



Signed, sealed and delivered. Dr. Tjama Tjivikua and Ambassador Leonard Iipumbu.

Agribank and Polytechnic sign cooperation agreement

By Levi Upula

The Agricultural Bank of Namibia, AGRIBANK, and the Polytechnic of Namibia, have signed a cooperation agreement that will see the two institutions sharing various project implementation costs in areas such as student bursary, internship and training of Agribank staff, research and development in agriculture, aquaculture, livestock and crop production.

The agreement was signed this week by the Rector of the Polytechnic, Dr. Tjama Tjivikua, and the Chief Executive Officer of Agribank, Ambassador Leonard Iipumbu. It formalizes cooperation

in program execution and implementation between the two institutions.

Ambassador Iipumbu said that education played an important role in the national economy by build-

ing the intellectual foundations, knowledge, skills and resources to meet the future challenges.

"Therefore, investing in education should be at the heart of corporate institutions in Namibia in order to promote competitiveness and improve social cohesion to reduce the inequalities that exist in our society," said Ambassador Iipumbu.

"As a result of the significant role education plays, the Government has been allocating the biggest portion of the national budget every year since independence. To ensure that the education development meets the needs of the country, Government embarked upon the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme, ETSIP, to reorganize and improve the quality of the education system in our country today for a prosperous Namibia tomorrow."

Agribank, Ambassador Iipumbu said, deemed it necessary to work together with institutions such as the Polytechnic of Namibia to facilitate speedy implementation of programmes that were mutually beneficial to all institutions. He said such types of network collaborations would drive excellence in knowledge production, distribution and its utilization to contribute to the national economic growth and the realization of Vision 2030.

Agribank has awarded bursaries worth N\$500, 000, 00 to students at Polytechnic over the years. Some of the beneficiaries of such bursaries have already graduated and were working in various fields at many institutions in the country.

"The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding demonstrates the commitment to shared prosperity," he said. "It indeed demonstrates that we are willing to embrace change through our capacity building, collaborate and pool resources, talents and work together for the development of a fully-fledged knowledge-based economy."

Dr. Tjivikua said the two institutions had cooperated in several areas for many years to further mutual interests and needs, and the new agreement would go a long way in contributing to the development of agriculture as an important economic sector.

Under the agreement, Agribank, may at its own discretion, provide financial assistance to the Polytechnic as it deems suitable from time to time. The agreement also allows Polytechnic students to undertake internships, in-service training or work-integrated learning at Agribank before they graduate. Agribank will also provide bursaries to students in critical areas of national development and will assist with the development of their education or research. Such bursaries will cover the costs of items such as books on such terms and conditions as set out in the bursary policy of Agribank.

"I believe that this agreement will officially take our two institutions to greater heights and will, equally, play a pivotal role in driving the nation to achieve Vision 2030 objectives," said Dr. Tjivikua.

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