

USAID HIGHER EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT (HED) PROGRAMME.  
(A message from Pro-Vice Chancellor Mwandemele to Ambassador Nandago)

You may recall that Prof. Jack Elliot had an opportunity early this year to brief you on the joint grant proposal that was submitted for funding to USAID involving the University of Namibia (UNAM), Texas A&M University, and four other Universities from USA. Texas A&M and UNAM are the lead institutions. I am happy to inform you that our grant proposal entitled "Namibia Agricultural Education: Increasing Small Businesses and Rural Community Incomes through New Approaches to Agricultural Value Chain Education" was among 20 successful proposal which won the planning grant out of about 300 proposals.

The two major Goals and their indicators are:

"Strengthened human capacity, curriculum, and outreach programs in higher education addressing economic growth and poverty reduction in local communities through a value chain approach"

The Indicators will be:

- A. Creation of a Centre of Excellence for Value Chain Economic Development;
- B. Enhanced UNAM/FANR outreach activities;
- C. Improved effectiveness of the Teaching Learning Improvement Unit (TLIU);
- D. Improved UNAM/FANR research capacity;
- E. Improved UNAM/FANR university ranking;

"Improved capacity of primary and secondary teachers to provide relevant agricultural skills to their students"

The Indicators will be:

- A. Primary and secondary school teachers trained to incorporate agriculture in their curricular;
- B. Establish School or Community Agricultural Processing and Training Centres.

From 28 May to 04 June 2009, the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr. Martin Schneider and I, were at Texas A&M to develop the main proposal for submission to USAID for funding. If successful, the project will be for the next 10 years. This proposal if successful will go a long way in complementing the Government efforts in addressing development challenges in Namibia and will contribute enormously towards Vision 2030.

The Principal Investigators from USA led by Prof. Elliot will be in Namibia from 30 June 2009 to sensitise key stakeholders such as Government Ministries (Education; Agriculture; Environment and Tourism, National Planning Commission; USAID country office, etc.) about the proposal and its importance to Namibia's socio-economic development . We would like to seek your assistance also in sensitizing the relevant Government Ministries on the same. The proposal will be presented before a panel in August 26-29, 2009 in Accra, Ghana. Support for the project from yourself and our Government would be very important in the successful implementation of the project and its sustainability. We wish you could make it to Ghana and be part of the presentation in support of this very important initiative.

At this stage let me express our very sincere appreciation to our USA partners, especially from Texas A&A University who are so committed to see that the best winning proposal is developed in support of Namibia. They have been and continue to spend lots of their time on this project, which will not only benefit Namibians but also USA academics and postgraduate students, through their participation and exposure to new learning and research environments in Namibia. I also wish to thank both Prof. David Hansen of APLU and Dr. Teshome Alemneh from HED Programme, in Washington, who have been so helpful in providing us with guidance and advice during the period of the development of the proposal. We had some teleconferences with them which were so useful in our tasks. We will continue to rely on their guidance and assistance and support as we finalize the document.

## II. CONFERENCES

From 23-27 May we attended the conference of the Association for International Agricultural Extension Education (AIAEE) in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The conference reaffirmed its decision for Namibia to host the 2011 AIAEE conference along with the Agricultural Scientific Society of Namibia (AGRISSON). AIAEE is also be an important partner of our USAID HED proposal, meaning that the project can draw from the experience of hundreds of additional USA Professors and Scientists from AIAEE, thereby enhancing its success of achieving the project goals.

During the same conference interest was expressed by the Chairperson of the International Federation of Information Technology, for Namibia to host the 2011 World Conference on Computers in Agriculture (WCCA), the first time ever to be held on the African continent. The WCCA is planning to convene concurrently with AIAEE/AGRISSON.

The choice of Namibia is definitely due to its political stability, prevailing peace and tranquility and the beautiful tourism attractions it has offer. We will make sure that these events are very successful and thereby increase the visibility of our country worldwide.