

# REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**OPENING REMARKS**

**BY**

**HON. NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH, DEPUTY PRIME AND  
MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS AND COOPERATIONS**

**ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE 32<sup>ND</sup> SAARMSTE CONFERENCE, IUM**

**16 JANUARY 2024**

- **Director of Ceremonies, Prof Alex Kanyimba,**
- **Hon. Dr. Ita Murangi - Minister of High Education, Technology and Innovation,**
- **Hon. Anna Nghipondoka Minister of Education Arts and Culture,**
- **Hon. Emma Kantema, Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports,**
- **Hon. Natalia !Goagoses, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation,**
- **Hon. Prof. David Richard Namwandi – Founder and Council Chair of IUM,**
- **Dr. Tulsi Molar - President of SAARMSTE,**
- **Members of the SAARMSTE Executive Committee here present,**
- **Professors Dr Osmund Mwandemele, and Dr. Eroid Naomab Vice Chancellors of IUM, and NUST respectively**
- **Professor Frednard Gideon Pro Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs of UNAM**
- **Dr. Nhlanhla Lupahla General Manager for Research, Science and Technology of the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology,**
- **Dr. Herine Otieno, Founder and Executive Director of EDUHUB Afrique,**
- **Distinguished participants,**

- **Members of the Media,**

## **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

First and foremost, let me welcome delegates who came outside of our borders, to the Republic of Namibia, the Land of the Brave. I ask you to feel home away from home. I also welcome all of you delegates, to 32nd Annual Conference of the Southern African Association for Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education (SAARMSTE). Namibia is truly honoured to host this Conference. Above all, I applaud, the International University of Management (IUM), for being the seat of SAARMSTE Conference 2024. You have made this nation proud. In the same vein, I thank all collaborating Institutions as well as the sponsors for their dedication in making this Conference a success. Your support is invaluable as we embark on these crucial discussions and collaborations that will shape the future of education in Mathematics, Science, and Technology in our region.

This Conference is held under the theme: ***“Rethinking Relevant Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.”***

The theme gave you the centre of gravity on where to pay your attention during your deliberations. It is also a common knowledge that, as educators and researchers, you must know better than anybody else, the importance of mathematics, science and technology in the social and economic development of any country. As such, the people and governments in Southern Africa are looking at you with expectations for the outcome of your deliberations to make a meaningful contribution to the development of our region.

I am informed that, participants to this Conference do not only represent various institutions globally but also embody a collective force of educators, researchers, and innovators dedicated to advancing Science, Technology, and Mathematics Education on a global scale. We, therefore, expect an outcome that will have a lasting impact in the lives of our people.

**Director of Ceremonies,**

A new era in technological advancement, it is crucial that our educational systems evolve to prepare our students for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The traditional methods of teaching and researching in these fields are no longer sufficient. We must embrace a

more interdisciplinary approach, one that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

The 4th industrial revolution demands a workforce that is not only proficient in Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects but also capable of adapting to rapid changes and technological innovations. Our research efforts must focus on developing new academic methods, integrating technology into our curricula, and addressing the disparities in access to STEM education. We need focused research with a deep understanding of our communities, historically and traditionally in order to address the real problems and achieve the intended goals in our developmental agenda.

In order to thrive in the 4th industrial revolution, we must rethink and revolutionize our approach to mathematics, science, and technology education. It is your responsibility as educators and researchers to pave the way for a future generation that is equipped to tackle the challenges of tomorrow. Therefore, it is only when our people are equipped with an appropriate knowledge that as a sub- region and Africa in general, we will be able to take our people out of poverty and realize the Africa we Want , under Agenda 2063. In other words, we must make concerted and deliberate efforts to realize knowledge-based societies.

Let us work together to drive innovation and excellence in STEM education, to ensure that our students are well-prepared to make a contribution and benefit to in the application of the 4th industrial revolution of course, the fact remains, for us to be successful, as a sub-region and Africa as a whole we have to invest in research. Without embarking in serious research, we will continue to be vulnerable in comparison with other regions of the world.

At this Conference, as participants, you are expected to delve into the challenges that the Southern African region faces in the realms of Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education. These challenges transcend borders and require collective efforts to address them effectively. Therefore, if we are to maintain our set goals and objectives, continued cooperation beyond Conferences is a must.

As you discuss, you must be able to identify issues that may impede on the goals and objectives we want to achieve. Those impediments may include but not limited to insufficient access to quality education and shortage of qualified teachers. The above demand comprehensive and systematic approach involving policy reforms, teachers' training, and the strategic use of technology in order is to bridge these gaps.

Similarly, science education encounters hurdles that hinder the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In addition, inadequate laboratory facilities, outdated curricula, and a lack of emphasis on practical applications hinder effective science education. Therefore, collaborative efforts are essential to modernize laboratory infrastructure, update curricula to reflect current scientific advancements, and promote hands-on learning experiences that instill a passion for science in students.

In the swiftly evolving landscape of technology, education must keep pace to prepare students for the fourth industrial revolution. The digital revolution presents both opportunities and challenges, including limited access to technology, insufficient digital literacy, and the rapid obsolescence of skills. A collective effort is required to provide equitable access to technology, integrate digital literacy into curricula, and establish mechanisms for continuous skill development.

In the realm of research innovation, I am informed that the Conference aims to encourage and showcase innovative research that addresses pressing challenges in mathematics, science, and technology education. Additionally, fostering interdisciplinary collaborations is emphasized to explore holistic approaches in addressing educational challenges.

Furthermore, the Conference must propose evidence-based policy recommendations to governments and educational institutions. Those recommendations must aim to address systemic issues in education, advocating for policies that promote inclusivity, equal access, and the integration of technology in education.

In the domain of teacher professional development, there should be an emphasis on highlighting the importance of continuous professional development for teachers. The goal is to enhance their skills and enable them to adapt to evolving educational landscapes. Furthermore, the Conference should explore strategies for attracting and retaining qualified educators in mathematics, science, and technology.

We must also be mindful that technology integration is a pivotal aspect that must be addressed by this Conference. Discussions and dissemination of best practices for integrating technology into education are paramount to bridge the digital divide. Additionally, the Conference should explore innovative approaches to leverage technology for personalized learning and skill development.

Global collaboration must also be a key focus, aiming to facilitate partnerships and collaborations among institutions, researchers, and educators globally. This collaborative effort is designed to share



knowledge and resources, establishing a framework for ongoing international cooperation to address common challenges in education.

In conclusion, I want to remind you as participants, people out there have high expectation that the SAARMSTE 2024 Conference will come up with tangible results aiming to solve the problem at hand. Based on the expectation of people, this Conference must therefore, serve as a catalyst for transformative actions in mathematics, science, and technology education, in our region.

The next few days, while you are here in Windhoek, must therefore, be filled with enlightening discussions, collaborative efforts, and the formation of lasting connections. Together, participants can reshape the landscape of education to meet the demands of the 4th Industrial Revolution.

Finally, Namibia is well known for its Conservation Tourism, I therefore, invite you to make time to visit some of our best tourist sites and admire the beauty of our country.

I now declare SAARMSTE 2024 officially open and wish you a successful deliberation!

I THANK YOU ALL