

8th IVETA Africa Regional Conference

Swakopmund - Namibia



VET SHINES IN SWAKOPMUND

Between the 18th and 21st April 259 vocational education and training professionals from around the world gathered in Swakopmund to attend the 8th IVETA Africa Regional Conference.

Hosted by the Namibia Training Authority in partnership with the Ministry of Education Namibia, delegates from twenty countries were welcomed with friendly Namibian hospitality. Just under half of delegates (47%) were from the host nation Namibia, while a further 43% came from African nations. The remaining 10% of conference delegates came from America, Australia, Canada, England, Finland, India, The Netherlands and New Zealand. Twenty-two delegates were unable to attend due to volcanic ash grounding flights in Europe. Interest in Vocational Education and training is high around the world and the diverse participation in this conference shows this.

On the evening of Sunday 18th April at the Opening Ceremony the Minister of Education the Honourable Dr Andrew Iyambo gave an inspirational speech, in which he welcomed all participants and emphasised the importance of Vocational Education and Training (VET) for the future of Namibia and for Africa. He talked of our joint responsibilities to deliver outcomes that are relevant for trainees and for industry in globally competitive markets. He talked of the absolute need to earn the trust and engagement of industry partners but also of VET trainees.

Commencing conference sessions on Monday, speakers from Africa, Australia, and New Zealand gave perspectives of why working with industry is vital to VET. Namibian case studies from the mining, public service and hospitality sectors were presented to the interest of everyone. Tuesday focussed on the theme of assessment with again both Namibian and international perspectives of assessment practices, the move towards continuous assessment, ensuring quality of assessment and recognition of prior learning programs discussed. A gala dinner "Diamonds in the Desert" on Tuesday evening provide lasting memories for many. With a fleet of forty four 4WD vehicles driving delegates to dinner in the desert moonscape, showcasing the extraordinary beauty of the Namibian landscape under the stars. The final conference day focussed on issues to do with teaching and learning, with delegates hearing from presenters from Zambia, Botswana, Iceland and Namibia. The panel discussion that followed with all keynote speakers and a representative of the Ministry of Education provided a chance to answer some of the important questions that had emerged. The hugely successful conference was closed by the Governor of the Erongo Region on behalf of the



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Deputy Minister of Education Dr David Namwandi. In the closing address the Deputy Minister encouraged everyone to work together in partnerships to make VET a strong first choice for the young of Africa.

Many delegates new to IVETA expressed earnest thanks at the experience, citing new knowledge gained and networks formed that they can apply in their own VET situations. Delegates who have been to multiple IVETA conferences commented that the Namibian conference was one of, if not the best IVETA conference they have attended. The knowledge, skills, greater understanding and new partnerships will provide benefits will filter through vocational education and training in many African nations for years to come.

