



REMARKS

BY

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**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
“NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT”**

**25 JUNE 2024,
WINDHOEK**

- **Director of Ceremonies: Mr Timoteus Mufeti, Environmental Commissioner, MEFT;**
- **Hon. Pohamba Shifeta: Minister of Environment Forestry and Tourism (MEFT),**
- **Her Excellency, Ms. Alka Bhatia: UNDP Resident Representative to Namibia,**
- **Government Officials here present,**
- **Representatives and Partners from the Namibian Academic Institutions, Private Sector and Civil Society,**
- **NILALEG Project Manager and Members of the Research Team,**
- **Conference participants,**
- **Members of the Media,**
- **All Protocols Observed,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Good Morning to you all

It is my pleasure and honour to welcome you this morning to the official opening of the ***“National Conference on Integrated Landscape Management”*** which is key to a sustainable future not only for our country but also the entire planet earth. In fact, one can say that the Integrated Landscape Management approach is not just a strategy but a vision for how we all can harmoniously coexist with nature while ensuring economic development and social well-being of humanity.

I would like to extend a very special welcome to Hon. Pohamba Shifeta, the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, who despite his very heavy work schedule, agreed to come and open this very important national conference. Welcome Hon. Minister.

Let me also extend a warm welcome to Her Excellency Ms. Alka Bhatia, the UNDP Resident Representative to Namibia who has also joined us this morning despite her busy work schedule. You are most welcome Your Excellency.

A word of welcome to all of you Dear conference participants. We are truly delighted to have you with us this morning and we look forward to your active participation in the conference deliberations.

Director of Ceremonies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Integrated Landscape Management approach recognizes that our landscapes are complex systems where agriculture, forestry, water resources, and human communities interact. As we all know, traditional land management often isolates these elements, but the Integrated Landscape Management approach integrates them to balance ecological health, economic viability, and social equity.

Our planet's health is declining due to deforestation, habitat destruction, and climate change. I am pleased to learn that projects such as the NILALEG Project and others from our Ministries of Environment Forestry and Tourism, and Agriculture, Water and Land Reform have adopted the use of the Integrated Landscape Management Approach which is directly addressing the three key important aspects mentioned earlier, that is, environmental sustainability, economic development, and social equity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our University's Strategic Goal D which aims at enhancing efforts on stakeholder engagements, quality service, relationships, communication, partnerships and teamwork, truly aligns well with the aspirations of the NILALEG project's effective multi-stakeholder approach to integrated landscape management which is deemed vital for Namibia to meet its global environmental obligations and national development goals, while at the same time addressing poverty and environmental degradation, and achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the long run. The IUM's motto "***Global Hub for Management Science and Information Technology***" also resonates well with this conference and the

aspirations of the SDG's, the RIO Conventions, the Vision 2030, and our National Development Plans. And because our philosophy is to focus on the development of quality human capital, it is my hope and wish that, as we foster this partnership, we will be able to explore opportunities for synergistic activities and increase coordination that will foster more impactful future collaborations.

Director of ceremonies,

It is true that for us to make informed decisions and to innovate more, there is indeed a need for us to be informed by evidence-based information obtained from research which forms part of our core mandate as an academic institution. It is through platforms such as this conference that deliberations of research findings, recommendations and solutions can be shared with key stakeholders. I therefore implore the organizing committee of this conference to make sure that the generated knowledge from this two-day conference will be properly archived, preserved, and made discoverable for use to reference from. It is also our wish that the outcome of this conference will not only help to inform areas of improvement for other future projects but also help to create synergies that will harness our partnerships.

May I take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Environment Forestry and Tourism through the NILALEG Project for this collaborative gesture. In the same vein, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the financial contribution to Namibia through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Namibia country office and for other numerous initiatives supporting our environmental conservation programmes.

As I conclude, I would like to leave you with the following quote by Sir David Attenborough: ***“If working apart we're a force powerful enough to destabilise our planet, surely working together we are powerful enough to save it.”***

I thank you.

