



Namibia Women in Engineering Association celebrated the **'World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development'** on the 6th March 2020 at the NICE Conference Centre in collaboration with the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST).

An interesting and mind-blowing Panel Discussion was organized by NAMWIE to highlight the **'Contribution of engineers to Sustainable Development Goals in Namibia'** .

'NAMWIE' was applauded as being a true leader by creating a platform and bringing together national experts and high school learners, women engineers and engineering stakeholders to participate in this panel discussion. It is hoped that this discussion will ignite a nationwide discussion highlighting the contribution of engineers to the SDG and NDP 5 goals in Namibia. The World Engineering day celebration by NAMWIE promotes the involvement of female engineers in achieving this goal.

The discussion started off with a focus on Gender Equality in the engineering sector. Discussing work place design and how conducive the engineering work place is for women, it was pointed out that safety boots for instance can be too heavy for women. Wearing a hard hat was challenging for ladies with long hair, dreads and braids; some ladies would prefer to wear a pink hard hat but they are dictated with a strict dress code mostly designed for men and therefore feel stifled at work.

All the rules and regulations set in the engineering sector are made by men and are suitable to the male gender, hence a female engineer is challenged as she

enters this field. Hence it is important to critically investigate the implications of these rules and regulations, policies in the engineering sector.

The discussion was directed to what is **Sustainable Development** and its impact on society and the nation. It was agreed that Sustainable development can be brought about by continuous cooperation of the industries, society and government. Public policies are formulated addressing a problem identified in the nation, most of the times Policies are approved.

The main problem facing these approved policies are the policies lack an implementation action plan, monitoring and evaluation of its impact, thus the purpose of the policy is defeated. There are several SADC protocols in the region, however, these too lack in its monitoring and evaluation of its shortcomings.

Africa is on the verge of proclaiming 'Africa Free Continental Trade'. Africa is home to 1.2 billion people and the free trade will give an opportunity of free trade and a market, for instance, the Agriculture industry itself is predicted to be worth more than 2.5 Billion dollars. It is envisaged that this free trade will benefit the nations Egypt, Kenya, and Nigeria while Namibia with its almost non-existent industrial landscape will be disadvantaged.

One example cited was the export of raw salt mineral to South Africa. This export of raw material is directly supporting industries in South Africa and employing numerous South Africans. It is vital that Namibians start the processing of salt and exporting salt product in the region thus adding value to the Namibian economy and create an opportunity for the expansion of the economy.

Namibia should explore renewable energy and blue economy aggressively which could become a sustainable pillar of the Namibian economy

The panel discussion ended with a concluding note that engineers are the backbone of industrialisation and contribute to the sustainable development of society. There is a great deal to be done in Namibia, engineers can contribute constructively to assisting in resilient technologies to counteract the impact of climate change, expanding cities and the challenges that will be faced with IR4.0 Artificial intelligence and advancing technologies.

In conclusion, the panellists and participants agreed there is a long road to trek to Achieve Gender Equality in the field of engineering and the SDG objectives in Namibia.



Namibia National
Commission for
UNESCO



Namibia Women in Engineering (NAMWIE) - WED 2020 Event snapshots



Fig.1. Panel members in discussion



the engineering sphere

Fig.2. Members Advocating for equality within



Fig. 3. Some of the learners, speakers and delegates of the event



Fig.4. NAMWIE EXCO members - From left: Mrs Ester Nashipili, Mrs Nampa Mwatange-Nanyanga, Dr Smita Francis, Ms Virginia Pohamba and Mrs Pombili Haihambo