less well. Education researchers have regularly conducted an experiment to test this in many different settings. They purposely mis-inform teachers about the abilities of the pupils in their classes. Pupils who have done well previously are described as the slow learners, while those whose earlier work was not as good are described as the brightest students. It turns out that those students who teachers think are the strongest do the best, regardless of their actual abilities. And those students whom teachers expect to do poorly in fact do not do very well. It is not that teachers set out to help brighter students more than others, or to give too little attention to students with lower scores. Rather, in very subtle and often unconscious ways, both teachers and students respond to the expectations we have of them. What this experiment shows is that ability grouping may help those who are labelled the strongest students and clearly hurts everyone else.

26. A second problem with ability grouping is that our measures of ability may not be very reliable. As well, they are often culturally specific. Even when teachers or examiners or other assessors do attempt to develop culturally neutral ways of measuring ability, it is extraordinarily difficult and perhaps impossible to do so. The subjects of the questions, or their phrasing, or the manner in which they are asked, may favour children from one background over those from another. If our ability measures are flawed, then ability grouping based on those measures risks imposing erroneous labels—and the expectations that accompany them—on young children. Those labels may then stick with them for the rest of their lives.

27. A third problem with ability grouping is that abilities may not be constant across different subjects. For example, children who score high on measures of reading ability may do much less well on tests of mathematical skills or knowledge of contemporary events. Yet, teachers frequently use one principal measure, often reading ability, to track children into ability groups. Again, this practice risks seriously harming some children, effectively reducing their life chances. Although it does happen from time to time, it is extraordinarily unusual for children assigned to the lowest ability group when they begin school to have moved into the highest group by the time they complete their education.

28. In sum, organising pupils into separate tracks according to some measure of their ability is likely to help only those in the highest track and to hurt everyone else. Whatever rationale there was for this practice when schools were to educate an elite is no longer valid when schools are to provide education for all. Inevitably, those who are identified as the most capable students benefit from the best teachers and schools, while the majority is left increasingly behind. Although ability grouping may initially seem to be a learner-centred instructional strategy, in practice it functions to perpetuate advantage. Where education is for all, the composition of each class should reflect the composition of the school as a whole. As teachers become more skilled in tuning their approach to the skills and interests of the students in their classes, they can address the differences among their students without needing to label some as bright and others as slow.

29. Education for all requires a similar re-thinking in how we approach the education activities we organise for younger and older people who are not in formal schools. In those programmes as well, we must deemphasise selection and grouping in favour of learning.

30. As we make the transition from educating an elite to education for all we are also making another shift, from teacher-centred to learner-centred education. That change, too, will seem troubling at first and will take us some time to accomplish successfully. We are accustomed to classrooms where attention and activities are focused on the teacher. Indeed, we have probably all encountered teachers so set in their ways that they pay little attention to the backgrounds, interests, and orientations of their students. They continue as they have in the past regardless of who is in their class. Few people learn easily or well in that setting. Much of the significant learning that does take place is accomplished despite, not because of, the teacher.

31. Teacher-centred instruction is inefficient and frustrating to most learners, and certainly is not consistent with education for all. Hence, we shall have to help both our teachers and our learners become skilled at developing and working in learner-centred settings. What teachers do must be guided both by their knowledge of the concepts and skills to be mastered and by the experiences, interests, and learning strategies of their students. Our challenge is to harness the curiosity of learners and the excitement of learning rather than stifling them. To achieve that, teachers must be learners.

32. Within education as well, education for all requires and permits broadened participation in decision making. Learner-centred classrooms rely on an active teacher role in developing the curriculum and working out how to teach it. Much more than has been our experience previously, learners will be involved in setting objectives and organising their work. And as our parents themselves become better educated they will become more active in monitoring and guiding the schools in their communities. Each of those groups—teachers, learners, parents—will necessarily become more accountable to the others.

B. LIFELONG LEARNING

33. In the process of rethinking our philosophy it is important to recognize that we are all learners. Learning is a lifelong activity - a process not an event. It is not something that happens once and then is over. It is something we do, not something we receive. Learners are speakers as well as listeners. And good teachers are listeners as well as speakers.

34. Although educators have long used the term, *lifelong learning* has a special significance in the context of education for all. When the task of schools was to educate an elite, it made sense to think of schooling in instrumental terms. Attending school had a specific purpose: to be selected for the next higher level, or to qualify for a particular job, or to secure the certificate necessary to practice a profession. Once that objective was achieved, schooling stopped. Except to work toward a new, higher level objective, there was little point in further schooling.

35. That orientation fosters what has been called the diploma disease. Students come to school to get certificates and diplomas. Employers require certificates and diplomas for employment. As more students successfully reach a particular level in the education system, employers begin asking for higher level certification. In turn, students and their families demand expanded access to higher level schooling. In this never ending chase there is little attention to learning. What matters is certification, not understanding. And even the certificates or diplomas that employers expect may bear little relationship to the knowledge or skills required for their jobs.

36. Our challenge is to cure this disease, not by devaluing diplomas but by revaluing learning. To achieve that, we must stop thinking that learning is finished when we have reached a particular level or achieved a particular certificate. Learning is something we do all our lives, before school and after school, in school and out of school.

37. Lifelong learning is central to education in contemporary Namibia in several ways. First, the previous education system did not equip us well for Independence. Quite simply, our pool of educated Namibians is too small to staff the jobs our development requires. Consequently, we have had to ask our people to assume responsibilities for which their training and experience are not entirely adequate.

38. A clear case in point is our teachers. To expand our education system rapidly, we shall need to rely on teachers with less preparation than we deem desirable. Those who were able to secure only limited teacher training under the previous system are anxious to upgrade their skills. And all teachers will participate in reforming and revising the curriculum and improving their teaching practices. How can we accomplish that? We could regard many of our current teachers as short term substitutes for a new generation of better prepared teachers. But it would surely be both economically inefficient and socially irresponsible to employ those teachers now and then to dismiss them in a few years when we have a larger pool of graduates from our teacher education institutions. We would as well lose the insights and learning of their experience. And in any case, we could not staff our expanding education system without them. Alternatively, we could send our current teachers back to school. But just at the moment we are trying to expand our schools and extend education beyond school walls we cannot spare them from the classrooms and

nonformal programmes for years to do that. Hence, we must develop settings for learning that co-exist with everyday work and that make effective use of holidays. At the same time we must nurture the idea among our teachers (and thereby among the young people with whom they work and their parents) that they, too, are lifelong learners. We shall have to adopt the principle that to be a good teacher one must continue to study, to be an active learner, throughout one's life.

39. More generally, we need to instill across the labour market the sense that education must both precede and continue during employment. People of all sorts, from relatively unskilled industrial workers to highly paid professionals, must come to expect that they will need to continue their education. Becoming a doctor, for example, is not the end of a long period of formal education. The development of new understandings of health and illness, the refinement of techniques, and the lessons of accumulated experience all require that doctors take supplementary courses throughout their professional careers. Similarly, manufacturing employees must learn to use new equipment, mechanics must master the intricacies of improved engines, and accountants must become familiar with new procedures and proficient at using new techniques. Quite simply, the underdevelopment of our past requires continuing education in our present and future.

40. Second, since it will take us some time to expand our schools sufficiently to accommodate all young Namibians, we must find ways to enable those who are not in school to be active learners as well. Whether living at distant cattle posts or in dense urban settlements these youths, too, must become part of our education system. For them, we must be especially imaginative in creating learning opportunities that are suited to their circumstances and that permit them to enter the formal education system when that becomes possible.

41. Third, our national development cannot wait. Even if we were very successful in providing improved schooling to all our young children, it will be a decade before the learners who begin now complete their basic education. Those who proceed beyond basic education will take even longer. But clearly we cannot wait that long to transform our economy, to increase our productivity, and to improve the quality of life of our citizens. Hence, at the same time we expand and upgrade the schooling of our children we must address the education of our adults, both those who have been to school and those who have not. We cannot permit them to think their education is complete, or that their opportunity for learning has passed. They, too, must come to understand learning as a lifelong activity.

42. Fourth, we know that in our rapidly changing economy there will be jobs tomorrow that our parents did not have in mind yesterday when they sent us to school and that today we can barely imagine. We know too that many of us will change jobs during our lives, perhaps several times. Hence, we need a culture of lifelong learning, the idea that when we have finished school we certainly have not finished learning. We should expect to develop new understandings and new skills throughout our lives. And to meet the needs of our changing economy and society, our education system must make it possible for learners to move between formal and nonformal learning activities and to reenter formal education later in their lives.

43. Fifth, a culture of lifelong learning will help our society react effectively to the challenges we will surely face. One example is AIDS. Ignorant, we become its victims. Or we can learn to manage and eventually master this affliction. Our education system can provide essential information to our people, helping them understand what AIDS is, how it is transmitted, and how it can be avoided. As it provides that information the education system can also encourage people, especially our youth, to talk about the sorts of behaviour that are not potentially deadly. To put that differently, the education system can not only provide information, but it can, and must, go beyond that to help individuals, families, and groups deal with this new and threatening situation. And at the same time, it can help us identify the likely consequences of AIDS for the education system itself.

44. Finally, the commitment to education for all recognises the value and importance of education in its own terms. Learning can and should be an intrinsically satisfying activity. It neither begins when children enter the school door nor ends when they complete their years of formal classroom instruction. Schooling itself must not destroy the excitement and satisfaction learning generates.

45. Similarly, adult and nonformal education must be intrinsically rewarding. Mass education should be both individually satisfying and exciting and yield societal benefits that go beyond the understandings, skills, and certificates that individuals secure. For example, we should expect more effective communication, flexible and durable cooperation, and more imaginative and non-violent dispute resolution.

46. It is important to stress again that we must all understand that learning continues throughout our lives. Our educators must design and refine strategies that make that both possible and satisfying. Learning is more than accumulating little bits of information in formally designated settings during intense but relatively brief periods. For learning to be liberating, it must involve developing both a critical consciousness and a solid sense of self-confidence. For learning to be developmental—both individually and collectively—it must be encompassing and unceasing.

47. Our commitment to education for all supports, and in turn is supported by, our commitment to building a democratic society. Literate citizens are better able to understand the issues that confront us and the alternatives that we must consider. We can consider different points of view and make educated decisions. Education for all will make it possible for all citizens to be active participants, not just voters, in governing our country.

48. If we are successful in fostering a culture of lifelong learning, our education institutions will no longer be regarded primarily as places to get certificates and degrees. Instead, they will have become centres for popular mobilisation, empowerment, and development.

C. A PARTNERSHIP

49. At the end of the 1980s people in many countries lost confidence in their public institutions. In the Soviet Union, eastern Europe, and elsewhere the strong central state seemed unable to deliver to its citizens the benefits it promised. In part as a consequence of those experiences, the international finance agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have generally reaffirmed their recommendations for a reduced role for the state and greater reliance on the market.

50. The market in Namibia is relatively strong. And we expect it to remain so. At the same time, the state retains several basic responsibilities. Among them is to ensure that we continue to invest in the most basic of our resources, our people. That means that our government must play the central role in providing basic education to our citizens, both young and old.

51. Of course, the state has other responsibilities. It must work to maintain a minimum standard of living for all of its citizens, especially during periods of economic difficulty. And it must work to resist the ways in which market forces often lead to greater benefits for those who are already better off. More generally, the state must look after those interests that have little economic leverage in the market. That is especially important where those who are the most successful in the market become increasingly influential in setting its rules. In addition to basic education, the state must invest in basic public health, in preventing and limiting the destruction of our environment, and in helping its citizens become more skilled at protecting their own interests.

52. It is for these reasons that much of this discussion about education for all in Namibia will refer to the government and government activities. But achieving education for all is necessarily a partnership. We can reach that goal only with the active participation of local communities, public and private enterprises, and those international and foreign agencies committed to promoting Africa's development.

II. Introduction

A. EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

53. To educate our people is to invest in our development.

54. Numerous studies, reports, and recommendations by national and international agencies emphasise the importance of education in our future development.

> Investment in human capital, including importantly basic health care and *primary education for children,* is one of the most effective means of stimulating long-term economic growth and improving general welfare.[1]

> Without education, development will not occur. Only an educated people can command the skills necessary for sustainable economic growth and for a better quality of life.[2]

> To achieve and sustain development, it is necessary to ensure the education and training . . . of the people so that they can participate fully and effectively in the development process.[3]

55. These are not just general principles or statements of intent. Spending on education can have a major development payoff. Sometimes the benefit is direct and rapid. Agricultural productivity may increase, for example, when better educated farmers learn new techniques more easily or adopt methods that they have read have been used successfully by other farmers. Sometimes the benefit is less direct and may not be visible for some time. Better educated mothers, for example, are more likely to attend ante-natal clinics and thereby reduce infant and maternal mortality. Whether the payoffs are direct or indirect, both the individuals who have furthered their education and the society at large benefit.

56. Indeed, beyond its contribution to economic growth, education is also an investment in improving the quality of our lives. Improved health for mothers and young children is one example. Another is enhanced communication. Great distances separate one part of our population from another. That we speak different languages and had different experiences prior to our independence tends to separate us even more. Literacy facilitates communication. Education, especially in the national language, enables that communication to flourish. The distances between us become less important. We can share in the joys of our fellow citizens far away, or learn of their problems and take action to help them out. We can find out about the problems we all face, like drought or AIDS, and learn what to do about them.

57. Education also improves the quality of our lives by helping us develop our abilities. As we learn more about our environment and the threats to it, we become better able to protect and preserve it. As we become better at identifying and solving problems, we also become better at creating jobs and increasing our income. As we develop our own new ideas and technologies, we become less dependent on imported innovations and the conditions that often accompany them. As it helps us become more successful in setting and pursuing our own goals, education is liberating, both individually and socially.

58. Education is both an investment in our future and our right as citizens. Unless we make the investment, we will not have the right.

B. A Development Brief for Education, Culture, and Training

59. The Namibian education system is characterised by acute disparities, inequities, and tensions. Policies of racial discrimination have left a legacy of differential allocation of resources to different racial groups. Some schools have highly educated teachers, extensive equipment, and relatively small classes. At the same time, other schools have teachers who have limited training and classrooms that are overcrowded and poorly equipped.

60. At Independence, the new Ministry of Education and Culture faced the formidable problem of how to address this unfortunate heritage. The challenge was twofold. It was important to understand exactly how the education system was functioning and what could be done to improve it. At the same time, it was necessary to begin reforming the education system immediately.

61. The Ministry commissioned a wide range of studies in order to understand better the nature and magnitude of the difficulties to be overcome. These studies, and reviews of the education sector more broadly, have been undertaken by many different experts, institutions, and agencies, both national and international. Collectively, these studies provide a good deal of basic information on many aspects of the Namibian education system.

62. As these studies were under way, the Ministry developed programmes and projects for education improvement, renewal, and reform. Among those initiatives have been Language Policy Formulation and Development, Basic Education Reform, Junior Secondary Curriculum Reform, Teacher In-Service Training, Examination and Assessment, Literacy Programme Development, and Distance Education.

63. In this context of multiple, simultaneous programme initiatives and numerous but largely disconnected studies, it is desirable to have a coherent and focused statement of policies, goals, and priorities for education, culture, and training. Accordingly, it was decided to prepare this statement, *Toward Education for All: A Development Brief for Education, Culture, and Training.*[4] This Development Brief has several purposes:

- provide a general introduction to education, culture, and training in Namibia and to their principal objectives;
- integrate the separate policy statements that have been issued and thereby provide a single point of reference to maior goals and policies;
- provide to policy makers and programme developers a solid foundation for informed decision making;
- serve as a broad guide for setting priorities and allocating resources among the various dimensions of education, culture, and training;
- suggest general benchmarks for the short, medium, and long term development of education, culture, and training;
- outline alternative approaches to reforming particular sectors of the education system;

- enable decision makers to assert a national initiative in negotiating with international and national education assistance agencies;
- foster a unity of purpose, effective collegial communication, and a shared culture of management and administration among those responsible for managing the national education system; and
- lay the foundation for the subsequent development of a detailed education plan.

64. To be useful, a document of this sort must be both theoretical at the broadest level and concrete in its attention to practical details. It must begin with a vision articulated by the national leadership that is perhaps not yet entirely clear to or fully shared by the education establishment and segments of the population at large. It must embody the richness of the diversity of Namibia's people and their cultures as it encourages experimenting with the unfamiliar. It must be daring in what it envisions and not limited to considering alternative colours for new paint to be applied to the old structures.

65. The transition between the eleven education systems and authorities of the past and the single Ministry of Education and Culture is a continuing challenge. Societal expectations remain sharply divided. On the one hand, the majority marginalised in the old system demands the redress of unequal allocations and social disadvantages: education for all. On the other hand, there persists concern, even fear, among the privileged minority that this redress may lead to declining quality in education and other adverse effects for them and their children.

66. Educators feel those tensions as well. Understandably in a transitional situation, the preparation of major policy documents generates apprehension. How will the institutional framework and specific positions be affected? Will programmes in which there has already been a substantial investment of time, effort, and funds be reconsidered or reoriented or perhaps discarded? Who will be the effective and influential participants in formulating the new policy statement? These concerns are not unreasonable and merit serious attention. Indeed, it is with them in mind that the preparation of the Development Brief was organised as a phased process in which the central challenge has been to find a manageable balance between the breadth of participation and the clarity of decisions.

1. Statements of Direction for Education, Culture and Training

67. A review of the numerous documents on education in Namibia provided one basis for an initial draft of the Development Brief in mid 1992. In several documents, including the Constitution of Namibia, the national leadership has specified the major objectives of national education policy. Each has signalled a stage in the consultative and policy development process.

68. Soon after Independence in 1990, the Minister for Education and Culture issued the draft proposal for education reform and renewal, *The National Integrated Education System for Emergent Namibia: Draft Proposals for Education Reform and Renewal.* The objective there was to open the discussion by publicizing some of the intended directions of education reform and policy.

69. July 1990 saw the publication of *Education in Transition: Nurturing Our Future—A Transitional Policy Guide-Line Statement on Education and Training in the Republic of Namibia*. This document sought to relate more general policy to practical issues.

70. Further policy changes appeared in November of that year. *Change With Continuity: Education Reform Directive: 1990—A Policy Statement of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport* outlined the basic framework for education management and policy evolution. The intention then was to stimulate discussion and foster consensus on major issues to guide the preparation of a formal legal instrument for education.

71. *Pedagogy in Transition: The Imperatives of Educational Development in the Republic of Namibia,* issued in May 1991, consolidated many of the themes addressed in *Change With Continuity.* Explained here, for example, was the structure for regional administration. This document also emphasised the importance of education supervision, administration, and management.

72. In November of that year, *Education and Culture in Namibia: The Way Forward to 1996—Broad Policy Directives for Education Reform and Renewal in Namibia* publicised a further set of policy directives. including the Language Policy for Schools, 1992 to 1996, the Three Term School Calendar for 1993, and the New Policy on Hostel Fees.

73. The Minister for Education and Culture summarised the policies issued to date in his address to the Sensitization Seminar on Educational Management and Administration, 17-18 February 1992: *Managing the Transition: Educational Policy Evolution and Implementation.* He elaborated education language policy in his contribution to the National Conference on the Implementation of the New Language Policy, 21-26 June 1992: *Language Policy Evolution and Implementation: Choices and Limitations.*

74. In October, 1992, *BASIC EDUCATION IN NAMIBIA - A Framework for Nation Building to the Year 2000 and Beyond* was published. This document provides the rationale and the context for the Basic Education Reform.

75. A list of the documents reviewed for the preparation of this Development Brief is included in the References, Chapter XII.

2. CONSULTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

76. A second important basis for the Development Brief has been consultations within the Ministry of Education and Culture and in the education community more generally. Extensive reactions to the initial text within the Ministry were incorporated into a revised draft of the Development Brief that was circulated during September and October of 1992. Five Workshops reviewed the draft Development Brief during October. Participants in those Workshops and in individual consultations included personnel from the headquarters and regional offices of the Ministry of Education and Culture and from other ministries and government departments, university faculty and staff, representatives from teachers' unions, student organisations, political parties, private enterprise, non-governmental organisations, foreign assistance agencies, and other groups concerned with education, culture, and training.

The comments and suggestions, both during the Workshops and consultations and in written form, were numerous and extensive.

77. The Development Brief is thus a schematic statement of goals, orientations, objectives, relationships, and priorities - in other words, *a statement of vision.* Accordingly, it cannot include detailed cost analyses, specification of programme alternatives, and the like, which are more appropriate to the education plan and to the specific programmes and projects to be incorporated within it. Some of our reform objectives will take longer to achieve than others. And some we will elaborate and revise as we work to achieve them. Indeed, the preparation of the Development Brief is intended both to provide an integrated overview of major goals and priorities and in doing so to facilitate refining, developing, and revising them.

78. The Development Brief, then, has had broad consideration and input over several drafts. Just as it has been based on extended discussions among those concerned with education, so should it contribute to even more extensive discussions about our education system, what it is, and what it should be.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

1. The former president of the World Bank, in a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations following the World Summit for Children, quoted in UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 1992* (New York: Oxford University Press for UNICEF, 1992), p. 27 *[emphasis added].*

2. World Bank, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Washington: World Bank, 1988), p. v.

3. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. *Adjustment for Transformation: An African Blueprint for Sustainable Development* (Addis Ababa: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 1989), p. 11.

4. With support from the Swedish International Development Authority, Joel Samoff, from Stanford University in the United States, coordinated the preparation of this Development Brief in collaboration with Ulla Kann and M. J. Mukendwa of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

III. Context

79. We have always educated our children, and we did so long before what we now call schools were established in our country. The adults in our communities took responsibility for helping the new generation understand their environment, their society, and their responsibilities as members of that society. They also helped the new generation learn how to hunt, to distinguish between healthy and poisonous plants, to herd and heal the animals, and the other skills they needed to function as adults in their communities. Here, however, we are concerned with formal schools and classroom instruction, and with the education activities directed toward those not in school.

80. As in much of the rest of Africa, formal education in Namibia prior to our Independence was limited and segregated. For nearly all of this century, schools were simply not open to most of our parents. Much of the schooling during this period was private. Until the seventies the territorial government itself invested relatively little in education. Since those who had imposed their control needed local assistance in administering the territory they controlled, Black Namibians were admitted to schools intended to develop basic literacy and numeracy. Some settler communities built and supported their own schools. Nearly all of the rest were opened and maintained by the Christian churches.

81. As Independence approached education for Black Namibians expanded more rapidly, primarily at the lowest levels. Still, the general pattern changed little. The numbers grew, but the parallel, separate, and unequal school systems persisted. Over time, a few Black Namibians were admitted to the elite schools and were able to pursue their education to a high level. Indeed, the logic of separate development required African teachers, headmasters, lawyers, and other professionals. But many of their peers had little, if any, schooling.

82. During the liberation struggle SWAPO, with international assistance, was able to establish a number of schools and adult education programmes. Although some schools were in makeshift facilities and had little or no equipment, others were fully equipped and staffed. These efforts enabled SWAPO leaders to gain experience in curriculum reform, upgrading teachers' skills, and the other dimensions of organising and managing an education system. The initiatives during this period have provided the foundation for secondary education and the National Literacy Programme and guided the organisation of pre-service teacher education in independent Namibia. The creation of the United Nations Institute for Namibia in Lusaka accelerated attention to higher education within Namibia. Many of the non-governmental organisations that were active in supporting these efforts continue to make significant contributions to our education today.

83. During this period an increasing number of Namibians pursued their education outside the country. One benefit of this forced exile was a broadened exposure to ideas and practices in education as well as politics. That internationalisation enables our current education leadership to consider philosophies and models of education in many different settings as it develops the mix that is appropriate to our own setting.

84. At our Independence education was a very high priority. One driving force of the liberation struggle was the promise that independence would bring new schools, more

schools, and better schools. It would also bring an end to segregated schools. Popular demand matched these high expectations. Many Namibians wanted to send their children to school. Before Independence, getting an education was one of the few ways Namibians could escape the most oppressive features of South African rule. For those who made it that far, education effectively guaranteed employment, a reasonable salary, and job security. Those were expected to be the fruits of Independence for all Namibians.

85. At that time, this Government inherited not one but eleven education systems and authorities. Although they shared a common administrative organisation and orientation, they had different responsibilities, authority, and resources. That system of separation did not provide a solid foundation for effective integration.

86. It is not surprising that different parts of our population had different expectations about what our independent education system would bring. The majority saw education for all as the vehicle for ending and then overcoming the segregation and inequalities of the past. The privileged minority, however, feared that education for all would lead to a decline in education standards to a lowest common denominator and that they and their children would be disadvantaged in the new system.

87. This Government, however, has been committed to fostering national harmony and mutual understanding. To achieve this, it followed a policy of reconciliation. Those who had belonged to the different authorities, and who had become used to working in unrelated systems, were brought together. They had to start to work together as a team with a common goal, attending to the needs of all of the learners.

88. Our current education system is transitional. We intend to retain the best features of the old system even as we reject its discriminatory and divisive organisation. We have a vision of the future we seek to reach—a vision that we regularly refine—and we have some ideas about how to get there. We are committed to a thorough overhaul of the education system we inherited. But we also know that the obstacles and distractions are many, and that it will take us time to reach our goals.

89. During this transitional period the legacy of the previous system will continue to trouble us. Although there is broad agreement on the general directions our education system should develop, some of our citizens are resistant to change. There remain problems of communication and suspicion about motives. Perhaps most troubling is the continued reluctance of some to make the transition from educating elites to education for all and to the new education philosophy, principles, and pedagogy that transition requires.

90. As educators, our antidote to that mistrust must be to insist that learning is interactive and that it requires mutual respect from all involved in this process.

91. This Government started, then, with a fundamental promise to expand and improve our schools, and to extend our education activities beyond the school walls. Confronting that promise was pent-up demand for access to the education system and too little time to develop detailed plans before our new system had to begin functioning. In hindsight, it is clear that we wanted more than it was possible to provide, and we wanted it more rapidly than it could be accomplished. We should not retreat from those aspirations. Our

expectations should always be high. Better to aim high and move forward energetically than to aim low and not move forward much at all.

92. Independence has permitted us to make a new beginning. This Government is committed to ensuring that it is the imagination and initiatives of our eforts to build a better Namibia, and not memories of the past, which guide our progress.

IV. Goals

93. At their most basic, the goals for education, culture, and training are those of the nation: equity, justice, democratic participation, and respect for human dignity.

94. Building on that base, the Ministry of Education and Culture will assign the highest priority over the next decade to four major goals and to those activities essential to reaching them: *access, equity, quality,* and *democracy.* Other activities will of course continue to receive attention, often a good deal of attention. And we must not neglect the large number of things we need to do everyday to keep our schools and other education programmes running well. Still, as Julius Nyerere, the former president of Tanzania noted, *to plan is to choose.* Our resources are not unlimited. To use those resources well, we must decide what is most important to us and then focus our attention, our creativity, and our energy there.

95. Let us consider, then, what education for all Namibians means.

A. Toward Education for All: Major Goals

1. Access

96. The Government's first commitment is to provide universal Basic Education. Ultimately, every Namibian is to have ten years of general comprehensive education. Basic Education is intended to ensure that by the year 2000 the majority of our citizens will have acquired basic skills of reading, writing, numeracy, and understanding socio-cultural processes and natural phenomena. This is the only way we can march with some hope into the next millennium.

97. Within the formal school system, the first stage will be universal primary education (Grades 1-7). As circumstances permit, that will be extended to include junior secondary education (Grades 8-10). Programmes of adult and nonformal education will address the learning needs of those not in school.

98. Extending access to education has two principal components. First, we must expand capacity. We must increase the number of schools and classrooms to be sure there are sufficient places for all Namibian children. We must also be sure that those schools are adequately staffed, that they are located where they are needed, and that they are in fact accessible to learners in their areas. It is a waste of resources to have underused school buildings in one place and very overcrowded classrooms in another.

99. Second, we must address the barriers that keep our children from going to school. For some children, that may mean persuading their parents that they will have a more comfortable and more secure future if their children attend school than if they remain at cattle posts to look after the herds. For other children, it may require overcoming the view that girls do not need to continue their education since their roles in life are to bear children and care for their families. For still others, it may require expansion of special education programmes, for example for children with limited sight or hearing. Low as they are, our school fund fees may be beyond the means of some of our families. For

them, we shall have to be sure that we have adequate fee reduction or remission schemes and that school fund fees are not used to discourage some children and their families from applying for admission. Most important, we must be able to show the parents of Namibia the value of education. They must see for themselves that both they and the country will benefit from universal basic education. If that is not clear, some parents, perhaps many parents, will be unwilling to support our schools and to send us their children.

100. We must also be sure that the habits of the segregated schooling of our past do not extend into the present. Previously, schools were reserved for particular racial or ethnic groups. Legally, we have abolished that discrimination. Unfortunately, old practices die hard. Some people still think of schools in terms of the old rules. Some students and their parents think they must attend the school that formerly was designated for their group and that they may not attend other schools. Having abolished discriminatory laws, we must now eliminate discriminatory practices and expectations among all our people. We must be sure that all our children fully understand that all of our schools are open to them.

101. At the same time, we must also acknowledge that schools themselves can be barriers to learning. Rote memorisation and repetition can stifle curiosity. Punitive discipline can discourage innovation, experimentation, and critique. Unchallenged learners become bored, and bored learners lose motivation to follow and join in class activities. When teachers disrespect learners, the learners come to have little respect for themselves.

102. If we are to expand access to education that is meaningful to our people and our country, we must be clear that our focus is on learning and not simply schooling. Schooling without learning may lead to diplomas and certificates, but for many students it also leads to frustration and self doubt. Learning, in school or out, leads not only to individual achievement, but also to self reliance, self confidence, and empowerment.

103. *To provide education for all, we must expand access to our education system. For that, we need not just more schools but schools and other education programmes where learning is truly accessible to all Namibians.*

2. EQUITY

104. Equality and equity are of special importance in Namibia. Our country is emerging from a sad history of racial discrimination and inequality. Continued privilege based on race or ethnicity is not acceptable. Unfortunately, it persists.

105. The Government's second commitment, therefore, is to provide equitable access to schooling and to its benefits. To achieve that, we must overcome a legacy of discrimination and segregation that was built into the school system itself. Like access, achieving equity has several components.

106. Expanded access is itself, of course, a necessary first step. We cannot provide a quality education to all our children while some are in school and some are not, or while some stay in school for the entire basic education programme while others leave after one or two years. In this respect, making sure that there are enough schools and classrooms for all our children is the foundation for constructing an equitable education system.

107. The next step is to ensure equality of access. Now, *equality* and *equity* are not exactly the same thing. *Equality* has to do with sameness, making sure that some children are not assigned to smaller classes, or receive more and better textbooks because of their race or the region of the country they come from. Achieving equality means making sure that children are not excluded or discouraged from the tracks that lead to better jobs because they are girls. An egalitarian school system is one in which the competence of the teachers, the availability of materials, and the quality of learning do not depend on race, or gender, or family origin. Books and other curricular materials in an egalitarian system do not have images that portray the world from only one group's perspective or that suggest that one group is better suited for particular occupations or positions in life. In the past, Namibian schools were not egalitarian. Differences in school facilities and equipment and in the level of preparation of the teachers did not disappear on the day of Independence. We have a difficult legacy to overcome.

108. To reduce the inequalities of the past will require affirmative action in the present. It is not sufficient simply to announce that discrimination by race, or religion, or gender is now illegal. The segregation that was introduced in the past was not just a matter of law. It was also a matter of the allocation of resources and of everyday practices. Hence, it is essential today to use our funds to redress those imbalances. For example, we will include a school readiness programme in Grade 1 of Basic Education to make sure that those children whose parents could not afford to send them to a pre-school do not start out far behind and stay behind their classmates from more affluent families. We must also find ways to encourage children to attend schools that formerly excluded them. Indeed, we must insist that the best of our schools make it *their* responsibility to recruit children and teachers from a wide range of backgrounds and life experiences. Overall, our aspirations—like those of all Namibian learners—must be high. We must encourage parents and their children to seek out education opportunities that were previously denied to them, and we must support them as they do so. And we must make it the responsibility of our institutions and their staffs to diversify their recruitment and to ensure that their enrolment matches the rich heterogeneity of our country. We must all be accountable for making sure these efforts succeed.

109. Adult and nonformal education is also part of our affirmative action. Clearly, it will take some time until we can provide places in our schools for all our learners. Hence, we will endeavour to develop multiple paths into and through our education system to meet the needs of learners of different ages and at different stages in their lives.

110. While equality has to do with sameness, *equity* has to do with fairness. Sometimes the two do not go together. Affirmative action, for example, means providing special encouragement and support for those who experienced discrimination in the past. Clearly, not everyone needs or should receive that special assistance. Thus, to achieve equity, it may be necessary to pursue policies that treat different groups of people in somewhat different ways. If girls have been systematically discouraged from selecting subject combinations that emphasise mathematics and science, then achieving equitable education requires that we find new ways to encourage more girls to select those subjects. The point, of course, is not to keep boys out, but rather to help girls join in. Because of past experiences, that may require treating boys and girls somewhat differently in this regard.

111. Just as *expanded access* to schooling is the first step toward achieving equality, so is *equal access* the first step toward achieving equity. Indeed, in the near future, we shall measure our success in achieving both equality and equity by looking at who goes to school. For example, we should not be satisfied by enrolment and promotion rates in basic education that vary significantly from one district to another. Nor should we accept a school system in which some of our children have sufficient textbooks in every subject and well equipped libraries and laboratories, while other children sit on the floor in large classes, copy their texts from what the teacher has written on the chalk board, and have neither libraries nor laboratories.

112. As we do better in promoting equal *access,* we must turn our attention toward *results.* Indeed, we cannot be sure that all learners have equal opportunities unless we have looked carefully at the outputs. For example, do girls stop their schooling sooner than boys? Are completion rates systematically and consistently higher in some regions than in others? Are race or ethnicity visible in the examination results? *Achieving equity in results is far more complex and difficult than achieving equality of access. But we shall have failed if we aim at anything less.*

3. QUALITY

113. Our third major commitment is to make our schools good schools and to offer high quality nonformal alternatives to formal schools. That, too, has several components.

114. Perhaps the most important challenge in improving the quality of our education system is to ensure that our teachers are well prepared for the major responsibilities they carry. More than anything else, it is the teachers who structure the learning environment. It is they who can keep learning exciting and satisfying or alternatively who make schooling a pain to be endured.

115. It is essential, therefore, that we help our teachers develop the expertise and skills that will enable them to stimulate learning. Their professional education must begin before they enter the classroom and continue during the course of their professional careers. It is also essential that our teachers see themselves as contributors to nation building and not simply workers who carry information between curriculum experts and learners. To be effective, teachers must see themselves as active participants, not passive intermediaries. They must be able to communicate their ideas to those who design curriculum and set examinations. And they must see the fruits of those ideas in the teaching materials they receive. To implement the syllabus and curriculum materials for which they are responsible, teachers must have sufficient autonomy to tailor a lesson's objectives to the needs, interests, and abilities of the students in their classes.

116. For teachers to be effective in structuring and managing the learning process, supervision must be supportive, not punitive. Principals, inspectors, subject specialists, and others must all see their role as using their expertise to improve what happens in the classrooms. They need to be imaginative in helping teachers overcome the obstacles they encounter. And where they find that particular teachers lack expertise or skill, they must be creative in helping those teachers see the additional work they need not as a sanction but

as an opportunity to improve their own abilities, to do their own job more competently, to be better respected by colleagues, learners, and parents.

117. We need also to reconsider what we mean by high quality education to be sure that we do not unthinkingly carry the values of education for the few into the era of education for all. We are used to taking examination results as the principal and often the only indicator of the quality of our education system. Yet those scores are at best only a partial measure of the sort of education we need to provide. We have all encountered people who have done well in their examinations but who cannot use effectively the formulas and dates they have memorised. Some with high marks have little sense of self confidence or social responsibility. As well, we know that learners with little access to libraries and laboratories, who have been taught by instructors with limited training and even less professional support, and who must take examinations in what for them is a foreign language do less well than their peers who have not had to overcome similar obstacles. Examination results are clearly too narrow a gauge of the quality of our education system.

118. Even at their best, most examinations assess only a limited range of achievements. We shall, of course, work to improve them. But they will never be sufficient as our sole indicator of the quality of education. How successful are our schools in helping learners become skilled at using the information they acquire? Do our education programmes enable learners to integrate scattered bits of information into a coherent understanding and then apply that understanding to unfamiliar situations? Do we succeed in making learning itself a self-directed, interactive, exciting, and intrinsically rewarding activity?

119. We must understand quality even more broadly. Access and equity are also measures of quality. Consider, for example, schools whose learners come from all parts of our society. If it turns out that students from only one racial group do well in their examinations, or that only boys concentrate on mathematics and science, or that children from only one ethnic group are chosen to represent the school, then something is very wrong. Even if some of its learners do very well on their examinations, that school is not providing a high quality education. Or consider a primary school where children master basic reading, writing, and numbers but do not learn about citizenship in a democratic society or respect for others' culture and values. That, too, is not high quality education.

120. As we broaden our understanding of high quality education, we must also address the concerns of those who fear that education for all will hold back our most gifted and energetic learners. Surely that would not serve our country well. Our education system must encourage and reward individual achievement. Our challenge in this regard is to develop instructional strategies that make it possible for learners from varying backgrounds and with differing abilities all to progress. Indeed, it is precisely for that reason that a learner-centred approach is so central to the new education system we are creating.

121. We must also be resourceful in ensuring that our children have sufficient textbooks and instructional materials. We should look forward to the day when our curriculum experts and teachers can choose among a number of appropriate books prepared by Namibian authors and illustrators. At the same time, our education system will be more resilient and adaptive if we improve our ability to develop instructional resources at the community and school level. Our schools must be creative and innovative in producing

their own materials. Teachers and children who rely on their own imagination and experience to design, construct, and collect the materials they need find learning exciting, empowering, and relevant to their lives.

122. Another task in raising the quality of education is to improve the physical facilities. Today, some of our schools are as solidly built and as well equipped as schools anywhere in the world. At the same time, other schools are too small for their enrolment. Even the learners who manage to find places inside are not protected from the wind and the rain. Not only do they lack laboratories and libraries, but they do not even have books and basic materials. We must do better than that. We must provide our learners an environment that is conducive to learning.

123. That does not mean that all of our schools must be very costly to build and maintain. That would surely be impossible. Instead, we must be resourceful and self-reliant. Our neighbourhoods and villages can participate in building and repairing schools. We can take advantage of the strategies that are appropriate to the local environment, perhaps using wood in some areas and sun dried bricks in others. Our students themselves can share responsibility for upgrading and maintaining their schools. Progress may come more slowly than we would like, but our objective must be to have schools that support, rather than impede, learning.

124. *We are all learners. Learning is a lifelong activity. Improving the quality of our schools is a responsibility we share. We all have a vital stake in the success of our efforts.*

4. Democracy

125. Our fourth major goal is democracy. To develop education for democracy we must develop democratic education.

126. If Namibian adults had been raised in a democratic society, then we might simply have left it to our civics instructors to teach our young people about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. But for nearly all of this century the laws and regulations of our country have been phrased in the language of democracy and at the same time excluded most Namibians from it. Becoming independent was in large part a struggle for democracy, a struggle for all Namibians to be citizens in their own society. Democracy must therefore be not simply a set of lessons in our schools but rather a central purpose of our education at all levels.

127. Our learners must study how democratic societies operate and the obligations and rights of their citizens. Our learners must understand that democracy means more than voting. Malnutrition, economic inequality, and illiteracy can be obstacles to democracy that are far more powerful than barriers to participating in elections. Our learners must also understand that they cannot simply receive democracy from those who rule their society. Instead, they must build, nurture, and protect it. And they must learn they can never take it for granted.

128. In the past, we were not fooled by an authoritarian government that preached to us about democracy. Nor will learners today be deceived by an education system that talks

about democracy and says it is for someone else at some other time. To teach about democracy, our teachers—and our education system as a whole—must practice democracy.

129. A democratic education system is organised around broad participation in decision making and the clear accountability of those who are our leaders. That is not to say that every decision in a school must be subjected to a vote or that the roles of the youngest children will be identical to those of their parents. Rather, it is to be clear that we must work diligently and consistently to facilitate broad participation in making the major decisions about our education and how we implement them. In schools that are responsive to their communities, parents and neighbours are not regarded as generally unwelcome outsiders. Instead, the schools are organised to enable them to be active participants in school governance, active contributors to discussions of school management and administration, and active evaluators of the quality of instruction and learning. Similarly, adult learners are expert consultants on curriculum content, scope, and orientation.

130. In democratic education for a democratic society teachers must be active creators and managers of the learning environment and not its masters or caretakers. We must structure our education system so that the organisations its participants choose to form, for example teachers' and students' unions, can play active roles alongside communities in shaping, guiding, and assessing it.

131. Indeed, learning is like democracy in many ways. Both are active processes. For successful outcomes, both learners and citizens must assume responsibility for those processes. They must both domesticate what is potentially alienating, making it their own. And as they share in its construction, so they must accept responsibility for its results.

132. *Just as education is a foundation for development, so is it a foundation for democracy. Building those foundations must be a conscious process in which all learners are engaged.*

B. Using Resources Well and Monitoring Their Use

133. To achieve our goals of access, equity, quality, and democracy, two related objectives will require special attention. Since the need is great and our resources—including people with relevant skills—are limited, we must get the maximum benefit from what we do. And we shall have to become much better at keeping track of where we are, what we have done, and what we have yet to do.

134. As we shall discuss more fully later on, education is necessarily an expensive enterprise. Cheap education is often just that, not worth very much. Hence, it is unlikely that we shall be able to reduce substantially the overall cost of education. And since spending on education is already such a large part of our national budget, it is also unlikely that education's share of total government spending will increase substantially. What we can do is work to make the best use of our money.

135. What that means is that we must ensure that we focus our spending on what we consider to be the most important activities and that we must reduce waste and inefficiency

wherever possible. Some types of poorly used funds will be easy to identify. Textbooks that are costly to produce and that remain in storage rather than being distributed to learners cannot contribute to their education. Teachers who arrive at school late and leave early cheat their students and their schools. Students and their families who take school furniture and fittings to use in their own homes deprive others of the use of that equipment. Other kinds of waste and inefficiency are much more difficult to discern. For example, teacher education programmes that do not help teachers develop the resourcefulness and self-confidence to function on their own in remote schools with rudimentary facilities and limited materials have not served us well. Nor do authoritarian principals so focused on discipline and punishment that they are unable to help their teachers improve their skills.

136. It is important to maximise the benefits of our spending on education and reduce inefficiency. At the same time, we must understand efficiency in terms of schools and learning. For example, making our classes larger and larger might seem to increase efficiency. And if we measure efficiency in terms of learners per teacher, that would indeed be so. After all, if a teacher's salary is the same whether the class has 50 children or 100 children, then it is more efficient—in these terms—to have the larger class. But the relevant measure to us is *learning,* not pupils per teacher. If having classes of 100 children means that little or no learning takes place, then increasing class size to that level is very inefficient. The point here is that schooling is not like manufacturing, say, glass bottles or automobiles. To make bottles or cars efficiently, we look for the lowest cost raw materials, we reduce waste and breakage, we train our workers to do their jobs quickly and accurately, and we install machinery that is reliable, has low energy cost, and is easy to maintain. Unlike bottle making and automobile manufacturing, learning is an interactive process. The bottles do not contribute to their own manufacture. Cars do not suggest how to do it better. But learners are active participants in their own learning and should help us improve our schools and nonformal programmes. What matters most, then, is not how many students there are per teacher, or even how many teacher hours are allocated to each student who completes a particular level, but rather how much and how well those students have learned.

137. To achieve that we must do a much better job keeping track of our education programmes and their results. Currently, it is far too often difficult to know exactly how much is being spent on a particular programme and to determine what sort of assistance will be most useful to particular schools. We must develop effective ways to monitor education activities. We are working now to establish a clear picture of the current situation that we can use to measure our progress. Because education for all requires a new sort of schooling for Namibia, we shall have to develop new, better, and more appropriate measures of expanded access, the reduction of inequalities, the quality of instruction and materials, and the effectiveness of education spending. Most important, we shall need to develop better ways to assess learning, both to help our schools and to help the learners themselves.

138. Education for all in Namibia means expanded access, the elimination of inequalities and fair treatment throughout the education system, improved quality of instruction and learning, and learning about democracy by practising it. To achieve those goals we shall have to maximise the benefits of what we spend. And to achieve that, we shall have to

have current information on the programmes we undertake and their results. Let us consider now how we shall proceed toward those goals.

V. Culture

139. In the past, culture was used to divide people. Even worse, some cultures were considered to be intrinsically more advanced than others.

140. The people of Namibia have rejected that policy. Indeed, our policy orientation is just the opposite of what it was. The Ministry of Education and Culture is committed to a policy of cultivating *culture as a unifying and nation building force.* Accordingly, the Ministry is using its resources and influence to encourage initiatives aimed at developing a true Namibian culture, an *enriched unity in diversity.* Diversity is also important to us. We recognise the uniqueness of the cultures of Namibia and we value their distinctive characteristics.

141. It is useful to distinguish two related but distinct dimensions of the Ministry's cultural agenda. One has to do with encouraging and supporting the development of culture understood broadly as the arts and artisanry of Namibia's peoples. The other is concerned with integrating into our education and daily lives our peoples' cultures understood as their values, world views, and ways of knowing and understanding. In both senses, culture is a shared way of living, not a fossil from the past but a vibrant, dynamic, constantly changing complex of ideas and interactions.

142. The Department of the Ministry responsible for Culture has two major goals. First, it works to translate into practical terms the Government's policy on the freedom of cultural and artistic expression, defined in Article 19 of the Constitution. Second, it seeks to create an awareness and to promote the revival of national heritage among all Namibians. To achieve those general goals the Ministry pursues a strategy of cultural renaissance that emphasises consultation, interactive partnership, involvement, and collaborative networking. Within that framework our challenge is to empower our communities, especially those for whom the facade of cultural preservation in the past was isolating and dispiriting.

143. The specific objectives of this Department are to:

- develop the material and spiritual culture of Namibia;
- enhance the Namibian identity through cultural expression;
- encourage local artists to strive for excellence in the execution of the performing and the visual arts and thereby to play an active part in the process of nation building;
- preserve national cultural treasures through archives, museums, monuments, heraldry, place names, art, and services for libraries and languages;
- encourage and promote international contact and in so doing, promote culture beyond the borders of Namibia as our contribution to human culture and international understanding;
- promote the vocational and employable qualities of the arts and create opportunities for such employment for Namibians;
- emphasise the educational and spiritual values of the arts for the entire population of Namibia;
- enhance mass education, learning, and information dissemination through library services;
- provide recreational and leisure opportunities through cultural events, festivals, and exhibitions;
- encourage research on culture and traditions;

- democratise both the practice and the perceptions of the national cultural institutions and services of Namibia; and
- encourage all the people of Namibia to participate actively not only in artistic and cultural expressions, but also in the various councils responsible for drafting policy.

A. Arts and Artisanry

144. We are undertaking a wide range of activities to foster this cultural renaissance. One focus has been on cultural facilities, such as the National Theatre of Namibia, the Windhoek Conservatoire, and the Arts Association of Namibia. They are now not only open to all Namibians but they are as well actively engaged in outreach programs directed toward those sections of the community that previously had little access.

145. A second focus has been on the organisations and institutions, both public and private, that promote cultural activities. The Ministry has laid the groundwork for establishing a National Arts and Cultural Council. The foundation has also been laid for upgrading the Arts Association of Namibia to become the National Art Gallery of Namibia. The Ministry supports the National Youth Choir, a National Arts Register, the National Archives, the State Museum, and a Traditional Namibian Music Research Project.

146. A third focus has been to seek out and encourage cooperation with our neighbours in cultural activities. Namibia's membership in the Southern Africa Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) and its successor, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), has already resulted in numerous regional activities, including a conference on Popular Theatre held in Rehoboth in August, 1991, and attended by representatives from 34 countries.

147. A fourth initiative has been to establish a National Commission for UNESCO which will facilitate Namibia's access to international funding and expertise for cultural participation and development, including participating in UNESCO's decade for cultural development.

148. A fifth concern has been to upgrade and expand the facilities we administer and extend our efforts to promote culture into the countryside. The Ministry's Culture Department administers the Central Library Service, the National Archives, and the State Museum, all of which have expanded. Senior Cultural Officers have been appointed in the six education regions.

149. A sixth initiative has been to organise seminars and sponsor publications on Namibian culture. A comprehensive cultural survey has been conducted, leading to the publication of *Culture in Namibia: An Overview.* The participants in a seminar on oral tradition, drawn from across Namibian society, laid the foundation for an on-going orature project, concerned with the creation, transmission, and evolution of values, traditions, customs, and history more generally. Especially in a setting where few are literate, orature plays a role similar to that of written literature in societies where literacy is more widespread. As well as linking people across time and space, orature provides a vehicle

for social comment and criticism. The Namibia Orature Project has launched a publication series, *Growing to Nationhood,* of which the first three books appeared in 1992.

150. To support and extend these initiatives, the Ministry has begun publishing *Kalabash,* a biannual magazine on Namibian culture.

151. Prior to our Independence much of the institutional framework of instruction and performance in art, music, and theatre were bastions of white cultural expression and influence. Our challenge, therefore, is to transform these institutions into centres of Namibian innovation, experimentation, and expression in the broadest sense. We need not only to encourage Namibian musicians and playwrights but also to bring their music and drama to a much broader audience. Like our doctors, engineers, and educators, they too must become role models for the next generation.

152. As we develop these cultural initiatives, we must resist the tendency to dissect culture like a specimen on a laboratory table. When we categorise, or organise departments in our schools and universities, it is common to put art in one room, music in another, and theatre in still another. There are times when that approach may be useful. But lived culture does not have such clear separations. A story teller is also a singer. A musician is also a dancer. The audience does not always sit passively watching but often participates actively in the spectacle. As we discover, rediscover, rejuvenate, create, and shape Namibian culture, we also determine how our culture is perceived, presented, and passed on. Our diversity is our wealth. As we fashion a unifying Namibian culture, we must reject the idea that there is a single model for culture or only one way to understand and appreciate it. Sometimes the audience sits quietly, listening to the orchestra. Sometimes the audience is the orchestra. Our traditions—both what we do and how we know—are many. They enrich our unity.

153. Our effort to open our museums to broader participation and to do a better job of preserving our legacy of the past must not lead us to treat culture as an exhibit. We do, of course, want to deepen our appreciation of our traditions and values. But a people's culture is alive, not static. We must not think of culture as something to look at. We live it. To nourish it, we must help our culture change with our circumstances, preserving what is valuable and modifying what is no longer viable.

B. Values, Perspectives, and Ideas

154. In that sense, everything we do is part of our culture, from our popular music to the clothing of our teenagers and elected officials, to the way we speak, to our customs for marriage and inheritance. Yet despite the diversity of our peoples and their histories, our education system has for the most part presented a single perspective on the world, and a single value system that reflects only one part of our heritage. Reforming our education to incorporate the perspectives, values, and ideas of all of our people is the second dimension of our cultural responsibility. In this regard, we must re-educate our educators and thereby re-educate ourselves.

155. When we think of culture, we must not think only of art or music or theatre. We must also think about how we tell our history.

156. We must also broaden our understanding of who we are and how we interact. In school, for example, our children learn about family and community and more generally about how societies are organised. But what is a family? For some, a family is a mother and a father and their children. For others, a family includes grandparents and perhaps great-grandparents. For still others, a family includes not only parents and their children but also the parents' brothers and sisters and their children. To develop our culture requires that we incorporate many senses of family and community in our learning and teaching, valuing each.

157. In a similar way, what we learn about the relationships between parents and children and between husbands and wives, or about the responsibilities of citizenship, or about what are reasonable uses and abuses of authority must reflect the values and life experiences of not some, but all of our people. That will not be easy. We have different ideas about when children should obey their parents without question and when they should be encouraged to be more questioning or even set out on their own. We do not entirely agree on appropriate ways to show respect for teachers or officials or elders. What we must agree on, however, is that our education system should draw on the practices of all of our peoples for models, that our curriculum and materials should include images that reflect the diversity of our country, and that our teaching at every level should respect not only the customs but also the ideas and the ways of knowing of all of us.

158. We shall have to work at this. It would be naive to assume that the cultural superiority and cultural prejudice of the past will disappear easily. They were far too entrenched in our education system and in the rules that governed our conduct to vanish quietly. Instead, we shall have to confront that legacy through a positive engagement in the study of the values and practices of all Namibians. Studying is an essential starting point, but it is not enough. We must explore our diversity to become familiar with how we are alike and how we differ. But we must do more. We must make the transition from viewing culture as the object of study to understanding ourselves as the subjects of culture. We must be part of our cross-cultural dialogue, not simply its observers. We must recognise our differences not as curiosities but as the foundation of our unity. Only by valuing those differences can we replace the cultural superiority of the few with the cultural confidence of the many.

159. Our cultural challenge is to recognise the values embedded in our everyday activities and to make sure those are our values. To enrich our national culture requires that we all take pride in our diversity. We all need to learn to honour all of our ancestors, restoring the voice to those whom our recent history has silenced. Our culture is not chains that enslave us to the past but the forge for our future.

VI. Two Major Policy Initiatives

160. Access. Equity. Quality. Democracy. These are the overarching goals that guide the development of education, culture, and training in contemporary Namibia. Translating those goals into general policies and detailed plans is an on-going process with broad participation. We are still at the early stages of that process. Indeed, one of the major purposes of this Development Brief is to focus attention on what we need to accomplish and how we are to do that.

161. Since Independence the Ministry of Education and Culture has launched several strategic initiatives concerned with:

- Basic Education;
- pre-service teacher education, especially the Basic Education Teacher Diploma;
- in-service teacher education, especially the Five Year Programme for Teacher In-Service Training (INSET);
- transition to the national language as the medium of instruction in schools;
- a new Junior Secondary Curriculum;
- expanded and enriched instructional efforts in mathematics, science, and technology;
- a new Senior Secondary Level Programme leading to the Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and for some to the Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education (HIGCSE);
- adult and nonformal education programs, especially basic literacy;
- establishment and development of the University of Namibia; and
- vocational education and training.

162. Within education, our principal priorities are increasingly clear: providing ten years of Basic Education to all Namibians and institutionalising the national language as the principal medium of instruction throughout the education system. Basic Education, of course, is not a single objective but rather a series of interconnected and overlapping objectives, programmes, and other activities. To achieve universal Basic Education, for example, we must help our teachers improve their skills, open new schools and out-of-school programs, and expand the production of instructional materials.

163. Making the transition to English as the language of instruction also involves a set of related activities. To teach in English requires teachers with advanced English competence and appropriate curriculum guides, textbooks, assessment measures, and other materials in English. Teaching in English may also have important consequences for career goals and paths and therefore the subject combinations we offer and recognise.

164. Both of these priorities have implications as well for education finance, governance, management, and administration. To expand access as rapidly as possible will require community involvement, from donating labour to monitoring progress to sharing responsibility for major decisions. Some approaches to teacher education require a far higher level of resources than others. International education assistance may be much more readily available for some activities we deem important than for others.

165. To assign a high priority to Basic Education and Language Policy is not to ignore other dimensions of our education system. We must of course recognise the importance of vocational and higher education. We must develop effective patterns of cooperation with other

ministries and departments, and with non-governmental and other organisations, as we address the need and demand for technical and vocational education. And more. But to plan is to choose. Our fundamental choice is education for all, education that is widely and fairly accessible and of high quality.

A. BASIC EDUCATION

166. The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia makes education the right of every Namibian and charges the government to provide reasonable facilities to render that right to education effective initially at primary education level. To implement education for all, the Ministry of Education and Culture has developed a programme of Basic Education that includes both formal schooling and adult and nonformal education.

167. The goals of Basic Education are to

- promote national unity, liberty, justice and democracy;
- promote human rights, respect for oneself and respect for others, their cultures and religious beliefs;
- foster the highest moral, ethical and spiritual values such as integrity, responsibility, equality, and reverence for life;
- support and stimulate learners through childhood and youth and prepare them for the responsibilities and challenges of adult life and citizenship;
- encourage perseverance, reliability, accountability, and respect for the value and dignity of work;
- develop literacy, numeracy, understanding of the natural and social environment, civic life, artistic appreciation and expression, social skills, and promote physical and mental health;
- provide knowledge, understanding and values, and develop creativity and practical skills, as a solid foundation for academic or vocational training, and for a creative, meaningful and productive adult life;
- promote maximal development of the individual learner's potential, including those with special learning needs;
- foster and promote the spiritual and religious wellbeing of the learner, with due regard to the diversity and freedom of beliefs;
- extend national unity to promote regional, African and international understanding, cooperation and peace; and
- lay a foundation for the development of human resources and economic growth of the nation.

168. The aims of Basic Education are to provide a balanced, relevant and coherent programme of instruction and learning. Basic Education will promote:

- functional literacy and language development
  - to help the learners to communicate effectively in speech and writing in English and in another language of Namibia
  - to provide instruction as far as possible through the medium of the mother tongue during the first three years of Basic Education, and to provide for the further development of proficiency in the mother tongue, and
  - to develop competence in English as the official language for the purposes of education and public life

- functional numeracy and mathematical thinking
  - to develop positive attitudes toward mathematics
  - to assist learners in acquiring the basic number concepts and numerical notation
  - to help learners understand and master the basic mathematical concepts and operations, and
  - to help learners apply mathematics in everyday life
- intellectual development
  - to develop a lively, questioning, appreciative and creative intellect, enabling learners to discuss issues rationally, solve problems and apply themselves to tasks
- personal development and self-fulfilment
  - to assist learners in obtaining the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for personal development related to the changing needs of Namibian society
  - to assist learners in developing self-confidence, self-knowledge, self reliance and understanding of the world in which they live, through meaningful activities
  - to provide for individual needs and aptitudes, within the framework of a common curriculum, including compensatory teaching at classroom level, and
  - to provide all learners with an equitable start to schooling through school readiness education
- health and physical development
  - to develop attitudes and practices and to further knowledge and activities which promote physical and mental health, and
  - to promote cooperation, positive competition, sportsmanship and fair play through participation in games and sports
- spiritual and ethical development
  - to provide religious and moral education which will promote the religious, moral and spiritual development of the learner
  - to promote and foster the highest moral and ethical values, and
  - to develop and enhance respect for, understanding and tolerance of other peoples, religions, beliefs, cultures and ways of life
- social and cultural development
  - to promote democratic principles and practices at school level in the education system and in civic life
  - to develop social responsibility towards other individuals, family life, the community and the nation as a whole
  - to promote equality of opportunity for males and females, enabling both sexes to participate equally and fully in all spheres of society and all fields of employment, and
  - to contribute to the development of culture in Namibia, and promote wider intercultural understanding
- national unity, international understanding and political development
  - to foster unity, national identity and loyalty to Namibia and its Constitution
  - to promote awareness of the place and role Namibia has within the region and its relationship to neighbouring countries, and
  - to further understanding and appreciation of the interdependence of peoples and nations for peace in the world
- vocational orientation and economic development
  - to foster the learner's awareness of the local, regional and national needs of Namibia, and to contribute towards development

- to equip learners to play an effective and productive role in the economic life of the nation, and
- to promote positive attitudes toward the challenges of cooperation, work, entrepreneurship and self-employment

- development of environmental awareness
  - to develop a holistic understanding of the dynamic interdependence of all living things and their environment
  - to develop a sense of responsibility toward restoring and maintaining ecological balances through the sustainable management of natural resources, and
  - to promote involvement in practical activities to preserve and sustain the natural environment

169. The Structure of Formal Basic Education

AGES	EXAMINATION FOR THE JUNIOR SECONDARY CERTIFICATE (JSC)		
15-16	Grade 10	Junior Secondary	FORMAL BASIC EDUCATION
14-15	Grade 9		
13-15	Grade 8		
12-13	EXAMINATION FOR THE CERTIFICATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION (CPE)		
	Grade 7	Upper Primary	
11-12	Grade 6		
10-11	Grade 5		
9-10	Grade 4	Lower Primary	
8-9	Grade 3		
7-8	Grade 2		
6-7	Grade 1 (incorporating School Readiness Education)		

170. The curriculum for Basic Education will include the following areas of learning:

- aesthetic;
- social and economic;
- linguistic and literary;
- mathematical;

- spiritual;
- moral and ethical;
- physical;
- natural scientific; and
- technological.

171. Learners will find the curriculum relevant only if the knowledge, skills, and values to be acquired are meaningful to them. If they feel that what they learn and how they learn it are significant, interesting, and useful, they will enjoy learning more and put more effort into it. Curriculum must be relevant both to the needs of learners and to society.

172. Since access to pre-primary education activities is uneven across Namibia, a School Readiness Education programme will be incorporated into the curriculum of Grade 1. In that way, all learners can begin their Basic Education at the same age despite the disparities in their prior preparation. In part, integrating this programme into the Basic Education curriculum is affirmative action to reduce the disadvantage of those children who have been unable to benefit from early childhood education.

173. Along with curriculum reform, the development of the Basic Education programme has provided an opportunity to think critically and imaginatively about teaching methods. A variety of methods should be used. Some of the most challenging and enjoyable teaching is done at the primary school level, in part because a great variety of different methods may be used. (Preparing teachers for Basic Education is discussed in Chapter VII, Section VII.D.3.)

174. Teaching begins with the interests of the learners, their level of maturity, their previous experiences, and the nature of the subject being taught. Our emphasis must be on the quality and meaningfulness of learning. Hence, our teaching methods must strive to facilitate and encourage learning. Accordingly, our approach to learning and teaching should be learner-centred, which means that:

- the starting point is the learners' existing knowledge, skills, interests and understanding, derived from previous experience in and out of school;
- the natural curiosity and eagerness of all young people to learn to investigate and to make sense of a widening world must be nourished and encouraged by challenging and meaningful tasks;
- the learners' perspective needs to be appreciated and considered in the work of the school;
- learners should be empowered to think and take responsibility not only for their own, but also for one another's learning and total development; and
- learners should be involved as partners in, rather than receivers of, educational growth.

175. Our teaching methods must allow for the active involvement and participation of learners in the learning process. Teachers should structure their classes to facilitate this active learner role. Often, that will mean organising learners in smaller or larger groups, or pairs, or working with them individually. It will mean as well using teaching techniques that fit the purpose and content of the lesson and that at the same time encourage active learner participation, for example, explaining, demonstrating, posing questions, checking for understanding, helping, providing for active practice, and problem solving.

176. Children respond best when they are interested in the things they are learning. It is the teacher's responsibility to discover the learners' interests and to plan learning activities that address and build on those interests.

177. A major challenge to teachers will be to plan learning experiences that are at a level appropriate to the learners with whom they are working. If the level is too high, then learners may turn away in frustration. If the level is too low, the learners are not challenged to learn.

178. Even very young children have a store of rich experiences. Building on learners' experiences is a sound way to stimulate interest and to lead into new and more significant and practical learning. A learner-centred curriculum seeks to do just that: to begin with learners' interests and experiences, and to use them to lead learners toward what is less familiar and not yet understood.

179. Of course, to some degree what we are studying, learning, and teaching will determine what method is used. Learning to sing and dance may proceed very differently from mastering the skills of arithmetic. We may teach writing in one way and drawing in another. The most successful approach to teaching draws on a variety of methods to engage the learners actively in their own education.

180. The most effective materials are learner-friendly. They meet the learner's needs and are stimulating and easy to use. They engage attention, actively involve the learner, and combine challenge and enjoyment. Materials of this sort are also carefully designed for specific learning objectives, to get a message across, to help learners understand, and to be easy for the teacher to use.

181. To maintain the focus on learning rather than on promotion and certification, evaluation in Basic Education will rely on continuous assessment throughout the year rather than on a single major examination. That assessment will be informal and continuous in lower primary school, without internal or external examinations, and continuous and both informal and formal at the upper primary level, including tests designed and marked by classroom teachers. (Assessment and evaluation in Basic Education are discussed more fully in Chapter VII, Section VII.H.3.b.)

182. Our emphasis must be on success, not failure. Hence, at each stage compensatory teaching will be provided by class or subject teachers for learners who are not making satisfactory progress in order to improve their levels of achievement. Often, special assistance of that sort will enable learners who are experiencing difficulties to progress with their class rather than being held back.

183. Similarly, gifted learners will also receive special attention. Generally, they will have more challenging tasks and additional and enriched materials. Often, they may serve as special resources within their classes, thereby encouraging both the gifted learners and their peers to reach higher levels of achievement.

184. Learners whose needs cannot be met through compensatory education will be considered for Special Education (discussed more fully in Chapter VII, Section VII.H.4).

185. . It is tempting to expect that our programme of Basic Education will assure employment for those who complete it and that it will thereby reduce the flow of young people from our rural areas to our cities. Throughout their schooling students should develop understandings and skills that will assist them in finding and perhaps creating employment. Still, although education and educated people surely contribute to economic progress, it is unrealistic to expect our schools to show immediate and direct results in reducing unemployment.

186. The fundamental problem here is that we are not creating new jobs as quickly as our young adults seek them. Nor are we creating enough jobs in the rural areas with attractive salaries and conditions. These are problems that schools cannot themselves solve. Beyond its own personnel, education does not directly create jobs. Over time, an effective education system will support and extend economic growth. Over time, it will as well respond to society's needs for particular skills and help young people become more competent in finding and creating employment. In the short term, however, if there are not enough jobs, there can be no magic revision of the curriculum that will reduce unemployment.

187. The relationship between education and employment is complex. Education promotes development and thereby contributes to creating jobs and expanding employment opportunities. But for the most part, it does so indirectly by building a foundation of understanding, analytic skills, and general expertise. It is not school-based vocational training but high quality general education and the development of life skills and exposure to practical subjects—pre-vocational preparation—that help people find and create employment. (Vocational education and training are discussed in Chapter VII, Section VII.E.)

188. Schools and other education programmes do have a role to play in reducing unemployment and its frustrations, but they cannot themselves solve the basic problems of the economy. To expect them to do so is to frustrate ourselves, and our young people, even further.

B. LANGUAGE POLICY

189. Language policy guideline statements were issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture in the documents *Education and Transition,* July, 1990, and *Change with Continuity,* November, 1990. These statements gave broad directives for language choices as medium of instruction and subject at school level and stated that schools were expected to play their role in establishing the use of English as the official language. Since English is not yet a *lingua franca* in Namibia, teaching English is to have a high priority. In July, 1991, the Ministry prepared and distributed the document, *Provisional Language Policy for Schools—A Draft for Discussion.* The responses nationwide to this document provided the basis for a policy confirming that English would be phased in as a medium of instruction, where that had not already taken place, during the five year period 1992 to 1996. During the same period the Basic Education Reform initiative is being implemented. This will result in the terminal objective of English as a medium of instruction in Grades 4-12 by 1996, with the exception that non-promotional subjects in Grades 4-7 may be taught in a national language other than English. The policy will apply to all schools, including private schools, except schools established for the express purpose of accommodating children of foreign nationals. The new

language policy was announced in November, 1991 (REF NO 68/91/11/28), and its implementation was discussed in a National Conference on the Implementation of the New Language policy in June, 1992.

1. CRITERIA FOR LANGUAGE POLICY FORMULATION

190. Language policy formulation in a multilingual society is a difficult task. What is required is a fair balance between the abilities of individuals to choose their medium of communication and the public interest in a common language to facilitate citizen participation and decision making in a democratic society.

191. Language policy evolution and implementation in the context of present day Namibia is further complicated by our historical past. Ours has been a history of the have-nots and the haves, the excluded and the privileged, the ignored and the high profiled, the *them* and the *we*. This historical experience has greatly fragmented our national consciousness. Ours is a story of two nations.

192. During the apartheid era what were referred to as cultural rights, specifically the choice of language, were used to legitimise the divisions in our society and the inequalities of power and privilege. Consequently, today much of the public perceives the demands by groups in our society for special consideration for particular language use to be an attempt to perpetuate the power and privilege of those groups. In practice, most Namibians simply do not have the resources needed to establish and maintain schools to teach in their mother tongues. Quite simply, opportunities are not equal. To act as if they were is to disadvantage those groups with fewer resources and thereby to extend into the future the inequalities of the past. Language policy formulation and implementation are thus bedeviled by the ghost of apartheid.

193. Language policy in general and in education in particular is thus necessarily a compromise. It is for this reason that the Ministry of Education and Culture has sought a national consensus. The Ministry considered carefully the views expressed by various groups. In addition, in formulating its language policy the Ministry has also been guided by several fundamental understandings:

- All national languages are equal regardless of the number of speakers or the level of development of a particular language. All language policies must be sensitive to this principle.
- All language policies must consider the cost of implementation.
- All language policies must regard language as a medium of cultural transmission.
- For pedagogical reasons it is ideal for children to study through their own language during the early years of schooling when basic skills of reading, writing, and concept formation are developed.
- Proficiency in the official language at the end of the 7-year primary cycle should be sufficient to enable all children to be effective participants in society or to continue their education.
- Language policy should promote national unity.

194. It is important to note here that we regard English as an evolving language in two senses. Like all active languages, it changes as people use it. Beyond that, regionally specific variants of English have emerged. People in Australia, Canada, and the United States are all

proud of their national language which they continue to call English even though it has diverged in important ways from what is heard in England. Over time we expect there to be one or more African versions of English. For us, English is a language of international connections, not foreign cultural domination.

2. LANGUAGE POLICY 1992-1996

195. To permit the preparation of new materials and teacher upgrading, the new language policy will be implemented in phases over the next five years. The immediate priorities are helping teachers develop the necessary language competence and supplying materials to schools. The uniform policy specified below on the sequence of subjects to be taught through English recognises the movement of people among different regions in Namibia and the importance and urgency of teacher education and materials production.

196. 1991 was a transition year, in which the principal change was the adoption of English as the medium of instruction in Grade 8. Beginning in 1993, the home language, a local language, or English will be the medium of instruction in Grades 1-3, with English as a subject. Ideally, all children should study two languages as subjects from Grade 1 onwards, one of which must be English. The other language may be Afrikaans, German, Ju/'hoan (a San language), Khoekhoegowab (Nama/Damara), Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga, Otjiherero, RuGciriku, RuKwangali, Setswana, Silozi, ThiMbukushu, or another language recognised by the Ministry for this purpose. All these languages will be deemed to have the same weight for promotional purposes.

197. English will be the medium of instruction for all promotional subjects, except a language, in Grades 4-7. Its introduction will be phased: mathematics beginning in 1993, science in 1994, geography in 1995, and history in 1996. During this period, all other subjects, including the home or other language, may, with permission from the Regional Office, be taught in a language other than English. Primary schools may teach foreign languages.

198. English will be the medium of instruction for all subjects at Secondary School level, Vocational-Technical Institutions and Teacher Training Colleges, as well as at Tertiary Level. This, too, will be a phased introduction, having begun in Grade 8 in 1991, and reaching Grade 12 in 1995. National languages will continue to be taught as subjects throughout the school system.

199. The above are minimum requirements for the terminal objective of phasing in English as a medium of instruction. Schools which are already using English as a main medium of instruction will continue to do so.

C. EDUCATION FOR ALL: ACCESS, EQUITY, QUALITY, DEMOCRACY

200. For us, education for all means access, equity, quality, and democracy. *Access* is our commitment to open wider the gates to our schools and adult programmes and to enable those who enter those gates to remain inside until they have finished. It also means understanding learning to be a lifelong process that takes place both inside and outside formal education institutions. *Equity,* beginning with that broadened access, is our commitment to non-discrimination. Beyond rejecting segregated education, we are committed to affirmative action to achieve equality. We must no longer tolerate the inequities we have inherited. Indeed, we must redress them. *Quality* in turn must rest on a foundation of expanded access and equity. The old measures of quality are too narrow for our new society. A school whose students have high exam scores but which cannot or does not provide an effective education to learners from all corners of our society cannot be considered high quality. Improving the quality of our education requires that we understand learning to be an interactive process in which learners create, not simply receive, knowledge. In learner-centred settings, mastery is measured not solely by the ability to recall and repeat, but, more important, by the ability to use, to transform, and to teach. *Democracy* is our commitment to developing an education system that will play a central role in transforming our society. To teach democracy we must be democratic. And being democratic will enable us to expand access, promote equity, and raise quality.

201. Our commitment to education for all is not simply a commitment to increase the number of learners in our schools and other education programs. For us, education for all means a new sort of education, a new approach to education. Our success in broadening access, achieving equity, improving quality, and promoting democracy will be the measures of our progress toward fulfilling that commitment.

VII. Programmes and Activities

202. To become effective guides for action, our general goals must be translated into specific objectives for the many parts of our education system. Each of those parts has its own unique characteristics and problems, and each must share in the responsibility for developing programmes that incorporate our broad goals. Let us turn, then, to consider major education programmes and other activities. What follows is necessarily an overview, more detailed in some areas than in others. Its purpose is not to provide an exhaustive catalogue of all programmes and sectors in the education system but rather to highlight some of our most important concerns and efforts. In this overview we must recognise that the ways we organise our efforts do not always fall into neat organisational categories. Basic Education, for example, includes primary, junior secondary, and adult and nonformal education. We must also keep in mind that our general purpose in this Development Brief is to chart our course of action and priorities. To be useful for that purpose, it cannot be as detailed or as fully documented as the Education Plan or the policy and programmatic papers prepared for each sector of the education system.

A. Early Childhood Protection and Development

203. Children's first six years are critical to their intellectual, emotional, and social growth. If their developmental needs are not met at this crucial stage, their growth potential is likely to be affected for the rest of their lives. It is therefore very short-sighted to begin investing our society's resources in educating our children only after they have passed that stage.

204. Family life in Namibia is changing. The extended family continues to exist for most Namibians, but its organisation and responsibilities are being modified by physical and social mobility. Child care is increasingly becoming the sole responsibility of the nuclear family, especially in urban settings. Where both parents must work away from the home, and where there are no other family members or household residents to provide child care, our children, and therefore we all, suffer.

205. Early childhood protection and development programmes must start with the family and extend to the community. Parents are children's first and principal educators. Families provide children their initial and enduring learning environment.

206. A support system beyond the family should replicate a good home where interaction among adults and children fosters positive attitudes, values, aspirations, and intellectual development, as well as providing for the child's basic welfare. Effective child care and pre-school programmes should help children

- develop a sense of self and autonomy;
- develop a healthy personal identity;
- develop concepts of morals and personal rights;
- develop a sense of social responsibility and citizenship;
- master language and use it purposefully and effectively;
- acquire concepts of space, time, and objects;
- learn about symbols and the concepts of culture; and
- learn how to get along with others.

207. Imaginative and effective early childhood protection and development programmes also benefit society more generally. They empower families by educating and sensitising them to the preconditions for good health and nutrition and for intellectual and social development. They empower the community by ensuring the welfare of its youngest members and fostering and nurturing the development of its future citizens. They empower the community organisations that provide early childhood programmes by establishing a firm link between the quality and effectiveness of their efforts and the health and security of the community as a whole.

208. The Ministry recognises the importance of early childhood education (pre-school and kindergarten levels). Accordingly, the Ministry believes that this level of education can best be developed under the direct auspices of communities with the assistance of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing. Early childhood education should be a central part of community development.

209. The principal focus of the Ministry of Education and Culture in this regard will be to prepare early childhood educators and to assist in developing appropriate curriculum, pedagogy, and learning materials for use by individuals and groups throughout the country.

210. It is important to stress that even at an early age, and perhaps especially then, children can and should be active partners in the learning process, not just the passive recipients of information. We have all witnessed the excitement of young children as they explore their environment and test their abilities. Discovery is a powerful reward, motivating children and fuelling their curiosity. If we fail to encourage this positive attitude toward learning during these early years, we shall miss it sorely when the children reach school. Indeed, if we dampen the enthusiasm of young learners by treating them as passive receptacles for the information that adults provide, we may never be able to restore the excitement of learning. If eager and involved learners have become passive followers by the time they enter the education system, both they and our society as a whole will have suffered a great loss. Like Basic Education, early childhood programmes must be learner-centred to enable our children to reach their potential.

211. Unfortunately, uneven access to pre-school can be a powerful mechanism for perpetuating privilege. Although there has been a 30% increase in the number of child care and pre-school programmes since Independence, currently those programmes serve only 5% of our birth to seven year old children. Children may arrive at school so far ahead of their peers that even the most skilled and dedicated educators cannot narrow the gap. Imagine a community house building project. If some in the group have a kit full of tools while others bring only their hands, those who are better equipped are likely to become the unofficial, if not official, leaders. Or recall the example of the foot race. If some runners arrive at the starting line much better trained and equipped than others, then the competition is unlikely to be a fair test of the runners' abilities. Now, in their early years our schools should not be like a speed contest, since learners should be cooperating, not competing. But eventually there will be competition to proceed to the next level, and those who had an advantage at the outset are more likely to be promoted.

212. More generally, for most children the principal determinants of real equal opportunity—in education and in other areas—are largely established during those early years. Different expectations for girls and boys at this age, for example, may entrench patterns of gender differentiation that endure throughout their lives.

213. It is in part for these reasons that the Ministry has decided to include a school readiness programme in Grade 1. It may also be necessary to develop an affirmative action programme for pre-school education to ensure that it does not undermine the equity that our education system as a whole is working to achieve.

B. PRIMARY EDUCATION

214. The primary school years are also an important formative period in the intellectual, social, and emotional development of learners. These years must therefore be understood as the basis for further learning, development, and growth. In our country, primary school forms the foundation for Basic Education.

215. The World Conference on Education For All, meeting in Thailand in March, 1990, stressed the critical role primary school plays in the process of learning:

> The main ordinary system for the basic education of children outside the family is primary schooling. Children who complete this level successfully should possess essential life skills and the capacity to benefit from further education. [*Meeting Basic Learning Needs: A Vision for the 1990s* (Jomtien, Thailand: World Conference on Education for All, 5-9 March 1991), p. 36.]

216. The Constitution of Namibia mandates universal access to primary education. Currently, approximately 80-85% of our school-age children begin primary school, though the rate varies somewhat among the regions. (These are rough estimates. We are in the process of improving our ability to collect and analyze the information on our education system that we need to make good decisions.)

217. While most of our children can begin primary school, there is still a good deal of room for improvement in the quality of the learning environment. The problems in this regard are many and have multiple causes, including

- factors whose roots lie in children's homes and communities (for example, children's household obligations that reduce the time they have available for schooling or even keep them from attending school, insufficient nutrition for children that reduces their attendance and concentration and may retard their mental development);
- factors linked to curriculum and instruction (for example, teachers with little or no professional preparation, limited in-service upgrading, support, and supervision of teachers, inappropriate or otherwise unsuitable curriculum, insufficient textbooks and instructional materials); and
- factors that have to do with the physical learning environment (for example, inadequate, poorly maintained, and often overcrowded physical facilities).

218. The Ministry of Education and Culture's major initiatives in primary education are discussed more fully elsewhere in this document: the development of a comprehensive

programme of Basic Education (see Chapter VI, Section VI.A), the related Basic Education Teacher Diploma programme (see Section VII.D.3), and the transition to the national language as the principal medium of instruction (see Chapter VI, Section VI.B).

C. SECONDARY EDUCATION

219. The rapid increase in secondary school enrolment has overwhelmed the capacity of schools in several areas of the country, especially in the North. In those areas, classrooms, laboratories, textbooks, and school materials are all in short supply. As well, in those areas a large percentage of the teachers—many of whom were trained to teach at primary level—lack the required qualifications for secondary school instruction. At the same time, some schools in other parts of the country are underutilised.

220. 1991 saw the introduction of a new Junior Secondary Curriculum throughout the country, to be fully implemented over a three-year period. Its principal aims are:

- providing a common core learning experience for all Namibian youth;
- promoting a balanced curriculum;
- improving the links between the learning in school, the local community, and the available job opportunities;
- introducing English as a common medium of instruction; and
- promoting learning with understanding through a relevant national curriculum.

221. Older learners who were unable to complete their secondary education in the past and other learners who cannot or prefer not to enrol in a regular secondary school programme can continue their studies through distance education (discussed more fully in Section VII.F.3 below).

222. At senior secondary level the last Cape Education Department Matriculation Examination will be written by full-time candidates in 1994. The current syllabus will be succeeded by a new senior secondary curriculum that leads to the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE). Although some of the IGCSE requirements are included in the new junior secondary curriculum (for example, English as the medium of instruction), the new curriculum will require major changes in methodology and assessment. Substantial in-service teacher education will be required at this level.

223. The IGCSE programme will prepare our students for entry to the University of Namibia. Yet, it will take some time for the University of Namibia to be able to address learning needs in all of the areas we deem essential for our national development. Hence, it will continue to be necessary to send some of our students to universities in other countries for their undergraduate education. In addition to those government sponsored students, there may be other Namibians who prefer to attend foreign universities. Although the IGCSE will be an adequate entry qualification for entry to universities in most countries, it is not currently accepted for admission to universities in Britain and South Africa.

224. Over time we hope to be able to satisfy the needs and demands for university education within Namibia and through cooperative regional arrangements. For the present, the Ministry plans to adopt a dual approach to this problem. First, students to be sent to foreign

universities will follow an initial course of study at the University of Namibia. Successful completion of that programme will be regarded as the equivalent of both matriculation and A-level and will thus serve as the entry qualification for universities with those admission requirements. Second, selected secondary schools may offer the Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education (HIGCSE), which will also provide acceptable certification for admission to British and South African universities.

225. Examinations are discussed in Section VII.H.3.a of this Chapter.

D. TEACHER EDUCATION

226. The quality, efficiency and effectiveness of our schools will depend to a large extent on the nature and success of our teacher education programmes. We came to Independence with several different systems for preparing our teachers. Within the country teacher education was inadequate in both quality and quantity. It surely could not support our commitment to education for all. Several initiatives begun outside the country permitted us to develop new approaches to teacher education but were necessarily limited in the number of teachers they could accommodate.

227. We have too few teachers to meet the needs of our expanding education system. And far too many of our current teachers have not had adequate preparation for the tasks we assign to them. In 1992 more than half of our teachers have not attained the credentials required for their positions.

228. Unfortunately, we cannot eliminate our shortage of well prepared teachers very quickly, perhaps not until the next century. As a result, educating new teachers and enabling our current teachers to upgrade their skills will strain the capacity of our teacher education programmes. At the same time, we also have too few qualified teacher educators. All of that means that we shall have to expand and upgrade our teacher education system simultaneously.

229. The challenge is even more daunting. Not only must we recruit new teachers and upgrade the skills of those currently serving, but we must also help them learn to use those skills in radically changed settings. For Education for All to become a reality, teachers must develop new visions, new understandings, and new commitments. Curriculum content, medium of instruction, classroom practices, assessment and evaluation—all these must be re-thought and revised.

230. Effective learning is more than simply gathering and memorising information. Learners must become skilled at using information not only in school or other education programmes but throughout their lives, often in ways that were not anticipated during their schooling. They must as well become skilled in determining what information they need to address a particular problem and in gathering that information. That sets high expectations for our teachers. Effective learning requires teachers who are not only competent in their subjects but who can also respond creatively to new situations. For Namibia to change, so must its schools. And for its schools to change, teachers must themselves become both agents and facilitators of change.

231. In fact, we must move in several directions at the same time. We must help our current teachers improve their skills and as they do so, their motivation, their self reliance, and their sense of self-competence. We must expand and improve our programmes to prepare new teachers at all levels. Especially, we must be sure that our pre-service teacher education incorporates and helps develop the learner-centred approach we are adopting throughout the education system. We must educate prospective teachers for their demanding roles in Basic Education, assisting them to become very competent at both what they teach and how they teach it. And to ensure that teachers are appropriately motivated and adequately rewarded, we must re-think both the career structure of the teaching profession and our system of accreditation. Let us consider each of those challenges.

1. IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

232. To address the needs of our current teachers, the Ministry created a working party on teacher in-service training that included representatives of the Ministry, teachers' unions, and other organisations committed to supporting education reform. The National Institute for Education Development has now assumed responsibility for operationalising the recommendations of that group.

233. It is necessary to implement dramatic changes in the short term. It is also necessary to develop now the appropriate strategies for the medium and longer term. Several Ministry initiatives address these needs:

- The consolidation of coordinating, planning, and advisory roles, particularly in its support for the Teacher In-Service Training Programmes.
- The creation of a national accreditation scheme to recognise the experience and expertise of currently serving teachers.
- The development and implementation of teacher in-service training projects in mathematics, physical sciences, life sciences, and English, especially to assist teachers in implementing successfully the new Junior Secondary School Curriculum.
- The introduction of English Language Broadcasting Programmes for teachers and others.
- The planning and development of a pre-vocational education support project.
- The development of a network of teacher resource centres to support in-service education activities at regional, district, and school cluster levels.
- The development of partnerships with non-governmental organisations, the private sector, and the churches in concerted activities for in-service training.

234. Teacher in-service education programmes are more effective when they are closely linked to classroom practice. Accordingly, the Ministry is developing an education support scheme to reach teachers close to where they work through teacher resource centres. Appropriately equipped, these will be used for seminars, workshops, and advisory services, and to store and make available to teachers appropriate reference materials. To maintain close contact with their colleagues, resource teachers will be based at these resource centres, and subject specialists will visit them regularly.

235. The Ministry is considering a distance education programme as another strategy for helping our current teachers develop their mastery of both subjects and pedagogy.

236. As teachers improve their skills, they may also progress to a higher level of certification. That, of course, enables them to improve their conditions of service.

2. *PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION*

237. Before independence teacher education was fragmented and uneven. Teachers serving under the different administrations did not follow the same preparation path. The various teacher education programmes had different entry requirements, scope, duration, organisation, and focus. Some were very resource intensive, developed extended competencies, and provided relatively high level qualifications. Others were far more rudimentary, providing minimal qualifications. Some emphasised classroom study at the expense of professionalisation.

238. Namibia cannot afford different teacher education programmes. And as we work to integrate the separate administrations of the past, it would make little sense to maintain separate paths for our teachers to follow. What we need is a common, national, feasible, and balanced programme that will fully prepare teachers to face and meet the challenges of reforming and staffing our education system in the years to come. This programme must combine professional insight and skills with subject knowledge.

239. With these concerns in mind, the Ministry established Task Forces on Pre-Service Teacher Training Programme Development and Minimum Requirements to be Appointed as a Teacher to address:

- restructuring and reorganising Teacher Education programmes;
- adopting a strategy for developing Basic Education teacher training institutions into fully staffed and equipped teacher education centres of high quality;
- coordination between pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes;
- improving staff development programmes at teacher education institutions;
- reviewing and revising examinations and assessment in teacher education;
- improving the management of teacher education;
- rationalising and improving teacher career development and incentive systems; and
- linking the teacher education programme for Basic Education with pre-school and senior secondary teacher education.

240. Three types of teacher education are being developed:

- The Basic Education Teacher Diploma, which will prepare teachers for Grades 1-10 through a uniform three-year course of study.
- A Technical and Vocational Education Instructor qualification, which will prepare teachers for instruction in pre-vocational skills and for vocational and other technical institutions.
- A Senior Secondary School Teacher qualification, to be the responsibility of the University of Namibia.

3. *PREPARING TEACHERS FOR BASIC EDUCATION*

241. We are committed to providing Basic Education for all Namibians. Although it may take us some time to achieve that goal, we must be sure that we are laying a solid foundation. Basic Education is learner-centred education, which requires interactive teaching and learning. Our expectations for the teaching profession in Basic Education are such that simply restructuring existing teacher education programmes cannot be adequate. The new situation requires a new approach. Hence, we have introduced the Basic Education Teacher Diploma.

242. Teacher preparation for Basic Education must first and foremost meet the needs of a professional teacher corps—people whose commitment and sense of responsibility, knowledge, and skills will raise the quality of education in the entire country.

243. The new teacher education programme will be a unified study for all teachers in Basic Education, combining a common core foundation with opportunities for specialising in particular phases or levels of schooling and subject areas. It will strike a balance between professional insight and skills and subject knowledge. Various types of exposure to classroom situations will be closely integrated into the course of study.

244. This teacher education is based on a democratic pedagogy, a methodology that promotes learning through understanding, and practice directed toward the mastering of living conditions. It will be closely linked to the curriculum goals and objectives of Basic Education and to the context of schools in our society.

245. The central focus of Basic Education is on the learner's needs, potential, and abilities. Learner-centred education presupposes that teachers have a holistic view of the learner, valuing the learner's life experience as a starting point for their studies. Teachers must therefore have sufficient knowledge and skills to be able to interpret syllabi and subject content in terms of the aims and objectives of Basic Education and to relate these to the learner. Teachers should be able to select content and methods on the basis of a shared analysis of the learner's needs, use local and natural resources as an alternative or supplement to ready-made study materials, and thus develop their own and the learner's creativity. A learner-centred approach demands a high degree of learner participation, contribution, and production. Teachers are key to the development of our country and are important resources to their communities. It is therefore essential that teachers maintain close contact with their communities and assist learners in integrating school and life outside the school.

246. Teacher preparation for Basic Education is not seen as the final stage of formal education, nor as the completion of teacher education. The rapidly increasing and changing state of knowledge, and the new demands that are made on the role and functions of the teacher, make it impossible to regard initial teacher education as an isolated part of a career. Rather, it provides a selection of knowledge and experience as the first entry into the teaching profession, an initial step in an on-going process of professional growth and development.

247. Basic Teacher Education will strive to:

- develop a teacher who will respect and foster the values of our Constitution, contribute to nation building, and respond positively to the changing needs of Namibian society;
- develop understanding and respect for diverse cultural values and beliefs;

- enhance respect for human dignity, sensitivity, and commitment to the needs of learners;
- develop a reflective attitude and creative, analytical, and critical thinking;
- develop the ability to participate actively in collaborative decision making;
- develop social responsibility towards learners, colleagues, the community, and the nation as a whole;
- promote gender awareness and equity to enable all Namibians to participate fully in all spheres of society;
- enable the teacher to promote environmental awareness and sustainable management of natural resources in the school and community;
- develop awareness of the varying roles and functions of a teacher and a commitment to the teaching profession;
- develop an understanding of learning as an interactive, shared and productive process;
- enable the teacher to meet the needs and abilities of the individual learner through organisation, management, and assessment of teaching and learning processes;
- prepare the teacher to strengthen the partnership between school and community;
- develop adequate command of English and another language of Namibia to be able to use them as media of instruction;
- prepare the teacher to be able to develop and use the creative and expressive abilities and skills of the learners;
- develop the ability to create learning opportunities which will enable learners to explore different ways of knowing, and develop the whole range of their thinking abilities;
- provide the student with sufficient breadth in curriculum content and depth in selected subject areas to be able to identify and select basic knowledge content for learners, and to organise and sequence content and learning situations appropriately;
- enable the teacher to understand and utilise current knowledge of children's intellectual, emotional, social, physical, aesthetic, moral, and spiritual development; and
- develop a positive attitude toward individual differences and enable teachers to utilise them to meet social and individual needs.

248. The first year of the Basic Education Teacher Diploma will provide a common foundation, with emphasis on children's educational and developmental needs, education theory and practice, and the classroom situation. During the second year, prospective teachers will continue their common foundation and begin to specialise in either Grades 1-7 or Grades 4-10. Those who focus on the lower grades will emphasise early childhood education, curriculum, and English communication skills. Those who focus on the upper grades will have a common core and a particular emphasis on English plus humanities, or mathematics and sciences, or pre-vocational preparation. Both the common foundation and the specialisation will continue into the third year, with further refinement of subject area expertise. Prospective teachers will spend part of their time each year working directly in schools. Both directly and in simulations, student teachers will experience the learning processes they will subsequently develop for young learners in Basic Education.

249. One of the demands of the new Basic Education in Namibia, and thus the Basic Education Teacher Diploma, is to develop a system of assessment and evaluation that is consistent with the stated principles of learner-centred, interactive teaching and learning: learning by understanding and learning through productive activities and cooperation. A principle of positive achievement will be used to assess what the prospective teachers know, understand and can do. This principle entails that a variety of assessment techniques be used

and that counselling, tutoring, and other remedial assistance become an integral part of assessment procedures. The purpose is to provide conditions for our new teachers to succeed rather than to concentrate on weeding out failures.

4. THE TEACHING PROFESSION

250. In order to increase and maintain the morale of the teaching profession there is an urgent need to develop a uniform career development system in teaching within the context of a broad strategy for human resource development. Such a strategy must include provisions for further education. To achieve that, we must adjust the current matriculation-centred teacher evaluation and classification to accommodate qualifications acquired outside the orbit of South African practices and influence.

251. Accordingly, the Ministry created a Task Force to consider career development and progression within the teaching profession. The Task Force surveyed the teaching profession prior to 1992 and found that among our teachers there are

- unequal base salaries for equal jobs;
- unequal benefits across the different previous administrations;
- gender bias evident at the higher levels of the profession;
- inappropriate teaching roles, especially in subjects for which the teacher is not adequately prepared;
- unequal education opportunities because different administrations required different levels of qualifications to become a teacher;
- insufficient recognition of teaching competencies, largely because of different applications of the merit system; and
- inadequate incentives for career-long professional development, leadership in sport and cultural activities, and service in rural and remote communities.

252. Our challenge, therefore, is to create new paths for teacher career development and progression that improve the old system without losing what was good in it. To supplement the professional orientation that we will emphasise in our teacher education programmes and in our daily practices, we need to recognise that there are different ways to become a teacher and to become a good teacher. We need as well to provide salary and other career incentives for the teacher attitudes and practices we wish to encourage.

253. We expect that people will enter teaching through one of three alternate paths. Most will begin with a pre-service teacher education programme, for example the Basic Education Teacher Diploma. Another large group will have begun teaching with very limited prior teacher education and will therefore rely heavily on in-service teacher education programmes. A third group, people who have begun other careers, will enter the teaching profession at a level determined by their own education and experience.

254. To make possible this system of alternate entry paths into the teaching profession, we shall have to broaden the criteria we use to select and promote teachers. We shall, of course, continue to look carefully at academic achievements. But we shall also need to consider the nature and quality of the experiences our prospective and serving teachers have had. Relevant experiences may be both personal (for example, in sport or cultural activities) and professional.

255. These broadened criteria will require in turn a national scheme of accreditation and credit transfer. That is, we need a system that will permit us to recognise the essential equivalence of academic study and experiences in different fields. For that, we hope to develop, along with our partners in education, a series of nationally recognised and accredited modules that will enable Namibians to extend, refine, and demonstrate relevant personal and professional experience.

256. To implement the Ministry's education and career development priorities a system of salary incentives will be negotiated. One set of incentives will recognise the professional development of teachers and education administrators. Here, too, we will find it useful to pursue a modular approach. To encourage professional development, there will be two sorts of nationally accredited professional development modules: those obtained through higher education studies and those obtained through national in-service education programmes.

257. A second set of incentives will recognise and encourage sports, cultural, and community leadership. These incentives may be earned either by successfully completing a module accredited by the appropriate national institution or by submitting an equivalent portfolio of performance.

258. Many teachers and administrators prefer to work in urban areas. Yet, some of our most pressing needs for skilled teachers and competent administrators are in areas of our country distant from urban life. Accordingly, a third set of salary incentives will encourage teachers and administrators to serve in rural and remote schools. Those who work in designated remote and rural schools for a specified period will retain their incentives throughout the remainder of their professional careers.

259. The flexible nature of the proposed career development structure will allow the Ministry to target certain priority areas of teaching, such as mathematics and science, for accelerated professional development and career advancement.

5. Alternate Paths to Accreditation

260. Notwithstanding our legacy of separate and disparate administrations, and in part because of it, we have found it difficult to determine systematically and fairly how preparation and experience in one setting compare to preparation and experience in another. At the same time, our commitment to recognising different entry paths to the teaching profession and different routes for improving skills requires us to make those comparisons. For that, we need a solid and respected system of accreditation.

261. Indeed, this problem reaches across the entire civil service. In June, 1991, the Ministry of Education and Culture assumed responsibility for evaluating public service qualifications. Our challenge is to improve our procedures for assessing degrees, certificates, and other credentials issued by many different institutions not only within Namibia but throughout the world. We are now extending that challenge by seeking equitable and practical ways to evaluate personal and professional as well as academic experiences.

262. Within education, culture, and training we envision a modular approach. We may begin by examining academic achievements. But we must also consider relevant personal and professional experiences. We anticipate that personal experiences may be developed and assessed by completing nationally accredited modules. Similarly, we anticipate that professional experience may be demonstrated through school-based performance and nationally accredited in-service modules.

263. More generally, we are working toward the creation of a National Qualifications Authority with representation from public and private organisations throughout the country. With its secretariat in the Ministry of Education and Culture, that Authority will oversee and coordinate the work of national accreditation panels that reflect the different sorts of preparation and vocations in Namibia. For example, the University of Namibia will constitute the accreditation panel for higher education credentials, while the Ministry, teachers' unions, parents' organisations, and representatives from private schools might constitute the accreditation panels for teachers and other education personnel. Similarly, representatives from employers, unions, training institutions, and relevant professional organisations might constitute the accreditation panels for mining, or computer services, or other occupations and professions. Those panels would then specify the equivalences among different sorts of preparation and training, inspect and accredit particular training programmes, and within the framework of the National Qualifications Authority assure the equivalence of credentials.

264. A system of that sort would provide the foundation for the systematic and fair recognition of competencies developed through experience. That, in turn, would enable us to identify those educators whose salaries and conditions of service should be adjusted to reflect not only their academic achievements but also their experiences. That would also permit us to develop a modular approach to professional development that recognises the importance and value of both academic study and practical experience.

265. Our responsibility in this regard is twofold. First, within education, culture, and training we need to develop our own system for recognising and certifying comparable academic work and practical experience in order to make possible multiple entry paths and routes for professional development. Because some of the elements of this preparation and experience are unique to education, it may prove useful to establish a Teaching Service Commission. Second, we need to develop a national accreditation system that serves both the public and the private sectors and that can recognise and assess education and experience of very different sorts.

E. Vocational Education and Training

266. Our education system has two sorts of responsibilities in preparing Namibians for the world of work. First, our Basic Education programmes must build a broad and solid foundation. Young and old people alike will be most successful in finding and creating jobs if they read, write, and handle numbers well. Their pre-vocational preparation will be even stronger if it enables learners to become skilled at identifying and solving problems, analysing situations and drawing on their knowledge to synthesise solutions, and applying what they know to new settings.

267. Second, together with public and private employers and workers organisations we must develop a coherent and effective system of vocational education and training. If we are successful in doing that, we shall have a system in which many responsibilities are shared and in which at the same time there is clarity on purpose and direction and fair and manageable accreditation.

268. It is important to distinguish these two responsibilities. To fail to do so risks burdening our schools with costly programmes that cannot reach their stated objectives, thereby reducing the resources available to other programmes that can be much more effective.

1. Education and Employment

269. As we encounter young people who have completed their schooling but who have not yet found employment, we are quick to think something must be wrong with our schools. But schools themselves do not, and cannot, create jobs. If our economic growth does not create sufficient new employment opportunities, even the most imaginative and relevant curriculum cannot significantly reduce unemployment.

270. Indeed, experiences across Africa provide useful lessons in this regard. First, developing competence in reading, writing, and arithmetic while mastering a second or perhaps third language—especially when instruction is not in the home language—is a full agenda for primary school. In addition, we expect our children to develop their curiosity and ability to undertake systematic inquiry, to discuss issues rationally, to learn to solve problems, to understand and practice democratic principles, to understand their own country and other countries of the world, to appreciate the interdependence of all living things, and more. If our primary schools can achieve those objectives, we shall rightly be proud of their success. They will have provided very good preparation for a wide and changing range of vocations. Adding a limited programme of directly vocational instruction will not make our young people more employable and may make them less well educated.

271. Second, even where there have been more systematic efforts to introduce vocational instruction into the school curriculum, including specially trained teachers and carefully prepared materials, that has had little effect on the unemployment rate. In part that is because on-the-job training is far more efficient and less costly than in-school vocational instruction. Even though employers may prefer that schools bear the expense of training their employees, in practice the vocational instruction that is integrated into the regular curriculum does not eliminate the need for job-specific training. Most often it does not even shorten the job-specific training time. Adding vocational instruction to the school curriculum requires significant increases in education expenditures.

272. At the same time, we need as well to recognise the value of integrating into our school curriculum life skills, practical subjects, and pre-vocational themes and experiences. A pre-vocational curriculum does not seek to equip students with the sorts of skills that would enable them to enter skilled employment without further training. Rather, its goal is to enable all students to develop an appreciation of the skills and attitudes appropriate to the work settings they will encounter in their adult lives. In that regard, it seeks to develop responsible decision making and problem solving relevant to work situations. It seeks as well to enable all learners

to be effective, enterprising, and capable whatever path they follow after they have completed school. Its approach is a combination of theory, project work, and practical activity. Although production is an important element in these activities, the principal emphasis is on the organisation and operation of the world of work. In sum, in adopting and implementing this understanding of a pre-vocational curriculum, we are not attempting to prepare learners for a specific trade or occupation. Rather, we are working to prepare all learners for the next stage in their development whatever that is and wherever that takes place—further study, employment, or self-employment, urban or rural, agriculture, fishing, or manufacturing.

2. *Developing and Accrediting Vocational Skills*

273. The organisation, management, and supervision of vocational education and training in our country are still rudimentary. However, the quality of many of our existing technical and other vocational education facilities is high. On balance, though, our economy faces a shortage of skilled human resources.

274. A recent report on vocational education and training concluded

> There is, to summarize the situation, a need in Namibia to develop a VET [Vocational Education and Training] system which is based on a unified non-discriminating policy with public and private VET schools and training centres offering a flexible formal as well as non-formal course programme of varying duration for teenagers and adults of both sexes depending on needs . . . . There should be close cooperation between schools, labour market and employers . . . . Curricula, teaching methods and examinations should be made relevant to Namibian needs and not unduly based on foreign models. [Mats Hultin-Craelius, *Vocational Education and Training in Namibia: A Development Proposal* (Stockholm: Swedish International Development Authority, December 1990), p. 5]

275. Vocational education and training in Namibia should

- be coherent and coordinated among all levels and across all occupational areas;
- be responsive to the present and future human resource needs of Namibia;
- be accessible to a wide cross-section of the population regardless of location, race, national origin, gender, and age;
- be available to people with different types and levels of previous academic work;
- attract and motivate candidates by providing multiple exit and entry points;
- have common, national expectations and standards;
- build on existing expertise and good practice;
- utilise resources, including staff, effectively;
- provide a flexible qualifications framework within which existing and future training providers can identify their own roles and function effectively;
- be organised in a modular format derived from functional analysis and specified in terms of desired competencies;
- be taught and assessed in ways that link theory and practice;
- certify accomplishments in standard and widely recognised and accepted ways; and
- be credible to employers and to higher education.

276. An effective vocational education and training system will increase the number of skilled Namibians, expand the pool of workers available for employment and capable of productive self-employment, and reduce our dependence on foreign workers.

277. How shall we address this challenge? First, we must do a good job of pre-vocational preparation. Then, we must ourselves develop and help others develop programmes of vocational education and training that are learner-effective, job-effective, and cost-effective. That is, those programmes must enable learners to acquire, refine, and master the understandings and the intellectual and manual skills that are needed for specific types of employment at a reasonable cost. Finally, we must have a widely understood and respected and manageable system for recognising and accrediting alternative paths to skills development.

a. Pre-Vocational Education

278. One task, then, is to draw on experiences in other countries to construct a pre-vocational curriculum that meets Namibian requirements. Its major aim is to provide to all learners an appreciation of the skills and attitudes appropriate to work settings. In this regard, we should understand work broadly to include salary and wage jobs, self employment, small-scale farming, family life, household management, and self improvement.

279. As we elaborate the pre-vocational curriculum, we will not include subjects with a specifically production orientation. We must be clear that our concern is not to prepare individuals for specific trades or to provide skills training except as part of a general education. Instead, our major focus will be on how the world of work is organised, managed, and monitored. Our methodology will combine theory and practice. The objectives of our pre-vocational curriculum are to

- develop responsible decision making, problem solving, and study skills in relation to the world of work;
- develop attitudes toward work settings that are consistent with good citizenship; and
- enable all learners to be effective, enterprising, and capable in both further study and work settings through active learning methods and relevant practical experiences.

280. To achieve these objectives, we have already begun to introduce appropriate secondary school curriculum. At the junior secondary level the Life Science syllabus introduces the elements of agriculture and applied science more generally. As well, basic practical skills are to be mastered in their contexts, for example textiles, wood work, metal work, and small scale agriculture, animal rearing, and commerce. The topics to be addressed include decision making, problem solving, basic bookkeeping, small business management, keyboard skills, and graphic communications. Within this approach, learners assume increasing responsibility for aspects of their own learning. At the senior secondary level the emphasis will be more academic, leading to technical training or other post-secondary education and higher level employment. The topics to be addressed at this level include setting goals, work relationships, valuing difference among people, cooperating for common results, community service and customer relations, and advanced business studies. Relevant courses and modules will be offered alongside the other IGCSE subjects.

281. So that they know what is expected of them in terms of breadth, depth, and standards of performance, learners need also to be involved in negotiating the local content of their pre-vocational studies. Consistent with our general learner-centred orientation, this negotiation is an integral part of an effective pre-vocational curriculum.

282. As we elaborate, refine, and implement its objectives, we shall involve local communities in adapting the pre-vocational curriculum to the local setting. When community members begin to see that learners are developing responsible attitudes and skills related to their local environment, then the whole value of education is enhanced. By inviting parents and adults other than teachers to become involved in the way the pre-vocational curriculum is managed, the status of those subjects can be raised.

b. Developing Vocational Skills

283. The basic philosophy of our vocational education and training system emphasises modularity and shared responsibility. Although we still have a long way to go before that philosophy is fully implemented, it is useful to indicate what we regard as important and why.

284. Currently, several ministries are involved in vocational education and training. The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the school curriculum, nonformal education, and technician training. The Ministry of Labour and Manpower Development is responsible for artisan and other trade related training. The Ministry of Agriculture and Water Affairs offers formal agricultural education and training at diploma level and also undertakes its own in-service training for extension workers. Other ministries train their own personnel. Both public and private employers and other organisations provide various forms of vocational education and training. Although it is generally agreed that greater coordination of these activities is desirable, and although there have been some initiatives to improve coordination, to date cooperation has been more informal and sporadic than systematic and planned.

285. Hence, we are still a long way from a unified and integrated national system of vocational education and training. Its outlines and institutional framework, however, are increasingly clear. Basic Education will include a pre-vocational curriculum for all Namibians. One more academic route to technical education will begin in senior secondary school and perhaps continue through to a system of national Polytechnics. Another route for vocational training will be through technical schools, skills training centres, technical institutes, and vocational training centres. Other paths will be developed by private training centres and programmes, both large and small.

286. Because our needs are diverse and often quite specialised, our population is dispersed, and our pool of skilled personnel is inadequate, we do not envision creating a single set of institutions under one authority to become the sole provider of vocational education and training. It is not necessary, and in our current circumstances not desirable, to locate in a single institution responsibility for vocational training, developing curriculum and educating instructors for that training, evaluating that training, licensing training institutions, assessing individual skills development, and certifying mastery. Rather, we expect that there will continue to be many training providers and multiple paths toward the acquisition of specific skills. We expect as well that different institutions will be responsible for training, vocational curriculum development, vocational teacher education, and accreditation. It is in that sense that responsibility for vocational education and training will be shared.

287. For that responsibility to be shared effectively and fairly, there must be some way to be sure that training in one setting is functionally equivalent to comparable training in another

setting. To achieve that, we shall pursue a modular approach. Quite simply, preparation for particular skills and jobs will be specified in terms of the types and levels of competencies that are required. In that way, different organisations can provide training for, say, tailors or computer programmers. Those training organisations may well pursue different approaches in their training, use different mixes of classroom instruction and practical experience, and offer courses of different lengths. What those training programmes—modules—will have in common is the competencies that learners will be expected to develop.

288. Our expectation is that all vocational education and training will be organised in a modular format and that the objectives of specific modules will be stated in competence terms. A modular system of this sort

- allows the recognition of mastery, perhaps in the form of credit transfer, across occupational areas and across levels;
- enables learners to see clearly what they must achieve, the standards expected, and the methods of assessment;
- relates theory and practice both during learning and in the assessment process; and
- can be quite flexible, while at the same time maintaining national standards.

289. That modularity will enable people to develop one set of skills in one setting and then to develop other skills in another setting without worrying that employers will not recognise the one or the other. That modularity will also make it possible to recognise competencies developed on the job and through nonformal programmes. As well, that modularity will make it easier for people to move from one job to another, carrying with them the certification of their skills.

c. Recognising and Accrediting Skills Development

290. To achieve this modularity and shared responsibility for vocational education and training, it is necessary to have a national system for recognising and accrediting skills development. Indeed, in order to have alternative vocational training paths and multiple training providers, we must have a respected and credible authority for establishing, monitoring, and certifying the equivalence of particular levels of training. Our challenge in this regard is to find a workable balance among objectives that are sometimes in tension. We want to encourage the initiatives and autonomy of those who provide training. We want also to facilitate the portability of credentials from one setting to another. And at the same time, we must have national authority and oversight to ensure the quality of training and the comparability of credentials.

291. Earlier, we considered how best to accredit teachers, and especially how to recognise their learning and skills development outside formal schooling. We noted that we are working toward the creation of a National Qualifications Authority (see Section VII.D.5). In its general operations, that Authority would assume overall responsibility for recognising and certifying competencies appropriate to occupations of all sorts. Its accreditation panels would rely on experts—including both employees and employers—from a particular cluster of vocations to specify the types and levels of competencies needed, to evaluate the training provided by public and private organisations, and to assess whether or not the needed skills were in fact being developed.

292. In short, we envision a system that permits and encourages many institutions to provide training, that relies on broad participation in determining whether or not that training is effective, and that has a centralised authority for recognising the equivalence of different paths to skills development and certifies the mastery achieved. The Ministry of Education and Culture will play a central role in developing and managing that system. To function effectively it will require the active cooperation of individuals and institutions across our society—public and private, large and small, and employers, employees, and educators.

F. Adult and Nonformal Education

293. The limited access and inadequacies of our former education system and the problems that persist into the present require an effective programme of adult and nonformal education. Even as we work energetically to improve formal education in Namibia, educational opportunities at both primary and secondary levels are still not available to all our children, are unevenly distributed throughout the country, and too often cannot provide a high quality learning environment. For these reasons, and because only a small proportion of our children can proceed beyond basic education, there is a serious education backlog in our country.

- Only about 40% of our adult population is literate. Of those, most are just barely literate in their mother tongue.
- Less than half of our teaching force is professionally qualified and certified.
- English language competence is low in the general population and even in professional groups.
- There is too little development of the skills that we need.
- The culture of apartheid seriously hinders communication and exchange between language groups and communities in our country. Unfortunately, its legacy persists into the present.

294. Educating our adults reinforces the education of our children. Parents who are literate are more likely to be sure their children attend school. Experiences elsewhere have shown that literate mothers have healthier children. Educated parents can help their children with their lessons and encourage them to continue their learning after school hours. Educated parents are also more likely to play an active role in supporting and managing their community schools. And of course, enabling our teachers to develop their own skills can enrich their classrooms and thus the learning experiences of our children. Quite simply, our entire education system functions better when we have an effective programme of adult education.

295. For all of these reasons, adult and nonformal education must play a major role in Namibia. In the short term adult and nonformal education programmes must address specific and immediate needs, particularly to overcome the inadequacy of education in the past. Over the longer term, they must help us to develop and support the spirit and practice of lifelong education.

296. Adult and nonformal education activities are focused on meeting the needs of those adults who had little formal education as children or who can no longer effectively meet their needs in that system. They serve multiple purposes. For those who have not had a chance to go to school, they can provide a basic education. For those who were unable to complete their schooling, adult and nonformal education provide opportunities to reach a higher level of

certification, or to learn more about specific topics, or to master English, or to develop the sorts of skills that will enable learners to find or create jobs and increase their income. Adult and nonformal education can also enable us to continue learning throughout our lives, regardless of whether or not we have gone to school or achieved a particular certificate.

297. Since adult and nonformal education were not highly developed in the past, the government must assume the responsibility for establishing a national system of adult education that permits adult learners to enter and leave at various levels and for training the personnel needed to operate that system. As it meets this responsibility, the Government will maintain close liaison with organisations and enterprises, both public and private, involved in meeting the education needs and interests of Namibia's citizens. In that sense, our efforts are both fundamental and complementary. We seek to lay a solid foundation for adult and nonformal education. At the same time, we also work to complement, and as appropriate supplement, the formal education system and others' efforts to expand education opportunities for adults.

298. The major objectives of adult and nonformal education are to:

- achieve 80% literacy by the year 2000;
- enable adults to continue their learning, especially through Continuing Education Centres and Adult Development Colleges;
- develop distance education, including broadcasting, to expand access to education and training and to support major national initiatives (for example, increasing proficiency in English);
- help adults develop skills that will help them secure employment and increase their income;
- train Adult Educators at various levels from and for public and private institutions and organisations; and
- develop adult and nonformal education as an integrated system that permits learners to progress from one level to the next, that provides access to the formal education system where appropriate, and that in general reinforces the formal education system.

299. Adult and nonformal education include:

- Literacy and Numeracy Programmes;
- Continuing Education;
- Adult Skills Development; and
- Distance Education (including Educational Broadcasting).

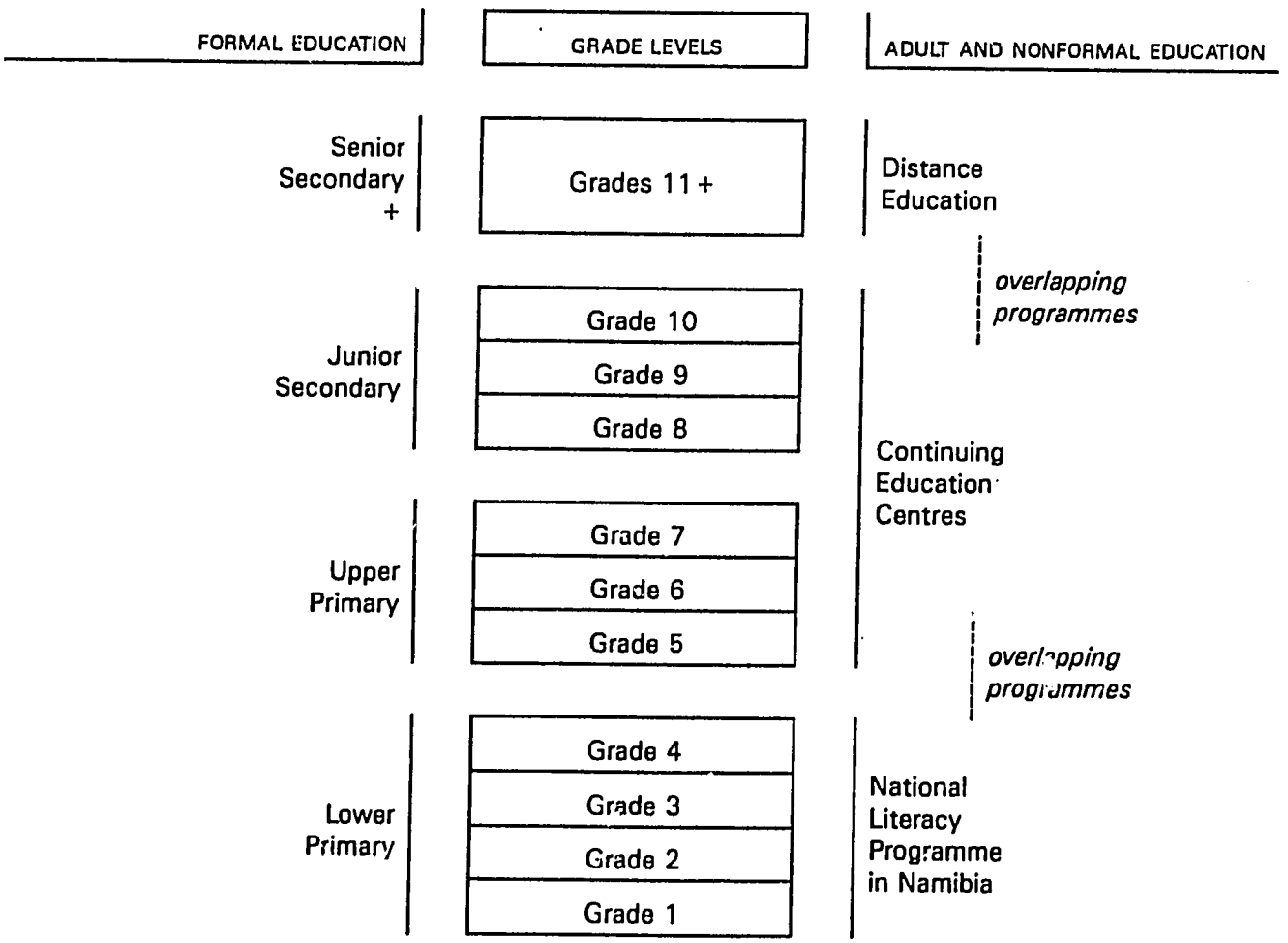
300. One challenge is to serve the needs of the many young adults who could not complete, or even begin their education under the former system. Currently, many schools have admitted these overage students into their regular classes. Since their experiences, needs, and learning styles often differ from those of the majority of young people in school, it will be necessary to find other ways of meeting this group's education needs. The principal vehicle for addressing those needs will be a comprehensive programme of adult continuing education, including education broadcasting.

301. Beyond those young adults, adult and nonformal education programmes must serve a wide range of people with quite different learning needs. Our literacy programme is primarily designed for young and adult Namibians who have never had an opportunity to develop basic reading and writing skills. It is intended to enable its participants to reach a level of mastery

comparable to learners who have completed lower primary school. Our continuing education centres are expected to serve several groups of learners, especially those at the next level, comparable to upper primary and junior secondary school in the formal education system. Our distance education programmes will then provide learning opportunities for people who have completed secondary school or its nonformal equivalent, as well as for others who find this mode of studying most practical. To supplement those activities, the Ministry will initiate a pilot programme of Adult Development Colleges.

302. Although grade levels in formal and nonformal education are not strictly equivalent, it is useful to compare the two systems in terms of the learners they seek to serve. Our learners will be best served when it is possible to move more easily between them. The diagram compares the general framework of adult and nonformal education with the formal education system. In practice, of course, the categories and levels in that framework will overlap.

COMPARABLE LEVELS IN FORMAL AND NONFORMAL EDUCATION



1. LITERACY

303. Basic literacy is a pre-requisite for the success of national programmes for improved health, economic efficiency, child education, and democratic participation.

> Illiteracy is one of the most cruel marks of slavery, backwardness and underdevelopment . . . [it] cannot and must not be tolerated. . . . . Let us not entertain illusions that illiteracy will disappear among our people on issuing nice-sounding declarations . . . . What is urgently required is a programme of concrete measures required of all of us, collectively and individually. That is to say, each and every one of us who knows how to read and write, should make it a point of duty and a national responsibility to instruct and educate those comrades and other citizens who are still illiterate. [Sam Nujoma, *Literacy Promoter's Handbook* (Luanda: SWAPO, 1986), p. iii.]

304. We must be careful, however, not to assume that adults who were unable to attend school during their childhood are not educated or that our illiterate brothers and sisters are unintelligent. It was not their choice to be illiterate! It was the discriminatory system designed to educate a small elite that kept our parents from going to school. And we must remember that our societies began educating their young long before we had the institutions that we now call schools. Literacy has to do with the ability to read and write, not think and understand.

> A person is not stupid or ignorant because he or she is illiterate. All adults have acquired many useful experiences on which we must build. [Sam Nujoma, in: Namibia, Ministry of Education and Culture. Department of Adult and Nonformal Education, *Literacy: Your Key to a Better Future* (Windhoek: Ministry of Education and Culture, January 1992), Preface]

305. Becoming literate is not simply a matter of acquiring a new skill. It is that, of course, but it is also more. To become literate is also to assert greater control over the immediate situation, to participate more fully in the life of the society, and to develop the self-confidence that accompanies the new competence.

> The progress of a nation depends to a very large extent on the abilities and attitudes of its people. We hope that through participation in the National Literacy Programme our people will not just acquire new skills, but a new confidence in their own abilities and imagination, and better exercise their rights and responsibilities as Namibian citizens. As people discover that they are indeed capable of mastering the skills of reading and writing they should also rightly conclude that they can be bolder in tackling other obstacles to progress in their lives. In short, one of the signs of the success of our Literacy Programme will be when participation in the democratic process increases in quantity and quality. [Sam Nujoma, *Literacy: Your Key to a Better Future,* Preface]

306. Literacy, like Basic Education, should be considered a fundamental human right. Yet, it is estimated that there are currently more than 400,000 Namibians who are functionally illiterate. Unfortunately, most are in their early years of adulthood, thus robbing Namibia of a large percentage of its most productive human resources.

307. The Ministry's Department of Adult and Nonformal Education has launched the National Literacy Programme in Namibia, beginning with 15,000 participants in 1992 and expanding each year toward an annual enrolment target of 80,000. Non-governmental organisations are expected to reach an additional 10,000 people each year in their basic literacy programmes. The combined goal is a substantial reduction in illiteracy in Namibia by the year 2000.

308. Implementing a programme of this scale could easily overwhelm the available resources. We have, therefore, considered several strategies for controlling the costs of this undertaking. The strategy that we have adopted relies on locally selected literacy promoters who must assume their responsibilities (including their own upgrading as instructors) for at least a year. They are employed part-time on a contract basis at a rate comparable to that of a teacher without professional qualifications. They will receive continuing training and support through mobile district literacy organisers.

309. An effective adult literacy programme for Namibia has several characteristics.

- Literacy is to be developed in English and in the local languages recognised for use in education by the Ministry of Education and Culture.
- The adult literacy programme must be a national effort, open to all those who wish to develop their ability to read, write, and work with numbers.
- Participation must be voluntary.
- Ideally, to encourage participation adult learners should pay no fees. If fees must be levied to defray costs, they should be very low.
- Participation in the adult literacy programme should normally not exceed three years, so that it can reach as many people as possible.
- If literacy skills remain unused, they quickly decay. Hence, the adult literacy programme must be linked to opportunities for continuing education for its participants.
- To maximise its impact and the sustainability of the skills acquired, literacy classes and other activities should be learner-centred. In general, the learners and their communities must play a major role in planning, monitoring, and evaluating the adult literacy programme.
- While the government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, will take major responsibility for initiating and overseeing the adult literacy programme, its success will require the involvement of other organisations and enterprises, both governmental and non-governmental.
- It is essential that all agencies involved in development activities cooperate effectively. The adult literacy programme should facilitate, and be supported by, other development programmes (for example, health education).
- An effective adult literacy programme requires permanent skilled staff to organise, coordinate, and manage the national effort. Other than those recruited for short-term special activities, adult educators should be paid.

310. To be fully effective, our adult literacy programme must connect with and support our other education efforts.

> Literacy programmes should also give impetus to other programmes of adult education, agricultural extension, primary health care, and so on. In this way we shall become not just a literate nation but an educated nation. Each and every one of us must keep learning. It is the only way that we can maintain our rightful place in a competitive world. [Sam Nujoma, *Literacy: Your Key to a Better Future,* Preface]

2. *Continuing Education Centres*

311. The Department of Adult and Nonformal Education has continued and expanded adult education activities begun prior to Independence. Among them are Continuing Education Centres. Increased in number from 24 to 38, those Centres currently enrol some 5,000 learners.

312. As our strategy of serving our out of school population has evolved, the role and functions of the Continuing Education Centres are changing. Their principal responsibility will be to provide education programmes for those learners who have completed basic literacy and who wish to continue with their education (comparable to Grades 5-10 in the formal school system). Previously, these Centres served primarily to give young people a second chance to obtain secondary school qualifications through evening classes. To permit the Continuing Education Centres to focus on the learning needs of new literates and those whose formal schooling ended at the lower primary level, nonformal secondary education will become one of the responsibilities of the Distance Education programme.

3. *Distance Education*

313. We are faced with a huge demand for expanded access to education at all levels. Much of this demand is from adults and young adults who have already had some education, formal or nonformal. Scattered throughout the country, they seek to upgrade their skills and to secure technical or professional certification. Distance education is the most practical and cost effective strategy for addressing this demand and providing quality education.

314. Accordingly, to supplement and support its residential programmes, the Ministry of Education and Culture is expanding and reorienting its distance education programme. Distance education has several major strengths.

- It is able to achieve significant economies of scale.
- It can share and therefore use more efficiently scarce existing resources and personnel.
- It facilitates the democratisation of the provision of education.
- It reaches isolated people and areas.
- It can spread new ideas quickly and widely.
- It enables people to learn while they continue to earn.

315. Formerly, distance education in Namibia primarily served teachers who wished to extend their own education. Now, distance education will serve a broader population, all those who have reached a level comparable to Grade 10 and who wish to continue their learning. Its major mission will be to improve the education of the thousands of our young people whose employment or location makes it impossible for them to participate in residential education programmes. Its curricular orientation will follow that of the IGCSE. The principal institution of this system will be the Namibian Distance Education College.

316. The priorities for distance education are:

- in-service teacher education;
- upgrading and continuing education for adult education workers;
- courses and remedial work for adults, both young and old;

- support for adult basic education, including skill training;
- courses for new literates, including technical, commercial, and community management skills; and
- courses to improve communication in English at all levels.

4. ADULT DEVELOPMENT COLLEGES

317. By their nature distance education programmes will generally be large scale and relatively formal. They therefore need to be supplemented by programmes that are specifically adapted and more narrowly focused on the education needs of particular localities and groups. To meet this need the Ministry will launch a pilot programme of Adult Development Colleges, in the tradition of the folk high schools in northern Europe and the Folk Development Colleges in Tanzania, adapted to suit Namibia's special circumstances.

318. The Adult Development Colleges will primarily serve the needs of adults who are already literate. They will offer a variety of courses tailored to their area and target groups. Those courses will vary in length, with some very short and none exceeding a year. In special circumstances, an Adult Development College may find it useful to prepare candidates for formal national certificates. But doing so must not be permitted to undermine their flexibility and responsiveness to local circumstances. To retain their focus, they must emphasise *local* and *learning,* not diplomas and certificates.

319. The Adult Development Colleges should both preach and practice democratic governance. Only by insuring that the local community has a major role in their decision making can they preserve their local responsiveness and accountability. It is reasonable to expect adult learners to pay for their courses. That will ensure that the learners are committed to participating in and completing the courses in which they enrol. The fees charged, however, should not be prohibitively high and will therefore not cover the full expenses of operating the Adult Development Colleges. Bursaries should be provided for deserving learners unable to afford the course fees.

5. OTHER ADULT AND NONFORMAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

320. Many Namibians are not yet comfortable communicating in English and are unable to participate in organised classes to develop their mastery of our official language. To reach that group a series of radio programmes has been developed: *Let's Speak English.* Broadcast nationally since March, 1992, those programmes are intended to reach a broad audience, ranging from new learners to teachers. Two books, oriented toward primary school teachers, have been published to go along with this series. Experiences elsewhere suggest that our radio education efforts will be more successful if people listen to them in groups, each with a tutor or discussion leader.

321. To assist adults in developing self-employment and small scale enterprises, the Department of Adult and Nonformal Education is considering a programme for Skills Training and Micro Enterprise Development. Its principal aim is to provide an integrated set of support services at the local level or within a project or community to enable people to create and sustain new viable projects or enterprises.

322. The objectives of this programme are to

- develop new employment and other income-generating opportunities;
- develop ways to draw on the existing infrastructure and facilities of the Ministry of Education and Culture and to establish links with other adult and nonformal education programmes;
- promote and develop attitudes and skills within Namibia that foster entrepreneurship, self-reliance, and local enterprise innovation;
- provide comprehensive support to potential projects, including the major factors essential to successful income generation (for example, information about opportunities and available resources, business, managerial, and other skills training, and assistance with financing);
- focus on the local community, its environment, and its resources without heavy reliance on external inputs;
- develop self-sustaining institutional capacity; and
- expand access and achieve equity in employment, especially for those most disadvantaged in the labour force, including women and people with physical disabilities.

323. None of these programmes can succeed without the simultaneous development and training of Namibian adult educators at various levels. To facilitate that, and to establish a clear structure, the Ministry of Education and Culture is considering creating a national training centre for adult educators, some of whom will continue their education at the university level, both within Namibia and in other countries.

G. HIGHER EDUCATION

1. OVERVIEW

324. We came to our independence with three very different paths to education beyond secondary school. Some of our young people continued their education in the institutions of other countries, both within the region and in more distant settings. Of those, many studied by correspondence, while others were obliged to spend years outside the country. Some of our young people studied at the United Nations Institute for Namibia in Lusaka. Within the country, the Academy combined a nascent university with a Technikon and a College for Out of School Training (COST). The Windhoek College of Education, created to prepare teachers for the white community, functioned well below capacity. Black teacher training colleges had much more limited resources and were inadequate to meet the needs of our population.

325. None of these paths serves us adequately in our current situation. Although we shall have to continue to send some students abroad, we cannot rely entirely on others, however well meaning, to determine the appropriate courses of study or selection and promotion procedures. Nor can we expect others to respond directly and promptly to our needs, now and in the future. The legacy of racially segregated higher education is equally unsuited to provide our higher education.

326. As in other parts of the education system, a major immediate task is to reduce the inequalities of the past by assisting those whose race, income, and gender limited their opportunities to proceed beyond primary school.

327. Our challenge, therefore, is to reconstruct the platform, to take what is useful from this heritage and shape it into a new institutional arrangement designed to suit our current circumstances and our aspirations. These are weighty matters with major cost implications. As the fundamental issues have become clearer, we have made several major decisions about the form and functions of higher education. In other areas, we are exploring our alternatives.

328. Our new system of higher education will have several major elements. The University of Namibia will assume responsibility for advanced education and research. A Polytechnic will provide high level technical and vocational education and training, perhaps sharing some activities and students with the university. As a matter of high priority, teacher education institutions will be integrated and expanded, both to prepare new teachers and to organise the continuing education of teachers already in service.

2. THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

329. Education beyond secondary school is intended to develop skilled human resources for our society, but also to help develop our culture, our artistic and musical skills. Competent public administration and management, increased productivity and efficiency, effective use of advanced technology, and innovation in all spheres of life all depend on the nature, scope, and quality of tertiary education. In the context of our emerging nation, the constraints of our historical experience are very much evident, including:

- limited human resource development due to apartheid education practices;
- restricted participation by the majority in management and enterprise decision making, due to job reservation practices; and
- widespread suspicion and prejudice against qualified black Namibians.

330. Since it will take some time to develop the system of higher education, there is an urgent need to expand and improve the system for allocating and managing scholarships and fellowships to support our students in other countries. Formerly located in the Office of the Prime Minister, this function is now being transferred to the Ministry of Education and Culture.

331. Created formally in 1992, the University of Namibia has assumed responsibility for continuing and managing the programmes of the former Academy. At the same time it has begun charting the directions and priorities of its development. The gestation and birth of this new institution have required a series of compromises. In part, the challenge has been to incorporate widely divergent views of the university's principal and subordinate missions. And in part, those compromises have reflected the need to adjust objectives to available resources. Reconciling disparate views of what is to be done and how to do it will remain a challenge to the university for the foreseeable future. Even with increased external support the demands on the university's resources will continue to exceed their availability. In that domain as well there will be a need for continuing compromises between what is desired and what is possible.

332. The principal objectives of the University of Namibia are to

- encourage and promote learning throughout Namibia;
- provide facilities appropriate to a university of highest quality for education that is responsive to the needs of Namibia, and make these facilities available to people likely to benefit from them;
- graduate people who are well trained in relevant academic and professional disciplines;
- provide opportunities for scholars to pursue the development of their highest intellectual potential;
- serve as a repository for the preservation, development, and articulation of Namibian values and culture;
- undertake basic and applied research that will contribute to the social, economic, cultural, and political development of Namibia;
- foster the development of science and technology;
- explore, develop, and support African history, culture, and languages;
- promote and defend a culture of excellence in the academic community by encouraging constructive criticism and subjecting itself to regular self evaluation and peer assessment;
- enhance the critical capacity of the academic community and of the society at large;
- serve communities, both urban and rural, and provide extension services throughout the country to extend and assist the education system as a whole; and
- foster national and international unity and understanding.

333. One of the University's principal responsibilities will be to participate in improving our education system as a whole. Directly, the University will be central to the expansion of our pool of well prepared secondary school teachers. Both directly and indirectly its education faculty will help refine the philosophy, shape the curriculum, and develop the materials of our education institutions, both residential and non-residential. And its research programme will help us see how we are doing and how we can do better.

334. For the present and the immediate future, the very limited number of Namibians who have been able to complete their own higher education requires us to rely heavily on scholars and researchers from other countries. As an institution of excellence, our university will always have international scholars on its staff. But to be able to shape and implement our own agenda, we must aim toward a university faculty that is largely Namibian. That can best be accomplished by laying a very solid foundation. The graduates of a high quality undergraduate programme will have ready access to the graduate education that will prepare them to become faculty members at our national university.

335. The dispersed population of Namibia requires that we establish a sophisticated distance education network to complement and supplement our residential higher education. The University of Namibia envisions establishing several university centres located throughout the country. As those centres become fully effective, they will permit regular contact with the university's main campus and its reservoir of resources, perhaps using electronic media and other new communication technology. Among the responsibilities of these centres will be the provision of access and bridging courses, especially in English and mathematics, to broaden the access to university education.

336. At this early stage of its life, three major issues are paramount for our new university. The first is organisational. The university must develop structures of governance, management, and administration suitable both to its tasks and role in society and to its location within the Namibian education system. That last—determining exactly how the university is to be integrated into the national education system—is the second major issue that must be addressed immediately. Third, those responsible for higher education must make the decisions and develop the mechanisms necessary to ensure adequate and reliable funding for the university. It is useful to highlight the major dimensions of these issues.

a. University Governance, Management, and Administration

337. The basic principle of governance at the University of Namibia is *academic freedom.* This is a fundamental characteristic of Namibian society entrenched in Article 21 of our Constitution. The Government of Namibia has stressed its commitment to this principle. Implementing academic freedom requires attention to both the rights and obligations of the university community.

338. These rights guarantee the University the basic conditions necessary for the pursuit of excellence. They assure the ability of teachers to teach, learners to learn and researchers to investigate and publish without external interference.

339. This protection is closely linked with obligations. The principal obligation of the university community is to ensure that the knowledge gained from the exercise of these freedoms is disseminated to the society at large in ways that contribute to its more general development.

340. The University's autonomy carries with it the obligation to preserve openness in University governance. That is a necessary foundation for trust and intellectual honesty. To ensure openness and trust in the governance of the university, its highest governing body, the Council, is designed to represent broadly our society. Within the University itself, the faculty, along with deans, department heads, and other senior officials, are responsible for decisions about instructional and research programmes and priorities.

341. The other face of governance is accountability. By its nature Namibia's single university has multiple constituencies and must be responsive, formally and informally, to different authorities. In part, our national university must be a service institution, helping us meet specific needs for personnel with advanced education. In that role it must as well assume responsibility for organising seminars, workshops, and short courses to bring its expertise, and where appropriate other national and international expertise, to bear on problems of pressing importance. To perform this service role effectively, the university must be accountable both to its own leadership and to those institutions to which it provides services. In part, our national university is the keystone institution in our education system. As such it plays a central role in educating our senior educators and curriculum developers. It also undertakes and coordinates research designed to help us understand, evaluate, and improve our education system. In that role, the university must be accountable to the Ministry of Education and Culture and to the education community more generally. In part, our national university must be a beacon of learning. In its teaching and research it must value discovery, exploration, and

understanding. It must be willing to address difficult issues and ask unpopular questions, systematically, thoroughly, and persistently. It must insist that its learners, both novices and veterans, present their analyses and understandings in ways that are comprehensible and useful to both specialist and general audiences. And it must assume these responsibilities in ways that kindle learning's spark of excitement and do not extinguish its flame. In this role, our national university must be accountable to the learners within it and to the nation as a whole. At the same time, for the university to establish and maintain an internationally recognised high standard of quality, its teachers and researchers must also be accountable to the professional communities in their subjects and disciplines.

b. The University's Systemic Role

342. There are many models in the world of the relationship between universities and other institutions of higher education. In some countries, the university is established as the principal institution of higher education, with other institutions—including teacher training colleges and professional technical training institutes--as its constituent parts. In other countries, each of those institutions has an independent charter and separate governing and managerial structures. In still others, the university is effectively a department of the ministry responsible for education, rather than an independent entity. In Namibia today there is a mix of these models, in which the university is autonomous but its relations with other institutions and with the Ministry of Education and Culture have not yet been fully defined.

343. We must work to find appropriate balances among conflicting goals and expectations. Consider, for example, decisions about the appropriate locations for especially advanced and expensive academic programmes. Some may regard it as essential that the University of Namibia have a faculty of medicine, while others consider that far too costly an undertaking for a new and relatively small university. It is preferable and certainly more cost-effective, they argue, to send a few students to medical schools in other countries. Similar questions arise about instruction and research in high energy nuclear physics, or the development, design, and manufacture of electronic microchips, or advanced molecular biology. Some may consider advanced work in genetic engineering both too costly and too specialised for Namibia's current circumstances. Others, however, may insist that only when Namibians themselves master genetic engineering can we really assert control over the development of our agriculture and animal husbandry. They insist as well that if there are no Namibians engaged in advanced and specialised research—say, in information technology—then Namibia will remain forever dependent on discoveries and innovations elsewhere. The development gap, they argue, will never be closed. There are no correct or permanent answers to these questions. Rather, they must be considered, discussed, resolved, and then reconsidered as needs and circumstances change.

344. Decisions on these issues both define the university and its programme and at the same time have potentially far reaching national significance. In this respect, the University is not simply another educational institution but rather has a critical role in our society's entire education agenda. The challenge here is to protect the autonomy of the University and at the same time ensure that it addresses consistently and energetically national needs and development objectives. That in turn requires a continuing, open, and spirited debate about exactly what are those needs and objectives.

345. With a relatively small population and limited resources, Namibia does not have the luxury of creating a large number of very specialised institutions, each operating independently of the others. We shall have to be imaginative as we decide where particular courses of study and research activities are located. Responsibility for some programmes may be shared by two or more institutions. Perhaps most important in this regard, we need a system that is sufficiently flexible to permit learners to move among our institutions of higher education as their own career goals and national needs require.

346. At least for an interim period, and perhaps over the longer term, we will need multiple entry paths to higher education. For example, some students may be admitted on the basis of their certified education accomplishments, while others may secure places through a qualifying examination. Still others may be selected in part on the basis of prior experience and the evaluative reports from their schools.

347. A related issue has to do with overall responsibility for research conducted within the country. Here, too, there are many models. In some countries, the university assumes primary responsibility for overseeing and conducting all research activities. Government departments look to the university to undertake the research they need. Foreign scholars, and often local scholars as well, must apply to the university for permission to conduct research. In other countries, while the university maintains a rigorous research programme, many other institutions also conduct their own research. The ministry responsible for education or the planning commission, for example, may have its own research unit to study those activities and problems with which it is most concerned. Other ministries and departments may also have research sections or divisions. Often there is a national research council responsible for coordinating, and to some extent managing, this wide range of research endeavours. There are also hybrids of these two models, incorporating some of the features of each. Our challenge is to learn from these experiences as we develop the pattern and linkages most appropriate to our own situation.

3. Polytechnic Education

348. In the long term we envisage a system of national polytechnics in different parts of the country. Preparations to transform the Technicon and the College of Out of School Training (COST) into a Polytechnic are well advanced. With the University as an autonomous legal entity in August 1992 the Academy Act was repealed. The University of Namibia Act makes provision for the continuation of the activities of the Technicon and COST under a sub-committee of the University Council until the Draft Polytechnic Bill, now under consideration, has been passed.

349. The Presidential Commission on Higher Education recommended that the Polytechnic and the University of Namibia would be parallel institutions that often interfaced. Both institutions would require its students to have completed full secondary education, but the Polytechnic would most likely set its entrance qualifications slightly lower than the University.

350. The current plans for the Polytechnic entail divisions for:

- Technical Services
- Accounting and Information Systems

- Technical Education
- Art and Design
- Library Studies and Information Services
- Management and Administration
- Hotel and Catering Services

4. FINANCING HIGHER EDUCATION

351. Education in general is expensive. University education is even more expensive. Lower staff/student ratios, advanced equipment and technology, libraries, laboratories and other specialised facilities, support for research, and more are all costly. The policy issue that arises is who should pay those costs. (The broad issues of financing education are discussed in Chapter VIII.)

352. For example, what part of the cost of educating their children should families pay directly? Should our sense of the national importance of university education and our commitment to equal opportunity lead us to set the direct fees at a very low level? Spreading the costs of higher education across our society as a whole would ensure that capable students would not be denied admission because they could not pay the fees. Or should the students admitted to the university and their families pay directly a much higher portion of the costs? That approach would recognise the substantial benefits of university education to individuals and their families. But unless there were a broad, inclusive, and fairly administered system of bursaries and remissions, that approach risks favouring learners from well to do families and discriminating against those less able to pay the higher direct fees.

353. In Namibia as in many other countries, the government is the principal source of funds for universities and higher education more generally. It is important to understand what that means. To say that an activity is supported by the government treasury is to say that those who are the source of the treasury's revenue pay for it. In most of Africa the most important sources of government revenue are direct and indirect taxes on exports. That is, in practice the producers of whatever is exported pay the major share of all government programmes, including higher education. In some countries that is the coffee farmers, in others the cocoa, or tea, or cotton farmers. In still others that is the cattle herders or sheep breeders, or the copper, or diamond, or gold miners. At the base, then, the country's workers and peasants pay the cost of establishing and maintaining the university. Often, those same people pay a second time, as tax payers, and then a third time as the parents and family of university students who must meet whatever fees are charged. It is important, therefore, when we consider instituting or increasing student fees that we not overlook what students' parents and families are already paying for their education.

354. The policy issue, then, is to determine how to apportion the costs of university education. What share of those costs should be paid directly by the government, that is, by the producers and tax payers of the country as a whole? What share should be paid by students and their families, either directly as fees or indirectly through the purchase of books and other materials and the provision of food, accommodation, and transport? What share is it reasonable to expect other institutions to pay—for example, the public and private enterprises that will directly benefit from the education of the students they employ? To what extent should the university itself be required to generate income, perhaps through contract research,

or organising seminars and conducting training for other institutions, or publishing? Should the university be expected to solicit funds directly from external assistance agencies or from private enterprises?

355. If there are to be substantial student fees or other direct payments, what procedures must be adopted to ensure that it is not only our richest families that can secure advanced education for their children? How can we ensure that all Namibians, and especially those who in the past have been disadvantaged in their access to education, have an equal opportunity to reach the university? What must we do to be sure that girls are encouraged to study science and technology at university level? And if there are to be high fees, are we also to have loan schemes or other means to permit students to delay payment until after they have graduated and secured employment?

356. The point of these questions is not to search for correct answers. Each society must set its own education agenda and practices, as we are doing now. It is essential that we raise these questions to extend and enrich our consideration of policy options and to broaden the participation in discussing them. To make decisions that suit our circumstances, we must be informed about the issues and what lies behind them. Because education is central to our development we must all be involved in thinking about it. To remain uninformed makes us unable to participate effectively in those deliberations. Even worse, when we do not take the trouble to understand the issues, we are not only likely to make poor decisions, but we will fail even to see how poor they are.

H. Cross-Sectoral Education Activities

1. Teaching Methods

357. Currently, teaching methods in our schools tend to foster memorisation and rote repetition. But to address the problems we face and to lay the foundation for a self-reliant and prosperous Namibia we need our young people to go beyond relying on what they have read or been told. Indeed, learning is more than memorising and repeating. Our children need to learn to think independently and critically. They must master strategies for identifying, analysing, and solving problems. Most important, they must develop self confidence: their own sense that they have the ability to contribute productively to their society, to help it grow, and to participate in governing it.

358. The direction for improvement is clear. Our teaching must be learner-centred and must aim toward:

- an enlightened understanding of humankind, its culture, its traditions, and its history;
- a methodology that promotes learning through understanding and practice directed towards the autonomous mastery of living conditions;
- a general reorientation of the organisation of school work with the view to fostering the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills by all pupils;
- continuous assessment of the learning process and its results;
- establishing a non-confessional religious curriculum where teaching about the roles of different religious and other philosophies of life in the history of humankind is introduced;

- promoting and protecting the fundamental equality of all learners and equity in their access to, their work in, and their benefits from the learning environment; and
- introducing and encouraging classroom practices that reflect and reinforce both the values and practices of democracy.

2. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

359. What children learn in school is another way of defining the purpose of schooling. Curriculum and instruction are therefore at the core of the education system. The curriculum defines the scope and sequence of the learning programme at each level of the education system. Instruction refers to the learning and teaching methods and to the ways they are used.

360. The curriculum inherited from the previous administrations was very distant from the lives and experiences of most Namibians and is being phased out. Even though good teaching can remedy some of its defects, our curriculum remains unsatisfactory in important respects. In many areas it is very narrow in its scope. Too often, it is concerned with describing, labelling, and categorising. Students spend a lot of their time memorising what things are called and how their textbooks and teachers organise those names. That is important, but it does not go far enough. Students must also learn to analyze and synthesise, to imagine and explore, to criticise and create, to understand and use. Students must also learn to relate what-is-now to what-can-be and how to get there.

361. To be effective, the curriculum must not treat knowledge as a burden. It must not treat concepts as ideas that are developed by people far away and imported into Namibia like automobiles or televisions. And it must not treat students as empty buckets into which teachers pour knowledge.

362. Instead, curriculum must treat learning as an active process that works best when the learners participate in developing, organising, implementing, and managing it. In this sense, curriculum is a strategy for cooperation in which both teachers and students have important roles. That cooperation will surely be the most fruitful when it is based on mutual respect and understanding rather than on suspicion and punishment.

363. The Ministry of Education and Culture has embarked on a programme of curriculum and instruction reform whose components include:

- designing a comprehensive curriculum for Basic Education encompassing a common core and other elements that are tailored to the situation and needs of particular communities and their schools;
- developing learner centred and self-accessing instructional materials;
- promoting criterion-referenced assessment procedures;
- providing similar and uniform core syllabi and instructional materials to all schools throughout the country offering Basic Education;
- enhancing learning through individualised instruction; and
- improving the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction.

364. Learner centred instructional materials will support implementing the new curriculum and attaining its goals and objectives. They will be of special value in helping inexperienced and untrained teachers to be more effective in their classrooms.

365. To implement this programme, the Ministry has set up a Technical Coordinating Committee on Basic Education Curriculum Reform. That Committee coordinates and guides the

- analysis of subject content and existing syllabi, selection of learning goals and instructional settings, and specification of performance outcomes;
- development of objectives and criterion tests, description of entry prerequisites, and determination of the structure and sequence of the instructional programme;
- specification of learning activities or events, the instructional management plan and patterns of classroom activities, review and selection of materials, development of new instructional materials, and assessment and evaluation of those materials; and
- conduct of internal and external evaluations of existing and new programmes, and the subsequent review and revision of programmes as appropriate.

366. The National Institute for Education Development (NIED) will play the central role in curriculum development and revision. Under its supervision a curriculum coordinating committee will oversee the work of curriculum panels responsible for policy coordination in preparing curriculum for related subjects. As appropriate, subject committees will be constituted to address the detailed issues of curriculum development and revision in their areas of expertise.

367. Classroom teachers are central to an effective process of curriculum and materials development. Their roles are multiple.

- They must be involved in curriculum development throughout all its stages: pre-study (research), initial draft, trials, refinement, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- They implement the curriculum in classroom settings.
- They are the principal interpreters of the curriculum as they use it.
- They are initiators of curriculum as they relate the national curriculum to local needs, thus ensuring its relevance.
- They monitor the curriculum by examining how its general objectives are translated into specific activities in their own classrooms.
- They are primary sources of information about the viability and feasibility of the curriculum and materials.
- Especially imaginative and skilled teachers may be seconded to NIED or resource centres to devote more time to curriculum and materials development.

3. Assessment and Evaluation

368. As was noted earlier, our commitment to education for all and our Basic Education reform have reoriented our teaching toward learner-centred instruction. They have as well required us to re-think the role of examinations. Where previously examinations were generally regarded as the sole measure of success for individuals and programmes, they will now become one of several tools for assessing and evaluating progress. It will be difficult, however, to dislodge examinations from their dominating role in our education system. They have dominated in two senses. First, examination results are widely used to determine how well students, schools, teachers, and even the entire education system have done. Second, because of their importance, curriculum materials and teachers' approaches become oriented toward both the content and the style of the examinations. Explicitly or implicitly, what is

examined gets much more attention than what is not examined. It is useful here, therefore, to reconsider the evolving role of examinations.

a. Examinations

369. A recent study has found that our examination and assessment procedures do not serve well our educational objectives:

> This emphasis on failure is endemic throughout the education system with students expecting to fail, teachers expecting them to fail, and Examiners setting papers to ensure that large numbers do fail. If this situation is to be reversed and the emphasis placed on positive achievement then a great effort will need to be made to re-educate all concerned. [George Bethell, Evaluation of Examination Needs of Primary and Secondary Schools (Windhoek: University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate for the Ministry of Education and Culture, October, 1990), p. 8]

370. The point of this observation is not that our examiners have personally set out to make life miserable for our learners. Rather, it is that we have been working with an examination system whose underlying philosophy is that the major purpose of examinations is to identify differences in learners' abilities and achievements. From that perspective, examinations would not achieve their purpose if everyone, or nearly everyone, did well. As was noted earlier, education for all requires that we re-think the philosophy that guides our examinations. As we do so, we are moving away from a narrow notion of examination to a broader and more inclusive concern with assessment and evaluation. Within that reconsideration, we are moving from an approach that emphasises success vs. failure toward an orientation that focuses on encouraging and recording achievement.

371. As part of its overall education reform, the Ministry is introducing new forms of criterion-based assessment at all levels. In Basic Education, minimum competencies will be identified by which teachers and learners can monitor progress. The Junior Secondary Certificate will be offered at Grade 10. The International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) will replace the Cape Education Department Matriculation Examination and will become the foundation for developing a Namibian Certificate of Secondary Education. The Ministry is considering establishing a National Evaluation and Assessment Authority to reform evaluation and assessment procedures. Our general orientation is to develop a range of learner-focused and age-appropriate assessment strategies, especially during Basic Education, and to reduce our reliance on formal, externally set examinations.

372. Examinations can serve several purposes. They can be used to assess individual achievement in order to evaluate each student's progress for the purpose of promotion or selection. That measure of individual achievement can also be used diagnostically, to enable students to see what they have accomplished and where additional study is necessary. Teachers can also use the diagnostic information to determine appropriate supplementary or remedial strategies.

373. Although it is individual students who are examined, it is possible to use examination results to evaluate the work of broader groups. For example, examination marks may be used to assess how well a class has mastered particular concepts or subject matter. In that case, we need not be concerned with how each individual did on the examination. Instead, our focus is on the class as a whole. Similarly, examination results can be used to evaluate the efforts of

all of the classes in a school, or all of the students in a region, or all of the Grade 10 students in the country. In the same way, examination results may be used to compare alternative textbooks, or different teaching methods. In this case, we might see whether or not students who used textbook A had higher marks than students who used textbook B. Again, to make that comparison we need not be concerned with the marks of each or any individual student.

374. The examination papers themselves can have different purposes. Far too often we set examinations that are designed to measure the recall of disconnected bits of information. That is, although we say we want our students to develop their ability to think critically, to compare and contrast, to analyse, to synthesise, to imagine, and to innovate, in practice our principal measure of progress checks on none of those abilities. Instead, it seeks to assess their recall. In fact, it may not even do that well. Far too often school tests and examinations are primarily a measure of students' mastery of the language of the questions posed. The students who have the best command of English, for example, may have the highest scores in nearly every subject. Many incorrect answers are due not to students' inability to recall something, but rather to their failure to understand correctly exactly what is being asked.

375. It is possible to design examinations that stress concept formation, analytic skill, the ability to integrate diverse understandings, facility at bringing knowledge to bear on unfamiliar themes and settings, and generating new ideas. The philosophy underlying our education reform requires us to move toward examinations of this sort. We still have a long way to go.

376. The purposes and uses of examinations differ in another way. Some examinations are designed to check on what students do *not* know. Currently, most of the examinations we use fall into this category. They assume that students ought to be able to recall a large number of discrete bits of information, and they proceed to determine which of those bits of information a student cannot recall. Alternatively, examinations may be designed to give students opportunities to demonstrate what they *do* know. In this sort of examination, what matters is not the information that students do not have but the information they have acquired and what they can do with it. Often the words we use reflect these two different approaches. Commonly, we discuss the *failure rate* in the first sort of examination and the *success rate* in the second.

377. That is an important difference. Research on learning is quite clear. Rewards work better than punishments. Success stimulates learning. Failure holds it back. Positive reinforcement promotes more and more rapid learning. Negative reinforcement does just the opposite. Indeed, when the messages to students are largely negative and punitive, most will find school painful rather than exciting. Many will simply stop trying.

378. In sum, we have inherited an examination system—and more important, a philosophy of examinations—that was designed for elite education. Its principal purpose was to select students for promotion to higher levels and eventually to certify their achievements. Its primary focus was on what students did not know. For most students, examination scores were negative and distinctly frustrating and painful messages.

379. The results of this system are truly dramatic and profoundly disturbing. In 1991, 3,660 school pupils sat for the Senior Certificate examination. Of those, only 437 achieved matriculation exemption. An additional 1,111 achieved a Senior Certificate. In other words,

2,112 failed! That is, of what were surely the most successful students in our schools, nearly 60% failed. A highly selective system, offered in the best schools of the country by our best qualified teachers led to wholesale failure. That must not continue.

380. In fact, the situation is even worse. These results, poor as they are, disguise the discriminatory character of the examination process. In 1990, the pass rate for all senior certificate pupils was 49%. In that year, the pass rate in white schools was 94%, while the pass rate in the Ovambo Region was 12%. Let us consider matriculation exemption. In 1990, of 655 Ovambo Region students who sat the examination, only 4 gained matriculation exemption. Fewer than 1% succeeded. In that year, 863 students took the Senior Certificate in white schools, and 331 gained matriculation exemption. More than 38% were successful. Overall in that year, white schools gained 75% of all the matriculation exemptions in the country.

381. Our schools are of course no longer legally segregated. But we know that in practice they are not yet fully integrated. The 1991 examination results indicate that on the whole it is still the same schools that are the most successful in the Senior Certificate examinations. They accounted for 50% of the total passes and 81% of the total matriculation exemptions. If the former white schools continue to do so much better, clearly we have a long way to go to provide equal opportunities to learners at all of our schools. At the same time, beyond the differences in home background and resources, facilities, and teachers among our schools, these results make us wonder if the existing examinations are measuring something other than academic achievement.

382. The orientation of our examination system is no longer appropriate to our current situation. We are committed to education for all. We need to focus much less on examinations and selection and much more on learning. To serve learning well, whatever tests or examinations we use need to be concerned with thinking and understanding, and not simply recall. They need to be designed to help us assess whether or not a particular curriculum unit, or set of textbooks, or teaching approach is an effective way to reach the objectives we have set. To provide feedback that is useful to our students, teachers, principals, and subject advisers, they need to be closely related to what is being taught and why. To incorporate the objectives of particular curriculum units, most often our tests and examinations will need to be designed and administered by teachers at the classroom level. And to support and accelerate learning, they will need to emphasise achievement and success, not failure.

383. We need to reeducate ourselves in this regard. We are used to the older pattern of examinations. Until we begin thinking about it, we may assume that the older style is all there is. But our commitment to education for all requires us to re-think what we have been taking for granted. It also requires us to help our students and their parents understand why we are making these changes and how they will benefit us. And we need to show them that we are improving the quality of our education system, not lowering its standards.

b. Assessment and Evaluation in Basic Education

384. The main purpose of assessment in Basic Education will be to develop a reliable picture of each individual learner's progress and level of achievement in relation to minimum competencies specified in subject syllabuses. That assessment will be used

- to inform learners and their parents of progress and achievements;
- to inform teachers of problems and guide ensuing compensatory teaching; and
- for promotion purposes.

385. Assessment has a formative role in education when it

- motivates learners to extend their knowledge and skills and to establish sound values;
- promotes good study habits;
- helps learners to use intelligently what they have learned to solve problems;
- helps build a positive and realistic self image; and
- is used to improve teaching methods and learning materials.

386. Different evaluation procedures are appropriate at lower and upper primary levels. In lower primary education (Grades 1-4), evaluation will rely on informal continuous assessment. No formal examinations, internal or external, will be administered at this level. In upper primary education (Grades 5-7), evaluation will rely on both informal and formal continuous assessment. Formal assessment will include tests developed by classroom teachers.

387. Basic Education will have specified basic competencies, related to the all around development of the learner. As many learners as possible should progress through the system. This means that a wide range of achievement levels will be accepted. An effective learner-centred education system must be able to accommodate low achievers and late developers as well as average and gifted learners.

388. Only in exceptional cases, determined individually, will a learner not be promoted between grades at the lower primary level (Grades 1-4). For promotion at the upper primary level (Grades 5-7), learners will be expected to attain a basic minimum level of competence in the promotion subjects for each grade. Entry from Upper Primary to Junior Secondary, that is, from Grade 7 to Grade 8, will depend on the learner's success in the external examination at Grade 7 and on availability of places in Grade 8.

4. Special Education

389. The Ministry of Education and Culture is mandated to provide education and training to learners with special needs and abilities. Included in this group are children with vision, hearing, or other physical, emotional, or mental impairments. Included as well are above-average and gifted and specific talented learners, as well as learners in regular classrooms who are seriously underachieving.

390. Directed toward optimal development and self-help, special education is expensive. But not providing it is even more expensive. The result of neglecting special education is adults who need care instead of being self-supporting and largely independent citizens able to contribute to their communities and nation. The twin objectives of our special education

programme, therefore, must be to provide assistance to our impaired children as early as possible and to assist them to become fully integrated into our society. To put that somewhat differently, we can consider the impairments of our children to be a burden on our society, or we can share responsibility for enabling our handicapped children to be as much a source of inspiration, strength, and accomplishment for our society as their peers. Surely we must choose the second course.

391. Our principal strategy for addressing the needs of young people with physical or other impairments is to integrate them as fully as possible into our regular education programmes. There are two major reasons for this orientation. First, in general all learners benefit from a heterogeneous learning environment. Learners who do not see or hear well, for example, are likely to do better when they work with and are challenged by their peers. Second, this policy of inclusiveness and integration permits us to use our limited resources most effectively. For example, an experienced special education instructor may work directly with a few children in a small class. That same instructor can assist many more learners by helping regular classroom teachers develop appropriate skills and teaching strategies.

392. At the same time, we must recognise that schools that are already overburdened and teachers who have little specialised preparation may not be able to develop constructive and supportive learning environments for these children. As well, some learners with special needs may not be able to work effectively in regular classroom settings. We must do several things to address their needs. A first step is to identify as early as possible those learners whose impairments require special attention. Since early identification is so important to the success of special education, we shall cooperate with other ministries and organisations whose programmes reach very young children. Then, we must help our schools and their staffs develop the sensitivity and skills to integrate learners with special needs into regular school classes and other activities and to provide supportive services and remedial education as necessary. For the most severely impaired, we shall need special classes and institutions with appropriately trained staff. We envision the creation of an Institute for Special Education to lead, guide, and coordinate these efforts.

393. Throughout our education system, we assume that everyone has the ability to learn. So too for learners with physical or other impairments. The school's responsibility, therefore, is to create conditions that are conducive to learning. The teacher's responsibility is to organise, enrich, and guide that environment for all learners.

394. Special education is not intended to provide favours to handicapped children. Rather, its charge is to establish and maintain equivalent opportunities for learners with special needs. It is guided not by a sense of sympathy but by an ethos of support.

395. Effectively challenging and encouraging our most able learners poses a dilemma for us. Often, efforts to identify gifted children turn out to designate not those with unusual intellectual abilities but instead the children of affluent families and others who simply have had more opportunity to read, write, travel, and more generally develop their academic skills. When that occurs, programmes for the gifted become a vehicle for perpetuating racial, or class, or gender privilege. Since it is especially difficult to design assessment measures that do not favour people from particular backgrounds, we shall have to be vigilant to ensure that the extra

resources we invest in educating our gifted learners do not function to entrench the divisions of our society.

5. *Responsibilities for Conduct and Discipline*

396. A great deal is changing very rapidly in our country. Education, too, is in a period of transition. For the most part, we regard the changes that are taking place as very positive. There are more learners than ever before, and all learners have new opportunities. We are excited about developing new approaches, new curriculum, new ways of organising the learning environment. At the same time, we must recognise that change can itself be unsettling. Indeed, in some areas we have witnessed a breakdown in discipline. This is a matter which requires the urgent attention of everyone in Namibia. All of us—teachers, principals, parents, members of our communities, as well as the staff of the Ministry of Education and Culture—must work to make our schools and other education programmes place where real learning takes place.

397. In the past, it was common to attempt to employ violence to deal with what were termed problems of misbehaviour and indiscipline. Too often the application of corporal punishment was capricious, guided more by principals' and teachers' concern about their authority than by a well grounded philosophy of education and understanding of the learning process. In any case, corporal punishment—which is the imposition of external control—is fundamentally inconsistent with learner-centred education, which recognises that learning is an active, not a passive, process and expects learners to be the doers, not the receivers, of their learning. Corporal punishment is *not* a strategy for establishing and maintaining an effective learning environment.

- How can we humiliate learners by beating them, and then expect them to cooperate with us in learning?
- If the brief pain of a beating has any lasting effect it is usually expressed in anger and resentment. Neither is conducive to learning.
- Why are we beating the children? Revenge? Because we are angry? Because we have had a bad day? Can we expect beating to lead to understanding?
- The threat of a beating may guarantee silence, but it cannot guarantee future cooperation.
- Corporal punishment sets one person against another, but effective learning is a cooperative, not adversarial, activity.
- It is the problem—whatever caused the behaviour that we consider unacceptable—that we need to attack, not the child.
- Corporal punishment creates an atmosphere of violence, and violence leads to more violence.
- Corporal punishment is based on the fear of pain. But fear drives out wisdom and lets in ignorance.

398. Corporal punishment is not a solution to whatever problems of behaviour and conduct we face. It is not permitted in our schools and other education programmes. The most effective discipline and control comes from within.

399. A national consultation process that began in 1990 developed the Namibian Code of Conduct for Schools. That Code emphasises the cooperative nature of learning and the shared responsibility for establishing and maintaining an effective learning environment. It sets out

the rights and responsibilities of learners, teachers, and school principals. Equally important, it highlights the role of School Boards in developing policies and rules appropriate to their schools and local communities. When they function well, those School Boards will coordinate the activities of all who share responsibility for protecting that learning environment—learners, educators, administrators, parents, and citizens. As they do so, the School Boards help us move toward achieving our goals of access, equity, quality, and democracy and at the same time monitor our progress, holding us accountable when that progress is not satisfactory.

6. GENDER EQUALITY

400. A particular challenge for our country today is to make sure that like their brothers Namibia's girls are able to develop their individual potential and use their abilities to contribute equally to our national development. Ensuring that girls are not disadvantaged in and by our education system is important to us for three major reasons.

401. First, gender equality is a fundamental right in our society. Our commitment to equality and to education for all requires us to address and redress not only the racial and ethnic discrimination that we inherited from our past but also the visible and not so visible patterns of differentiation based on gender.

402. Second, our national development requires the dedication and contributions of all our citizens. We restrict our own progress if we disadvantage half our learners during their education.

403. Third, women's special roles and responsibilities—even as they are changing—make the effective education of girls a high priority. Throughout Africa it is clear that educating girls as well as boys reduces infant and maternal mortality, encourages more widely spaced childbirth, increases the pool of skills available to both public and private sectors, enables women to increase their earning power, and effectively stimulates new employment. Investing in girls' education is thus a strategy for reducing poverty and improving the quality of life of families and the population as a whole. To highlight women's roles in our contemporary society does not, and must not, mean that we expect those roles to remain the same forever. Far from it! Indeed, if our education programmes are successful in addressing gender issues, men will assume greater responsibilities for child care, for improving and protecting infant and maternal health, and for eliminating the barriers women face when they seek employment.

404. Ensuring access, equal opportunity, and equity for girls in our education is not simply a utilitarian issue. Achieving those objectives is fundamental to the sort of society we are building.

405. We must deal with two sets of issues to make progress toward those objectives. One has to do with the experiences of girls in the education system. The second concerns gender expectations and stereotypes more generally.

406. To evaluate our own progress in improving girls' education in Namibia we must consider access, persistence, achievement, subject choice, and overall development of competencies. In some respects, we have apparently been quite successful in reducing discrimination against girls in our schools. In much of Namibia, girls enrol in school and

proceed through junior secondary school at the same rates as boys. But not everywhere. In some areas, for example, girls' dropout rates are much higher. In those areas, many fewer girls than boys complete their basic education. We do far less well at the upper levels of schooling. After Grade 11, many fewer girls than boys remain in school. The 1991 matriculation examination results are particularly striking. While in urban areas more girls than boys passed, in the rural areas only half as many girls were as successful as boys.

407. The reasons for these differences are many and complex. Some obstacles to girls' success lie within the education system, while other barriers are erected in the society at large. Still, the results indicate that at some levels and in some places our education system can enable girls to learn well and succeed in their examinations. We must not be satisfied until we can point to gender equality at all levels and in all regions.

408. In addition to these problems of access, persistence, and achievement, it is also the case that gender expectations and stereotypes guide and influence subject choices and other decisions in the education system. Formally and informally, explicitly and implicitly, girls are directed toward subjects deemed appropriate for them and away from subjects considered too demanding or inappropriate for females. It is troubling but not surprising, for example, to find that fewer girls than boys select and succeed in the sciences and mathematics. It is also disturbing to note that there are fewer boys than girls in subjects generally perceived to be more feminine. We know that there are no genetic, or biological, or physiological factors that make girls less able to master trigonometry or physics. Hence, if we graduate fewer female (or Black, the parallel is obvious) mathematicians or physicists, or train fewer female electricians, we have disabled some of our people and held back our own development. Within the education system, we cannot completely modify the gender expectations and stereotypes that are held in our society. But we shall be very remiss if we do not address them imaginatively and energetically.

409. Indeed, our education system has a broad social responsibility to address gender and its roles. We must educate our teachers about the hidden curriculum that steers girls toward some subjects and careers and away from others. As we do that, we must help our teachers and other educators develop a gender conscious curriculum and teaching materials that identify not only gender inequalities in our society but also the assumptions and the institutional framework that make those inequalities seem normal and therefore acceptable. We must also educate boys about partnership, parenthood, non-violent relationships, and the unacceptability of a male superiority complex. Educating teachers and boys is a necessary foundation for enabling girls not only to choose courses and vocations but also to develop their self-respect and self confidence.

410. At the same time, we must be sure that both girls and boys in our education system have role models to emulate, including female scientists and mathematicians and electricians and women in positions of authority and responsibility. Indeed, our schools and other education programs should themselves become models of egalitarian social institutions in which all individuals can develop their own potential and are not held back by race, or ethnicity, or gender. To achieve that we must address effectively sexual harassment, early pregnancy (especially where teachers are involved), peer pressure toward sexual submissiveness, and related issues, including AIDS.

411. Rather than assuming that the ways we commonly differentiate, teach, and guide females and males are natural, we must question and challenge those patterns. That is a responsibility for all of us.

7. *Hungry Children Become Slow Learners*

412. It is well known that children who do not have adequate nourishment are less able to concentrate on their studies and complete their assignments. Severe and continued malnourishment may reduce children's learning abilities for the rest of their lives. Making sure our children eat well is a special concern during the current national drought. But even when there is more rain, children in some areas of the country do not have a nutritional diet. A pilot school feeding project seeks to address this problem. Begun in the south, this programme is being expanded as resources permit. The Ministry will monitor its progress as it considers its long term strategy in this regard.

I. Goals as Measures of Progress

413. Our education programmes are many and often complex. Responsibility for their success is shared among many people. Educators, administrators, learners, citizens—we all have roles to play. As we engage in the activities that most directly concern us, we must keep clearly in view the goals toward which we are working: *access, equity, quality,* and *democracy.* In addition to being targets to achieve, they are also measures of our progress. As we evaluate a curriculum reform, or a pedagogical initiative, or new learning materials, we must ask: to what extent and how well do they move us toward our major goals? In that way, we move forward.

VIII. Finance

414. Education is an expensive enterprise. That is so primarily because learning is an interactive process. Students can memorise isolated facts by themselves. But to be able to analyze and develop new ideas requires interactions among learners. To change things, one must understand them. Understanding is developed by exchanging ideas and insights. At first, one's understanding is incomplete. When a learner puts forward that partial understanding, other learners react. They may challenge the original idea or support it. In response, the learner who put forward that idea modifies and refines it. New information is gathered. Relationships are clarified. Potentially confusing elements are identified and set aside. As the picture becomes clearer, the learner can put forward the new revised idea to begin the process again.

415. The teacher is a master learner. One of the teacher's major responsibilities is to help organise and structure the interactions among the students in the class. Students can and should help each other learn. But it is the teacher who must make it possible for that to happen and encourage it. It is for that reason that even with the most advanced equipment and materials, teachers will always have a critical role in education. Since teachers are essential to learning, they need to be well prepared. Certainly, they ought to be paid a reasonable wage.

416. It would be very short-sighted to staff schools with teachers who are inadequately prepared or so poorly paid that they must hold a second or even a third job in order to feed and house their families. It would be equally short-sighted to have classes that are so large that learning suffers badly. Since a major part of the spending on education is allocated to teachers' salaries, education will always be relatively expensive. Like other enterprises, education requires an initial investment before the payoff begins to become visible. Investing too little in education in the present will significantly reduce the payoff long into the future.

417. In systemic terms, our commitment to access, equity, quality, and democracy, and our firm belief that each of those goals requires the others—that we cannot make a tradeoff between, say, access and equity, or equity and quality—means that we must not take a short term view of efficiency. If we were to slow the pace of education for all, for example, we would have more time to train and upgrade our teachers. But to do so would be to perpetuate the inequalities that characterised our education system at Independence. Illiterate Namibians would continue to find it difficult to become more effective citizens in a democratic society. Once again we must consider what we spend on the social transformation to which our education system is committed not as a cost but as an investment in our future.

418. The principal resource for the development of Namibia is us, its people. Schools or programmes that do not, or cannot, educate all the people—that continue informally the segregation that was formally decreed in the past, for example—are thus very inefficient.

419. We came to independence with a spirit of reconciliation. That is good, but it has a cost. In education we have merged the eleven previous administrations and authorities into a single ministry without massive layoffs. The result is that currently, as those who have studied our education system tell us, our staff is somewhat top heavy. We shall, of course,

work to reassign and re-train personnel to enable them and the Ministry to function most effectively and most efficiently. Realistically, however, we must realise that our policy of reconciliation will have direct financial consequences for some time into the future.

A. Maximising Benefits, Not Reducing Expenditures

420. Currently, nearly a fifth of our government's annual recurrent expenditures go to education. That is a somewhat higher proportion than in many other African countries and substantially higher than in some. It is a level of spending that we may find difficult to sustain. Yet we must also realise that even so, we invest less of our funds in education than most of the countries of the North Atlantic and Japan. It is not surprising that the education gap between the richer and poorer countries continues to grow.

421. Even the most optimistic projections for the future of the Namibian economy do not envision that the government funds available to education will increase substantially. Our government must also commit resources to the health, safety, and well being of our people. The large gaps we have to close—between the schools and communities with the highest and lowest spending per pupil, between the education we think our teachers ought to have and the limited preparation most were able to secure prior to Independence, to note just two examples—will take a good deal of our budget each year. Providing basic education for all will mean increasing expenditures as we reach more people. We shall find it a great challenge to fulfil our education aspirations if our economy is healthy. If economic growth is sluggish, resources available to education will be even more constrained.

422. Therefore, the challenge in financing education is to ensure that every expenditure has the maximum positive impact. There are, of course, areas where spending can be reduced. But the principal focus must be on gaining the maximum benefit from the funds that are available.

423. Currently, what we spend on some of our students far exceeds what we spend on others. For example, a class that has a teacher:pupil ratio of 1:8 has a much higher level of spending per student than a class where the same ratio is 1:50. If the teachers in the two classes have approximately the same salaries, each student in the first class has been allocated resources equivalent to those spent for six students in the second class. And if the teacher in the first class has had more education, or if the students in that class have more books and equipment, the difference is even greater. Only by making all of our schools universally accessible in practice and not just in theory can we eliminate these inequalities in spending.

424. Resources are never unlimited. Therefore, we must always try to find ways to make the money we spend more effective. There are several ways we might make our education expenditures more effective. Some may be preferable to others in our current circumstances. But we shall have to consider each of them carefully, assessing the advantages and disadvantages.

425. One approach is to discourage repetition. Now, many students repeat one or more years of their schooling in order to do better on examinations. For some students, that

additional time may be especially helpful. But other students may be no more successful the second or third time. We need here to balance the benefits to particular individuals against the cost of providing those benefits. In our current circumstances, we may need to discourage or even prohibit repetition in order to permit other children to use those places in school.

426. Another possibility is to eliminate very small classes. While it is true that in small classes teachers can work more closely with each individual student, that practice has a high cost, since it requires that we have many more teachers and classrooms. A school that operates with very small classes is using resources that could be used to improve facilities, or purchase additional materials, or reduce class sizes elsewhere. Here, too, we need to find a reasonable balance between maintaining manageable class sizes and enabling all our children to go to school. To achieve that balance, we have set minimum class sizes at each level. To ensure that setting minimum class sizes does not reduce the chances of rural children to go to school, we may need to consider multi-grade classes. It may also be necessary to offer certain subjects that usually have low enrolments in only a few schools in each region. We must be sure that doing so, however, does not undermine our commitment to equity.

427. A third strategy is to insist that our schools be much more efficient in their use of supplies and materials, even electricity and water. There is room for innovation in this regard. A school that with its community's help builds a system to collect and store rainwater may have a more secure water supply than another school that is entirely dependent on piped water and perhaps unreliable pumps. A school that does not leave lights or machines on when they are not needed may make it possible to bring electricity to a school that does not yet have it.

428. There are other ways to improve the efficiency of our education system. Yet, we must be careful when we apply terms like efficiency to education. There are several potential problems here. First, efficiency is often used to refer to manufacturing or production in general. To be efficient is to use the lowest cost way to make the product. Machinery that requires more raw materials, for example, or that produces a higher number of unsatisfactory products is less efficient. The goal is to identify the process that has the lowest cost per unit of output. But education differs from manufacturing in fundamental ways. Even after decades of research, we are not entirely sure how each input contributes to the learning process. Textbooks, teacher qualifications, instructional approaches, class size, whether or not students are ill, malnourished, or cold, language of instruction, and more all affect learning. But they may do so in different ways in different settings and at different times. Most important, education is an interactive proce '. Inputs are also outputs. Teaching methods influence what students do. And students' behaviour in turn influences teaching methods. Hence, it is extraordinarily difficult to develop systematic and consistent comparisons of alternative inputs. The output side of this equation is also problematic. What, exactly, is the output of an education system? Learning? Understanding? Creativity? Individual and collective abilities and skills? Self reliance? Self confidence? National unity? And what are the appropriate measures of each of those? In practice, the number of graduates, or the number of years the average student takes to complete a course, or examination score is taken to be the output. But that is a very limited and limiting view of what we are trying to accomplish. The efficiency of an

education system is difficult to assess because it does not fit well the model of the production process that has been used to define efficiency and how to measure it.

429. Second, the common uses of the term efficiency in education settings confuse wastage and misuse with education policy. Many of the analyses of education in Namibia and elsewhere stress the importance of increasing internal and external efficiency. In those documents, internal efficiency means student progress through school, teacher-student ratios, use of physical facilities, and measures of achievement, commonly all summed in the unit cost per student. Higher internal efficiency means that less money is spent per student. From this perspective, internal efficiency may be improved by either spending less per pupil or reducing dropouts and repetition, or both. Most students who repeat a year in school are simply trying to improve their chances for selection to the next level. Whether or not they are permitted to repeat is a matter of education policy, not inefficiency. There may be circumstances in which it is deemed educationally sound to permit students to remain in school an additional year or to re-sit an examination. That decision to permit some, or even many, students to repeat a year is a matter of education policy, not inefficiency.

430. Similarly, from an educational perspective, the rate of promotion is most often a matter of policy, not the misuse of funds. How many students move from one level of school to the next is largely determined by the number of places available at the higher level. Examination scores may determine *which* students are selected, but not *how many*. In that sense, those students who are not selected have not failed or dropped out. Rather, a decision was made (for whatever reason) to limit the number of places at the next level. That decision means that many students, including some very capable students, are not able to proceed. Great improvements in instructional methods, or better qualified teachers, or new textbooks and materials may well increase learning. But they cannot improve the promotion rate, since that is fixed by the number of available places. In other words, what looks like inefficiency (an apparently high failure or low selection rate) is in fact the result of a policy decision.

431. External efficiency is used to refer to the relationship between schooling and the labour market, commonly assessed in terms of the percentage of students who pass, graduate, and secure employment. Higher external efficiency means that a larger percentage of students who finish school find employment, or find it more quickly. Yet schools seek to do far more than prepare students for subsequent employment. Indeed, there is substantial evidence from many African countries that the school curriculum has relatively little direct impact on employability. (Recall the discussion of this evidence and its implications in Chapter VII, Section VII.E.1.) Hence, the employment rates of those who finish school may have something to say about the state of the economy, but they are a very poor measure of what we normally understand as the misuse of school resources.

432. In short, since pass and graduation rates are largely the consequences of general education and national policy and therefore not of either student or school achievement, it is confusing to characterise as internal inefficiency the decision to promote few students. The willingness to permit student repetition, too, reflects a policy decision (whether for pedagogical or political reasons), not inefficiency. We all recognise that the charter of schooling is far broader than, and may not even include, vocational preparation.

Consequently, it confuses the issue to use rates and types of employment as a measure of the (external) efficiency of our schools. And since it is far from clear that in-school and skill-specific vocational training make better employees, unemployment rates cannot provide even a rough measure of a more limited notion of employment-preparation efficiency.

433. The third problem is that most often discussions of efficiency focus on cutting costs, even though we may already be spending too little. Our principal challenge is to maximise the impact and benefits of what we do spend. That does not mean that we should tolerate misuse of our available resources. It does mean, however, that in many circumstances cutting spending may reduce, not increase, efficiency.

434. It is worth reviewing what is problematic here. The primary goals of schooling are to develop basic literacy and numeracy, to promote social consciousness, responsibility, reliability, good citizenship, self reliance, and self-confidence, and to foster curiosity and creativity. Whether or not students continue in school or remain for additional years is largely determined by education policies. Notwithstanding a mountain of research results, educators know relatively little about the sort of early in-school training that leads to better mechanics, or managers, or teachers. While it is difficult to project very far into the future, it is likely that adults in our society will work in several different occupations during their lives. In this context, to focus on internal and external efficiency as those terms are used in the international writing on education is to undermine education's efforts to achieve the broader goals with which it has been charged. As well, by using these terms we treat as problems of administration and management, presumably amenable to technical solutions, what are fundamentally issues of public policy. Misusing resources should not be tolerated. But data on the number of graduates or on the rate of unemployment may tell us very little about whether or not resources are being used well.

435. Our most important and effective strategy for minimising waste is to establish clear accountability. Educators, administrators, students, and our communities at large should all be able to see what funds are allocated and how they are used. And they must have effective channels for raising their concerns and influencing both the volume and the pattern of expenditures.

436. It is useful to recall here that the most appropriate vantage point for examining how and how well we finance our education system is that of our *learners,* not the budget, nor the Ministry, nor the general education philosophy, or the curriculum. A learner-centred approach assumes that most students and participants in education programmes can learn and succeed. A learner-centred approach then assesses all of the dimensions of the education system in terms of how they support or hinder effective learning and whether or not they provide to all learners a fair opportunity to be selected for additional education opportunities. That orientation then provides a framework for determining how best to use our available resources. Each allocation of financial, administrative, curricular, and human resources can be evaluated in terms of its contribution to improving the learning process.

437. To be able to make that evaluation, we must be able to see clearly how our resources are used. Currently, our accounting system makes it difficult to understand patterns of spending and the priorities they reflect. Even senior officials cannot be sure

that actual expenditures are entirely consistent with the policies and priorities we have adopted. We must work toward what is sometimes termed transparency. Our managerial, administrative, and accounting procedures must not obscure what we spend and how and when we spend it. Accurate, reliable, and timely expenditure information is vital to effective and efficient allocation and management of our resources.

B. External Resources

438. As we have noted, education is expensive. It is also our future. The education system we construct today will have a major role in determining the standard of living and quality of life we share tomorrow. And we cannot wait. We must move quickly to reform the system we have inherited, to eliminate the inequalities embedded in it, and to enable every Namibian to become educated. For these reasons, we have sought assistance from our friends overseas. Some of those friends began their programmes of cooperation even before our independence. For others, the commitment to help us reach our development goals has been more recent. To all of them we are grateful.

439. Relying on foreign assistance, however, can easily become a problem instead of a solution. Even the most supportive of our overseas friends have their own agendas and priorities that may, or may not, coincide with our own. Where we rely on foreign funding, we may gain some additional resources. But at the same time we may lose some control. If we become too heavily reliant on foreign assistance, we risk losing our ability to set our own development agenda and to decide how to pursue it.

440. That is not to say that foreign assistance is undesirable. Overseas support has been instrumental in helping us achieve some of our goals. We shall continue to seek that support. We are hopeful that the international community will recognise its global responsibility for assisting the countries that are its disadvantaged citizens, just as we assume our national responsibility for assisting our own disadvantaged citizens. But at the same time, we must ensure that our relationships with our overseas friends are genuinely cooperative, that foreign support compliments our own efforts and is synchronised with our own capacity. We must not become so dependent on foreign assistance that we are unable to educate ourselves. For if we cannot educate ourselves, we cannot determine how we will be educated.

C. Hostel Fees

441. Under the previous system each ethnic authority determined the policies, procedures and levels of hostel fees. Consequently, those fees were not uniform. At Independence, the government announced its commitment to general education that is free in terms of tuition, books, and classroom materials.

442. The government has also emphasised the necessity for parents to contribute to feeding and maintaining their children while they are housed in hostels, just as other parents do for their children who are day scholars.

443. In November 1991, the Ministry of Education and Culture announced its New Policy on Hostel Feels (REF NO 70/91/11/28), which specified that hostel fees shall be determined on three criteria (the detailed fees are not included here, since they will need to be adjusted periodically):

- All hostels throughout the country shall be classified on the basis of their quality, state and condition on the scale A-C. The A hostels are those with basic and bare minimum facilities; the B hostels are moderately equipped; and the C hostels are slightly above the general standards. Currently, most of the C hostels will be those of the former White, Coloured and Rehoboth Administrations because school facilities of those former second tier authorities were generally better than others.
- Fees will be determined on a sliding scale for families with more than one child in a hostel and will be implemented according to the classification of the hostel. For each additional child, the fee will be decreased by 10% up to 5 children. Boarders in B hostels will pay 10% more than those in A hostels, and boarders in C hostels will pay 30% more than those in A hostels.
- Fees will also be pegged on the parents' income. In practical terms, those families in higher income brackets will pay more than those with lower incomes.
- Scholars who can demonstrate that they are unable to raise money for hostel fees should be accommodated. Such scholars should provide legal proof to the Regional Education Director of such an inability, for example, a notarised statement from a magistrate, church leader, senior local official, or senior police officer or office of the Regional Commissioner. Orphans are a case in point.

444. Recognising the fact that maintenance of hostels is an intensive burden on government resources, the government is studying the possibilities of reducing the number of hostels. This could be done by extending some of the Primary Schools into Junior Secondary Schools and encouraging learners to be day scholars. Although this strategy would reduce direct government expenditures, it might also make it more difficult for learners from remote rural areas, where there are no easily accessible day schools, to secure a high quality education.

445. As this example shows, decisions on using resources always involve tensions among competing goals and tradeoffs and compromises among priorities. Reducing spending on hostels may well make funds available to use elsewhere in the education system. But carried too far, that reduction may seriously disadvantage learners who happen to live far from more densely populated areas. It is for that reason that we must constantly evaluate our resource allocations in terms of the objectives and goals that we deem most important. In what ways and to what extent does a particular allocation improve learning and the learning environment? How does it advance our progress toward access, equity, quality, and democracy?

IX. Planning

446. Managing an education system is like crossing a rapid river by stepping from one rock to the next. There is always the risk that we will slip on a wet stone and be swept along by the current. It is hard to be looking forward to see where to go and at the same time to be looking down to make sure the footing is secure. Because we always have more uses for our money than we have funds, we generally cannot afford sturdy boots with non-slip soles, or poles to steady us. Certainly we cannot afford a bridge across the river.

447. Hence, we try to look ahead to see where we want to go and how best to get there. We call that planning. We try to take stock of our available resources and to work out ways to use them as effectively and efficiently as possible. In the early years of Africa's independence, education planners thought that they could see quite a way into the future. They also thought they could develop robust strategies for reaching their goals. Experience has not been kind to that initial optimism. Often the future turned out to be quite different from what the planners expected. The demand for some skills, for example, far exceeded their projections. Equally often, it proved to be impossible—for economic, or political, or other reasons—to proceed according to the map the planners had drawn. In some settings, falling world prices for a country's principal export sharply reduced the funds available. In others, deteriorating relations with one or several of the North Atlantic countries had the same effect. In still others, the intensity of popular demand for access overwhelmed plans for phased expansion and regional resource redistribution.

448. What these experiences tell us is that planning must be a strategy for dealing with what is known and also with what is not yet known and perhaps cannot be known in advance. In part, planning is like map making. By identifying and locating obstacles and rough terrain, we can determine the best route to reach our objectives. In some circumstances, the best path may be the most direct path. In other circumstances, the route we judge to be the best may be the most secure or most reliable or least expensive to follow.

449. But education planning must be more than map making. Some barriers to our progress do not become clear until we get very close to them. In cartography, once we identify the features of the landscape, we can be confident that generally they will not move about. But the landscape of education is filled with people and their institutions, not hills and rivers. And people do move around. They change their mind, adopt new priorities, discard policies, and elect and reject leaders. Consequently, education planning must deal with ambiguities, active subjects, and uncertainty.

450. It is not that we do not need maps. We do. But education planning requires *both* a clear sense of direction *and* the ability to respond quickly and effectively to unexpected events. Effective planning must help us a) see more clearly the obstacles we are likely to encounter, b) develop strategies for dealing with those obstacles, c) anticipate better the problems that may arise with little advance warning, d) inventory our resources and skills so that we know what we can call on as we confront the unexpected, and e) outline alternatives for dealing with the unanticipated.

451. To put that somewhat differently, education planning helps us chart constraints, both actual and potential. By collecting and analyzing information on what we are doing, it helps us see where we are in relation to the objectives we seek to reach. Even the most successful

education planning cannot provide complete blueprints and maps. It can, and must, help us develop reliable charts of known and suspected obstacles and flexible and resilient strategies for making our way through them.

A. Policy Development and Analysis

452. Formally, policy planning and formulation in the Ministry of Education and Culture are the responsibility of the offices of the Minister, Deputy Minister, and Senior Administrative personnel. Included within this function are curriculum and teaching, personnel and logistic services, programme development, research, policy analysis, information management systems, institutional development, and resources control. These offices have as well responsibility for the overall supervision and control of all aspects of the Ministry's operation.

453. It is useful to distinguish two sorts of planning in which we are engaged. One type of planning, often now termed physical planning, is primarily concerned with developing specifications for land and facilities. Where are the dense populations that require additional schools and other education programmes? Which school sites can maximise the reach of our education activities? Which locations are most easily accessible, have an adequate water supply, and so on?

454. As the ministry responsible for education has evolved, so has the role of planning. This second type of planning is directly concerned with broad objectives, directions, and priorities. As in much of the rest of the world, education planning focuses on policy development and analysis, the evaluation of alternative courses of action, and the financial and support implications of education policies. During this transitional period, much of the policy planning has been the responsibility of special advisers and task forces. That arrangement has the advantage of freshness, immediacy, and often, rapidity. Its principal disadvantage is that it does not establish a widely known and generally understood process for considering policies and making decisions. As well, relying on ad hoc arrangements may obscure accountability.

455. It is timely, therefore, to enhance the national capability for education planning, understood broadly to include creating, elaborating, and evaluating alternative courses of action. While physical planning and administering and managing existing programmes will remain important, it is useful to distinguish them from planning's critical contribution to education decision making. Broadening and reorienting the planning function in this way has four major implications.

456. First, to be informed and effective participants in discussions of objectives and priorities, senior planners must have a supporting staff that can gather, organise, and analyze baseline information, develop, refine, and present simulations and projections, and assess the cost implications of alternative courses of action.

457. Second, to be effective, planners must have a clear and regularly updated understanding of the goals and objectives toward which they are working. They must understand clearly the priorities assigned to different, and potentially conflicting, objectives. And they must be sensitive to both educators' and citizens' preferences—which are not always the same—about how education activities should be organised. For these purposes, senior planners must create,

implement, and refine a strategy that ensures regular and frank consultations with both those who operate the education system and those who use it. As decision making is decentralised to regional and local levels, these consultations must include educators and citizens throughout the country.

458. Third, to coordinate the decisions made within education with those of other sectors, planners within the Ministry of Education and Culture must have a defined and sustained role in national planning. Only in that way can they ensure that the needs and preferences of education are reflected in national plans and that decisions made at the national level are understood and incorporated into the plans developed within education.

459. Fourth, senior planners must have direct access to senior decision makers in the Ministry of Education and Culture and, correspondingly, must be directly accountable to them.

B. Education Management Information System (EMIS)

460. To move forward, we need to know where we are now. Unfortunately, the legacy of eleven separate education authorities has been gaps in systematic data collection efforts, which we are filling rapidly. Currently, we have been able to develop basic statistics on the activities of the entire education system. We are not yet, however, able to use fully and effectively in our decision making the information we collect.

461. Clearer and more reliable data are needed at all levels. Those data must be both accurate and timely. To be useful, information and analyses must be organised and presented in ways that are readily comprehensible to decision makers. It is important to recognise in this regard that many of the most important education decisions are made at the school and classroom level. Hence, decision makers at those levels too need ready access to planning information.

462. The decentralised nature of education decision making highlights the importance of communication throughout the education system. The data that are collected are of little value if they are not available in useful forms to those who must act on them. Just as central authorities need reliable information from the regions, so regional and local officials need reliable information from the centre and from other local areas.

463. The Ministry of Education and Culture is establishing a system for gathering the information we need and making it available to decision makers in a useful way. Because we expect to use that information to improve both the planning and implementation of our programmes, we use the term Education Management Information System to refer to all of the activities related to gathering, storing, analyzing, and presenting information.

464. The primary goals of the EMIS are to indicate accurately the state of education throughout the country and to pinpoint clearly those areas where additional assistance—personnel, finance, skills, supplies, physical facilities—is required to upgrade the schools and other education programmes and improve the learning environment. It should as well enhance the ability of parents, students, and others to assess how the education system is doing and to insist that its managers be accountable for its results.

465. The principal tasks of the EMIS will be to
- collect and edit quantitative and other information;
- compare and analyze the information collected;
- develop and interpret alternative courses of action and their likely consequences; and
- present information to decision makers and to the education community more generally.

466. To accomplish those tasks, the EMIS must be capable of drawing its information from a wide range of sources, including the schools and other education programmes, the daily operations of the Ministry, applied research conducted by and for the Ministry, studies of the population, the economy, and the society more generally, and studies undertaken by the foreign agencies involved in Namibian education. It must also be able to distribute its information and interpretations to many different constituencies—Ministry decision makers, other educators, officials from other ministries and government departments, parents, learners, citizens, and the various organisations, public and private, national and international, concerned with education. Ultimately, the use of the information that is gathered must be seen to result in better decisions, better allocation of resources, and enhanced learning throughout the education system.

467. An important tool for relating education results to the location and the use of resources is computer based school mapping. The Ministry is currently using this powerful new technique to show the exact location of each school or education programme site, the demand for education in the surrounding population, and the extent of the resources that flow to that school or site. That permits both specialists and non-specialists to see clearly inequalities and other problems in the distribution of education services.

468. Just as it is essential that we encourage research on our education system, so is it important that we study our efforts to improve it. It is natural for us to be optimistic about the reforms we introduce. We prefer to see that we are making progress. No one likes to report that things are not going well, or that a particular programme—even one that seemed to be brilliantly conceived and making good progress—is not working very well. But we must not fool ourselves! If the village butcher sells the meat from a diseased cow but assures his neighbours that what they are buying is good quality, he may make them sick. And he will also lose their trust and then their business. So, too, for educators. If we announce that we are using significantly improved books and other curriculum materials and our citizens see that learners are in fact continuing to rely on older books or that there are no books at all, we will lose their trust. A successful school requires cooperation between the school and its community. Cooperation is built on trust. And trust cannot be based on misinformation or ungrounded optimism.

469. We must, therefore, study what we do carefully. Sometimes that study will be undertaken by the staff of our Ministry. Sometimes it is useful to examine ourselves through outsiders' eyes. Hence, we must encourage research, both by ourselves and by others. For that purpose, we shall strengthen the Planning Directorate and eventually develop our own research capacity. Although at times it may be awkward or even painful to hear that our progress is not what we had hoped or thought it was, we shall fail in our efforts to make things better if we are not prepared to see things the way they are.

X. Management and Administration

470. The current organisation of the Ministry of Education and Culture is necessarily transitional. In fact, it is transitional in two senses of that term. First, the organisational pattern is part way between the multiple education authorities of the past and the integrated and focused institution of the future. Second, the Ministry is part way between an organisation with a largely administrative charter and a dynamic institution that asserts and assumes a major role in setting national policy.

471. The transitional character of the current situation need not be an obstacle to achieving the Ministry's goals and objectives. It may well provide opportunities to experiment with new patterns of authority and responsibility. It may also stimulate creative thinking about strategies to ensure broad participation and accountability. During this transitional period, however, it is essential that the entire education community learn to be tolerant of some ambiguities in relationships and become accustomed to periodic changes, often involving major units of the Ministry.

472. Of the two transitions noted above, the first is the most visible and perhaps initially troubling but ultimately more easily resolved. There can be no doubt that the separate education authorities have ceased to exist and that everyone formerly employed by them shares the responsibility for forging a single institution and developing effective professional relationships. Completing this transition will take some time. The road will not be smooth. Some old habits persist long past their time. But the destination is clear and the objectives attainable.

473. The second transition is far more problematic. For many people, the ministry responsible for education and culture is essentially an administrative agency. Although it contributes to policy formulation, its major responsibility is to attend to the large number of activities an effective education system requires. Teachers must be educated, employed, supervised, upgraded, paid, and eventually retired. Students must be prepared, organised, assigned, supplied, examined, transported, fed, and eventually certified and graduated. Books and other materials must be printed, stored, and distributed. Curriculum guides must be conceived, drafted, tried, revised, duplicated, and circulated. There are vehicles to acquire, assign, fuel, repair, and scrap. There are buildings to construct, maintain, repair, and remodel. Staff must be paid regularly and accurately. A staggering volume of documents must be reviewed, categorised, stored, and perhaps retrieved. And more.

474. These administrative and managerial tasks would be daunting in any organisation. The education system, however, touches everyone in the society. In many countries, it is the largest single employer. It is essential, therefore, not to underestimate what is involved simply in making sure that schools open every morning and that learners, teachers, and administrators all have a sense of what to do when they get there.

475. At the same time, it is also essential to recognise that precisely because of the extent and significance of the schools—the centrality of education to national development—educators must do more than manage and administer. They must also be innovators. Even more, they must encourage, nurture, and protect the culture of innovation on which the economy, political system, and society depend.

476. Different institutional missions require different organisational patterns. One organisational structure may be especially well suited to administer programmes in a setting where major goals have already been set and are widely accepted. Creating those programmes, especially where there continues to be sharp disagreement over objectives, priorities, and operating strategies, is likely to require a very different organisational structure.

477. Presently, the Ministry of Education and Culture must reform its organisational structure to become more effective in addressing its changed responsibilities. Having inherited a largely administrative model, it must function as a radical reformer. Here, then, is the challenge of the second transition. When schools were charged with educating a small elite, there was a broad consensus on what constituted a *good* education system. With clear goals and standards, attention could be focused on administration. Now, however, we are in the era of education for all. We are still grappling with what constitutes a *good* education system for that mission. Attention to administration must be accompanied by innovations in both objectives and standards.

478. This dual responsibility in the midst of a dual transition suggests that we must combine the routine and stability of clearly defined organisational domains with the flexibility and responsiveness of special purpose units. Our challenge will be to manage, even render creative, the friction that will surely occur between the two patterns. A related challenge will be to establish clear and effective patterns of responsibility and accountability that do not seriously impede creativity and experimentation.

A. Responsibility and Accountability

479. At present, the management of the Ministry of Education and Culture are coordinated by the Offices of the Permanent Secretary and Deputy Permanent Secretary. Those responsibilities are organised in six departments: Adult and Non-Formal Education, Culture, Formal Education, National Institute for Education Development, Regional Education Offices Coordination Office, and Auxiliary Services.

480. The supervisory, control and some implementation functions of the Departments are vested in departmental Directorates, Divisions, Sub-Divisions, Sections, Sub-Sections and Units. Mostly, however, the implementation function is decentralised. For this purpose, the Ministry established a structure of regional administration, organized into six Regional Offices, each managed by a Director.

481. As we develop and modify this organisational structure, we are also learning how to operate it effectively. Many educators and administrators have assumed responsibilities for which their professional preparation and experience was limited. That has the value of forcing them to examine their responsibilities with a fresh eye not yet encumbered by years of service in a bureaucratic setting. But it also means that many of us are learning our jobs as we do them. Hence, we must be sure that we develop an effective programme of in-service education not only for our teachers, but also for our managerial and administrative personnel at both national and regional levels.

482. Especially because the education system we have inherited has so many teachers who are not well prepared for their responsibilities, it is essential that we have an effective system of school and teacher support and supervision. To address this, the Ministry has created a Task Force on the rationalisation of roles and functions of inspectors, education officers, subject specialists, and school principals. One of its principal responsibilities is to help develop clear accountability. Reforms for which no one is directly responsible are unlikely to get very far. Successful reform requires that those who direct or implement the new programmes feel personally responsible for them. When several older children are told to look after their little brothers and sisters, each of them may attend to other things, thinking the others are looking after the young ones. Everyone—which actually means no one—is responsible when a young child wanders away or is burned in the fire. But when one of the older children knows that she is responsible for the others, we are much less likely to find a burned child. So too in the education system. We need to be able to reward those educators who are doing their jobs well and to help those who are experiencing difficulty to improve their skills. And we need to encourage our staff to take responsibility for making things work rather than assuming someone else will do it.

B. Evolving Organisational Patterns

483. To repeat, the current pattern of administration and management is transitional. While that introduces some ambiguity into lines of authority and accountability, it also has several advantages. One is flexibility. We can respond more easily and more quickly to changing needs and goals. Second, during this transitional period we can experiment with alternative organisational patterns to see which serve us best in our current circumstances. Third, we are not hindered by a rigid bureaucracy from deploying and redeploying our personnel as necessary.

484. As we gain experience with different organisational arrangements we move closer to what we regard as the institutional structure that best fits our needs and objectives. It is useful at this point to highlight several managerial and administrative issues that we must address.

1. Sharply Delineated vs. Overlapping Responsibility and Authority

485. Two general models characterise most large administrations. (We must recall that the Ministry's responsibility extends over the whole of Namibia and that it is one of the largest employers in the country.) In the first, lines of authority are sharply delineated. In the second, there are many overlapping responsibilities.

486. In the first model, for each task to be done there is a single point of responsibility. For example, the department or section responsible for primary education has final authority over all activities related to primary schools, including curriculum, pedagogy, teacher education, and the like. Or, that department might be responsible for most of those activities, while teacher education and, say, facilities maintenance are the responsibilities of other departments. However the responsibilities were divided, none would be assigned to two different departments simultaneously. The principal advantage of this pattern is that the assignment of responsibility is clear to all involved. With rare exceptions, it is clear whom to hold

accountable when things do not go well. The principal disadvantage of this pattern is that the everyday world of learning and teaching is never as clearly or cleanly divided as this model presumes. Those responsible for examinations, for example, have a great influence on the curriculum, as do the instructors on teaching methods. As well, when the administration is organised according to this model, it may be more difficult to use the available personnel effectively. A person experienced in developing materials for science teachers may be part of the curriculum department and thereby not easily available to teacher educators or inspectors in circumstances in which that expertise would be especially helpful.

487. In the second model, departmental structure reflects the organisation's understanding of how its tasks are clustered. Several units may share responsibility for particular decisions and programmes. For example, one department or section is responsible for curriculum and another for teacher education. Those two departments must then cooperate in specifying exactly how the curriculum is integrated into teacher education. For that, neither department can proceed without the support of the other. The principal advantage of this model is that personnel can more easily be deployed according to the objectives to be accomplished. There might be established, for example, a unit charged with reforming teaching methods at the primary level. That unit could include experienced teacher educators, curriculum developers, inspectors, language instructors, and perhaps even a planner. The principal disadvantage of this model is that when responsibilities overlap, lines of authority and therefore accountability become more difficult to discern. Each unit must spend at least part of its time negotiating with other units about who will do what and in what ways.

488. Currently, the Ministry of Education and Culture has elements of both models. The problem is that while the practice reflects both patterns, people often speak as if one or the other had been (or should be) adopted. One consequence of that confusion is that it becomes even more difficult to understand where authority lies and who is responsible—and therefore accountable—for which activities. However, it is possible, even desirable, to have one department assume responsibilities that essentially overlap with those of other departments. What is important in this regard is to create an organisational structure that most effectively corresponds with the Ministry's objectives. Equally important is to be sure that those involved have a common understanding of that structure and have the same expectations for its units.

2. *RATIONALISATION*

489. The time is ripe then to transform the transitional structure of the Ministry of Education and Culture into a more permanent one, while at the same time maintaining a flexible approach to management. Much is required of the new structure. It must facilitate communication throughout the system. It must encourage not only the matching of, but also the delegation of, authority and responsibility. It must promote accountability for, and sustainability of, all educational programmes and projects. finally, it must be cost-effective and it must be based upon the functions to be performed in pursuit of the Ministry's goals.

490. To achieve these ends the Ministry has developed a proposal for the rationalisation of its organisational structure which has been approved by Cabinet. The new structure will have three Departments, namely: Formal Education Programmes; Adult and Continuing Education, Libraries, Arts and Culture; and Personnel, Financial Management, Technical and Support Services. Within these Departments, there are ten directorates. Given the central functions of

corporate planning and development, of educational project planning and of the educational management information system, the Directorate of Planning and Development will not be within any of the three Departments but will be responsible directly to the office of the Permanent Secretary.

491. In order to bring its services closer to the community, the number of the Ministry's Regional Offices will be increased from six to seven, and in several of the more remote areas of the country District Education Offices will operate. Each Regional Office, while retaining its individual character to suit the nature of the region which it serves, will very much reflect the structure and functions of the central ministry.

492. To ensure an effective span of control for the implementation of policy, an Executive Management Team will be established having overall responsibility for the four functions of management: planning, organisation, direction and control. This team will comprise the Permanent Secretary (as chief executive), the heads of the three Departments, and the Director of Planning and Development. Regional Directors will report to the Executive Management Team through the office of the Permanent Secretary. This office will also include a central information office in order to facilitate communication between the ministry, its clientele and the public at large.

3. *Relationships with Other Ministries, Departments, and Organisations*

493. Education is far too broad and far too important a task to be entirely the responsibility of a single institution. Indeed, all of us are both learners and teachers during our lives. Many other ministries, organisations, groups, and individuals involved in educating our society. Far from surprising or disturbing, we should be pleased by the breadth of that involvement. And we should encourage others to join with the Ministry of Education and Culture in addressing the challenges of education and development.

494. It is reasonable to expect that there will continue to be many agencies and individuals involved in education. Our goal is to cooperate with them in mutually beneficial and reinforcing ways. It is also reasonable to expect, however, that we will be better prepared to solicit and support that cooperation if we have thought clearly about its forms and potential problems. It is useful to highlight here some of the issues raised by that cooperation (see also Chapter XI).

495. We expect our communities to share with us the responsibility of educating their children (see Chapter XI, Section XI.B). We expect them to bear a somewhat greater portion of the cost of education, in part by helping to build and maintain schools and teachers' houses. But we cannot expect them to pay and yet have no say. Communities and countries have always resisted being taxed (formally or informally) without having an opportunity to influence policy, including the policy of taxing them. We will surely create frustration, not cooperation, if we expect our citizens to contribute their funds but not their ideas, or if we expect them to listen to us while we are unwilling to listen to them. Hence, we must find ways to involve communities in education decision planning and decision making. As we do so, we must expect that there will come times when some, or even many, of our communities disagree with educators on issues of policy or practice. Indeed, it is likely that at times there will be strains in this relationship. That is as it should be in a democratic society.

496. Several dimensions of education require interministerial collaboration. For example, both pre-school education and vocational education and training cross ministerial boundaries. We shall, therefore, need to decide exactly how that collaboration is to be managed and administered. We shall also need to decide in which areas overlapping activities are appropriate and where they should be avoided. (See Chapter XI, Section XI.A.)

497. For many years, the Namibian people have had the support of many friends and partners outside the country. Since our Independence the level of that cooperation has risen and expanded in scope. (On foreign assistance to education, see also Chapter VIII, Section VIII.B.) The managerial and administrative issue that arises in that regard is how we can most effectively manage our relationships with our overseas friends. That is a potentially a very problematic issue, since as a small country we may find that there are more foreigners studying and supporting our education than Namibians!

498. In many African countries foreign agencies that provide assistance to education have come to have a major influence on the direction and content of education policy. Sometimes the foreign funds have explicit conditions. In order to receive them, a country must adopt a specific policy or regulation, or implement a particular programme, or organise schools in a particular way. Although some of those policies in themselves may be desirable, when they are attached to foreign aid they make the recipient country less self reliant and perhaps even less able to become more self reliant. Our challenge, therefore, is to find ways to collaborate with our overseas friends while we maintain our sense of purpose and direction.

4. DECENTRALISATION

499. Much of the discussion in this Development Brief refers to policies and programmes at the national level. Because of the importance of what happens at the local level, that discussion should also be understood to refer to the regional education offices and to policies and programmes that are decided or implemented locally. Over time we shall need to strengthen the links between regional education administration and regional and local government, especially when education programmes and related activities are among the programmes supported through funds raised locally.

500. The most important influences on the quality of our education and many of the most significant resources for improving it are located at the local level. As educators, we often focus on decisions and programmes at the national level. But in practice, it is our teachers, along with learners and their parents, who make our schools and other education programmes what they are. To improve our education system and to upgrade the quality of our schools requires a good deal of work in our schools and communities. To achieve that, and to maximise the local contributions to our education system, we shall need to decentralise both responsibility and authority.

501. Decentralisation has many meanings and can take different forms. Indeed, sometimes it is deemed useful to have different sorts of decentralisation in separate spheres of public activity. Fundamentally, decentralisation is concerned with the relocation of authority and responsibility from the centre to regional and local levels. Policy makers and citizens must decide what is the appropriate pattern and extent of decentralisation in particular circumstances.

502. Local government is a good example. In some countries there are no separate local government institutions. All decisions are made by national officials. In other countries, local government authorities exist and are responsible for certain spheres of activity. At the same time, their decisions must be approved by the national government, and they have little or no ability to raise their own funds. In still other countries local government agencies are much more autonomous. They can levy taxes, allocate funds, create and cancel programmes, even open and operate their own schools without any direct oversight or approval. None of these patterns is automatically correct or better than the others. Rather, each must be assessed in terms of its suitability to a particular country and its circumstances.

503. Until recently in Namibia, governing our local areas was the responsibility of national leaders or officials appointed by them. We have now created regional and local government councils and authorities and transferred some responsibilities and authority to them. Over time we shall have to evaluate whether we find this sort of decentralisation best suited to our needs.

504. Just as for local government, decentralisation in education can take many forms. Currently, our new regional councils and local authorities have a very limited role in education. But in many countries, including some with a very centralised political structure, primary education is the responsibility of regional or district or urban councils. Should we proceed in that direction? It is also possible to devolve greater responsibility and authority to regional education offices, or to principals, or to School Boards. Would the learning environment be improved in Namibia if employing and promoting teachers were entirely a function of regional councils or local authorities? Of if School Boards directly engaged and dismissed principals with no assistance or oversight from the education ministry? Would we be more successful in ensuring that books and materials reached learners if each education region had its own budget and purchased them directly? Again, these questions do not have right and wrong answers for all time. When the task is to integrate separate education authorities into a single, coherent, and effective framework, centralisation of initiative and control may be essential. At a later moment, we may decide that arrangement has served its purpose and move toward greater decentralisation. The general point is that there is no pattern of education decentralisation that is always better.

505. Decentralisation has to do with where power and authority are located. In a democratic society, the organisation of power and authority are always matters of public debate and popular decision. Each proposed arrangement has advantages and disadvantages and is preferred by some and disliked by others. Consequently, we must evaluate proposals to relocate power and authority in terms of our major goals. Will the new pattern enhance learning? Will it advance our progress toward *access, equity, quality,* and *democracy?*

506. From that perspective, let us consider the advantages of decentralising decision making and implementation. When decision makers are closer to the focus of their decisions, they are more likely to be aware of the important factors that should govern their actions, of available resources, of popular preferences and support, and of the problems that are likely to arise. When decision makers have more detailed, reliable, and up-to-date basic information, they can then formulate more realistic and more effective plans. Decentralising functions and officials of the central government can also increase decision makers' familiarity with and sensitivity to

the local setting. Communicating with national headquarters can be time-consuming, sometimes very time-consuming. Locally made decisions need not suffer those delays.

507. Decentralisation can improve the capacity of local government and other agencies to perform functions best undertaken at the local level, by locating services and facilities closer to the citizens who use them. It can as well facilitate the effective integration of isolated rural areas into local and thus regional and national development programmes.

508. Decentralisation can increase the efficiency of central government by relieving national officials of tasks and responsibilities more effectively performed at the local level. When everything must be decided centrally, the speed of decision making goes down, while its cost goes up. Hence, decentralisation may well increase the number of public goods and services, and the rate of their delivery, at lower cost.

509. Decentralisation can also permit more flexible, more creative, and more innovative administration. It can encourage small scale experimentation. Finally, decentralisation can permit more effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of development projects. When policies are set and programmes are implemented locally, our communities are better able to monitor the resulting activities, reducing waste.

510. Decentralisation may help to accomplish our political goals. It can facilitate political participation, understood as a basic right of all citizens. By involving more of the citizenry, both individuals and groups, in decision making, decentralisation can reduce inequality and promote greater equity in allocating government resources and in access to government programmes.

511. Our regional education offices are already a major step in this direction. We must ensure, however, that in addition to bringing central decisions up-country, our regional educators also bring the inputs from their regions to the centre. It is worth repeating again that we cannot expect our citizens to contribute to our schools without having a voice in their management and functioning. And we cannot ask our students and their parents to behave responsibly toward community schools unless they also have some responsibility for those schools. *Our* schools must also be *their* schools.

512. While it is important, decentralisation is not a magic solution to the range of problems we face in education. It is necessary to make some decisions at the national level. It would be difficult to operate a national education system, for example, if each community determined the age at which its children began school. In our current circumstances, it would be impossible to ensure that schools had sufficient textbooks if each community had to negotiate directly with local publishers in order to produce them.

513. Another problem is that decentralised decision making makes it more difficult to reallocate resources for reasons of national priorities or equity. Local people may be quite willing to contribute additional funds to support their own schools. They will be less willing to pay more, however, if the principal beneficiaries of those extra funds are schools elsewhere in the country. Clearly, therefore, without central intervention, our more affluent communities would always have the highest quality public services, while our poorest communities might have none at all.

514. Decentralisation is important, but not equally important in all circumstances. It bears repeating that there is no level or degree of decentralisation that is best. Rather, what is needed is an effective and efficient balance between central authority and local autonomy. In some circumstances, the centre will play the larger role, while in others the most important voices and initiatives may be at the local level. Over time, that balance will change. Hence, we fool ourselves if we think we can find one pattern of decentralisation that will suit us best. Instead, we need to become more skilled at negotiating and renegotiating the compromise between local authority and central direction.

515. In this respect, education is like the rest of our political system. People have different views and interests. Public policy is often based on a compromise among those interests. That compromise itself will periodically be challenged and must occasionally be revised or even discarded altogether.

516. For these reasons, it is important that we coordinate the regionalisation and localisation of education with the decentralisation of the political system. Each process must inform and support the other. To this effect, the Ministry has created seven Regions, each of which is coterminous with either one, two or three of the thirteen new Regional Authorities.

517. In sum, we have instituted a system of administration and management that provides a good deal of autonomy to the six regional education offices. Our goal is to work out a reasonable and workable balance between central direction and local autonomy. Some decisions clearly affect the country as a whole and need to be made at the national level. Similarly, programmes that have national implications and consequences may be better managed centrally. At the same time, it is equally clear that some decisions ought to be made locally, where those responsible can have frequent and systematic contact with the schools and communities that will be affected. Similarly, programmes that are heavily dependent on local participation and contributions, or that vary widely in form and scope from one section of the country to another, or that are designed to meet specific local needs are best administered locally.

518. To enable and facilitate that sort of local autonomy, the Ministry of Education and Culture must assume responsibility for coordination and support. Specifically, it must work to

- facilitate communication among the seven regional offices and between the regional offices and ministry headquarters;
- strengthen regional education services through staff development;
- help assess and meet regional needs through personnel recruitment, deployment, and transfer;
- follow up regional requests that are addressed to the Ministry to ensure that there are prompt and timely responses and that those responses are fully communicated to the requesting regions;
- develop systematic procedures to enable regional directors to join their senior management colleagues in participating in Ministry policy analysis and decision making; and
- organise regular meetings of regional directors and appropriate central Ministry staff to discuss both general education issues and those issues specific to particular regions.

C. PHYSICAL FACILITIES

519. Learning and teaching conditions in a large percentage of our schools are unsatisfactory. Many primary school classes in the rural areas are overcrowded and lack basic text books and classroom equipment. Many rural schools are dilapidated. Many are constructed from rudimentary materials or, at best, are corrugated iron sheds. Although both teachers and students try to ignore these conditions, learning suffers.

520. The Ministry of Education and Culture has therefore embarked on a Rural Physical Facilities Improvement Initiative. The goal is to use local contractors to build classrooms, teachers' houses, and school public conveniences. Subsequently, this approach will be extended to involve general community participation. Local communities will be expected to share responsibility for improving their schools and also to see to their basic repair and security.

D. MANAGING AND ADMINISTERING EDUCATION FOR ALL

521. Just as education in Namibia is in transition, so are the systems we use to manage and administer it. We must learn how to operate them effectively and efficiently even as we reform them. We will surely find that some patterns that seemed appropriate when the task was to educate an elite are not suitable to education for all and learner-centred instruction. Just as we shall have to reevaluate and discard some older ideas about teaching and learning, so must we re-think how we manage and administer the education system, both nationally and locally. For both learning and its management the benchmarks are our major goals—*access, equity, quality,* and *democracy.*

XI. Education: A Partnership for National Development

522. Education is everyone's business. That is so in two senses. First, whether or not we ourselves are educated, whether or not our children are in school, we all have an interest in the education system. Our standard of living and the quality of life in our society depend on it. Its performance and achievements, as well as its problems and failures, affect us all. We may differ on the priorities in our national development agenda, but we agree an effective and efficient education will help us achieve them more readily and more rapidly. We may disagree on exactly how our democracy should function, but we know that it will function better with a literate, informed, self reliant, and self-confident citizenry.

523. Second, the responsibility for education is shared widely. While the Ministry of Education and Culture of course has primary responsibility, it relies on the active participation and cooperation of many others—individuals and organisations, public and private, national and international, large and small—to develop and support a sound education system. Just as all of us benefit when that system works well, so each of us has a role to play in ensuring that it does work well. We must stop thinking of education as something that the government does and start thinking of education as something that belongs to all of us. It is useful, therefore, to note several of the dimensions of the partnership, or really, set of partnerships, that contribute to education, culture, and training in Namibia.

524. Learners, all learners, are of course our primary partners in this effort. Learning is an active process in which learners share responsibility for creating, sustaining, and managing the learning environment. Learners are the subjects, not the objects, of education. Indeed, to be effective, teachers must themselves be good learners. Learners are also responsible for their own conduct and for ensuring that they contribute constructively to the schools or programmes in which they are enroled. Where this partnership functions well, education is an opportunity, a value in itself, not a requirement.

525. It is the policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture to establish networks of cooperation and collaboration. Those networks may include other government ministries and departments, non-governmental organisations, international organisations, and foreign assistance agencies. For example, currently the Ministry is developing cooperative and coordinated undertakings with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in pre-school education and teacher housing, with the Ministry of Labour and Manpower Development in vocational and technical education, with the Ministry of Mines and Energy in research and technology, with the Ministry of Youth and Sport in school sports and life skills training for school youth, and with the Public Service Commission in staff development.

526. Beyond the Ministry of Education and Culture, many other institutions are engaged in education. For example, other institutions provide agricultural education and extension services and train health professionals. Many companies provide initial and on-the-job training to their employees. Both public and private enterprises support a wide range of education activities, directly and indirectly. Churches and other non-governmental organisations have played a critical role, especially in adult and nonformal education. The government's responsibility is thus to encourage and facilitate this diversity of participation.

527. Working contacts have been established with non-governmental organisations, including teachers unions, churches, companies, and community organisations. For example, teachers'

and students' unions, companies, churches, and other non-governmental organisations participated in the work of the Commission on Higher Education, the Working Party on Teacher In-Service Training, the deliberations of the Etosha Conference on Basic Education, the National Literacy Commission, and other consultative and advisory bodies.

528. The Ministry expects to intensify the level and scope of collaboration in policy formulation, programme development, and implementation. Our goal is to strengthen these partnerships. A major step in that regard is the recent inter-ministerial agreement to establish a common certificate course, to be offered by the Department of Adult and Nonformal Education, for all extension workers, community activators, adult education organisers, and others with similar responsibilities.

529. The Ministry has developed this cooperation internationally. Currently, there are joint undertakings with international and national agencies and with non-governmental organisations. Those programmes are focused on strengthening the capacity of the Ministry to address its major objectives, including

- improving the quality of schooling at all levels;
- increasing the supply of textbooks and instructional materials;
- implementing education reform programmes;
- eliminating inequalities in resource allocation between racial groups, and between rural and urban areas; and
- achieving equity in access to schooling;

530. Periodically the Ministry organises informal discussions with cooperating agencies based in Windhoek. In addition to their other responsibilities, several Ministry technical committees coordinate the inputs from our international partners with our own efforts:

- Language Policy and Development Committee;
- Basic Education Reform Committee;
- Committee on the Establishment of the National Evaluation and Assessment Authority;
- Working Party on Teacher Education; and
- Secondary School Reform Committee.

A. INTERMINISTERIAL COLLABORATION

1. EARLY CHILDHOOD PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

531. We recognised the importance of early childhood education even before Independence, during our liberation struggle. (Early Childhood Protection and Development is discussed in Chapter VII, Section VII.A.) Expanding and improving our education efforts at this level will require inter-ministerial cooperation.

532. The Ministry of Education and Culture is working with the Ministry of Local Government and Housing to upgrade existing community early childhood programmes and to open new pre-schools. In this cooperative undertaking, the Ministry of Education and Culture will assume responsibility for teacher education (both pre-service and in-service) and will assist in developing curriculum, pedagogy, and learning materials, and in setting national standards.

2. *VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING*

533. A comprehensive system of technical education and vocational training, either as an integrated system or as interacting complementary systems, is a prerequisite for economic development and social progress. In Namibia all education (including technical education) at the primary, secondary and higher education levels is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The promotion, provision and co-ordination of vocational training and skills development on a national basis is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Manpower Development. Hence, an effective programme of vocational education and training requires systematic and fruitful cooperation and coordination between these two ministries. Indeed, that collaboration must also involve other ministries, organisations, and enterprises, both public and private, that support vocational training programmes.

534. The National Vocational Training Board will facilitate and coordinate the cooperation among these institutions. (Vocational Education and Training is discussed more fully in Chapter VII, Section VII.E.)

B. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

535. Schools can meet the needs of communities only if there is a genuine and working partnership between the government and the community. Schools are located in communities to serve them. Communities must therefore be fully involved in the affairs of their schools.

536. The Ministry of Education and Culture has embarked on a programme of sensitising communities, especially in the rural areas, to take an active interest in their schools. That interest can take many forms. Communities may help to build the school in the first place and later to maintain it. Communities may monitor the education of their children, checking to be sure that the term has started on schedule, that teachers turn up for their classes, and that children receive the books and materials allocated to them. The Ministry and communities both share responsibility for making sure that resources are effectively used and that the quality of education improves.

537. To encourage and facilitate citizen participation in education policy formulation and programme development and in monitoring and supervising education services several informal councils and committees are envisaged:

- National Advisory Council on Education Policy
- National Advisory Council on Vocational and Technical Education
- National Literacy Committee
- Core Planning Group on Distance Education
- Regional Advisory Councils on Education and Training
- School Boards / School Committees.

Some of the above committees are already established, others are awaiting the proclamation of a new Education Act.

C. THE COMMON AGENDA

538. What brings together and integrates these partnerships is our common agenda. Our major goals serve both as targets toward which we are working and as benchmarks for our progress as we move forward. Our commitment is to *education for all.*

539. To achieve that, we must expand *access* to our education system to enable both younger and older learners to develop their abilities and thereby contribute to their own and to our national development. Expanded access means that all school aged children should be able to find a place in school, but it does not mean only that. It means as well that older learners too can find places in the education system and that all our citizens have opportunities to continue learning throughout their lives.

540. To achieve that, we must have an equitable education system. Expanded access is one step toward achieving *equity.* Ensuring equality in access, selection, promotion, achievement, and learning generally is another step. We must not permit learners to be disadvantaged because of their race, or ethnic group, or gender, or religion. We must go beyond that. We must act affirmatively to assist those groups that have been disadvantaged in the past. And we must also act affirmatively to eliminate from our education system, and from our society at large, the racial, ethnic, gender, and religious stereotypes and expectations that function to direct some learners away from particular courses or subjects and to undermine their self-confidence.

541. There will be little point in working hard to expand access and achieve equity if we do not simultaneously improve the *quality* of our education system. To achieve that we shall have to enable our teachers to continue their education and to develop new skills. We shall also need better textbooks and curriculum materials and to be sure that they reach the learners. Most of all, we must make the transition from educating an elite to education for all. To achieve that we must reorient schools and other education programmes toward learner-centred instruction. We must at the same time re-think our procedures for assessment and evaluation, for selection and promotion, and for inspection and advisory services. We must develop the profession of teaching, with appropriate incentives, rewards, and evaluation strategies.

542. Finally, our education system must support and protect our *democracy.* To achieve that, it must help learners understand the rights and obligations of citizenship and develop the skills that will enable them to be active, imaginative, and responsible participants in democratic society. To teach democracy, it must also practise democracy. Adults and children, teachers and learners, principals and School Board members, administrators and inspectors, of course have different roles and responsibilities in our education system. All must be responsible and accountable for what they do. At the same time, in a democracy authority and responsibility are shared. And accountability in education reaches beyond the limits of employer/employee relationships. Hence, we must be especially creative in re-thinking and reorganising how we make and evaluate decisions. We must be sure that all who have a stake in education can participate in setting its objectives and assessing its progress. We must ensure that the authority of knowledge and expertise does not become an authority of rules and control that squelches curiosity, stifles inquiry, suppresses initiative, and smothers wisdom.

543. As we proceed, we must be sure that our support services are indeed supportive. That is, we must be sure that the ways we plan, finance, manage, and administer education support education for all and the major goals we strive to reach.

544. *Our people are our future. National development requires the development of our education system. We all share responsibility for that.*

XII. References

[The publications and documents listed here were consulted for the preparation of this Development Brief. To facilitate finding these sources in libraries and archives, they are noted here according to general library rules, guided for the most part by what actually appears on the documents themselves. Since similar documents (or even subsequent versions of the same document) may appear in different forms, their listings here may not be entirely consistent.]

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