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tive SME ventures. We must remove all bottlenecks and enhance efficiency in order to strengthen the growth of this important economic sector.

The manufacturing and adding-value to our natural resources must remain a priority in order to improve the competitiveness of our national economy globally.

As you are all aware, our country is blessed with abundant natural resources, namely: copper, diamonds, zinc, gold, precious and semi-precious stones. In addition, our country is endowed with varieties of agricultural produce. I would like to call upon the youth to embark upon ventures that are aimed at economic diversification so that we can produce finished goods for local consumption and export them to other countries.

Education and training remain critical to our youth who are the future leaders of our country. I therefore would like to encourage you to study mathematics and science subjects so that you can be-

come agriculturalists, medical doctors, engineers, geologists, architects, marine biologists, economists, mathematicians and scientists who can implement Vision 2030.

Over the years; the SWAPO Party Government has prioritize education and trainings. We have expanded educational programmes at our institutions of higher learning, including our vocational training centres and teacher training colleges.

Last year the University of Namibia opened a new Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology at Ongwediva with a clear purpose of training our own engineers in all engineering fields. This year, a new School of Medicine was opened in Windhoek to train our own Medical Doctors. Our Government has laid a strong foundation for our youth. Therefore, you must now study hard and take your education seriously. It is the only way in which you will become future leaders of our country.

Our youth are increasingly losing focus on the future. They engage in negative behaviors and alcohol and drug abuse that de-

stroy their lives. You must lead productive lives and contribute to the socio-economic development of our country.

As you all know, a nation can only be truly independent when it can produce its own food.

Therefore, with the view to enhance food security and self-sufficiency in our country, the SWAPO Party Government prioritized the development of agriculture. We have initiated several projects under the Green Scheme along the Orange, Kunene, Okavango and Zambezi Rivers for crop production. The Ministry of Agriculture Water and Forestry is working together with the University of Namibia to develop and improve rice production in the country. Last year, the two institutions established the rice project at Kalimbeza in the Caprivi Region which was declared by His Excellency Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia, as a national project.

I therefore would like to encourage the youth to volunteer themselves to work on this important national project.

In addition, our Government has implemented aquaculture projects and research centres in various re-

gions of our country to improve the livelihood of our people. I would like to encourage our youth to embark upon aquaculture projects to create employment for themselves and employ fellow unemployed Namibians.

We still face many challenges in our nation building efforts. We must therefore remain united and focus our energies on the application of scientific research and appropriate technology for development, proper planning and timeous implementation of our development plans and programmes. In this way, we will be able to achieve our strategic objectives, namely the eradication of poverty, disease, ignorance and under-development.

In order to succeed as a nation, we must mobilize all the Namibian youth, especially members of the SWAPO Party Youth League, to promote national unity, solidarity and patriotism. We should eradicate all negative tendencies of individualism, regionalism and tribalism. Experience has taught us that these negative vices had destroyed nations. They derail social progress and economic development.

The hallmark of our national lib-

eration struggle was to fight against racial discrimination, tribalism and apartheid. Our youth must never and never again allow themselves to be divided on the basis of regionalism, tribalism and ethnicity.

Equally, we should support efforts that are being made to accelerate the socio-economic integration of the SADC region and the wider African continent through the African Union. We should promote commercial trade and investments among all African countries in order to accelerate economic development and reduction of poverty, diseases and ignorance. As the youth, you should ally yourselves with progressive youth organizations on the African continent and other continents so that you can create a better and progressive world.

As members of the SWAPO Party Youth League, you must re-dedicate yourselves to the ideals of national unity and patriotism so that you can defend our hard-won Freedom and Independence. Although the enemy was defeated politically, he has not given up.

History has taught us how the enemies of peace, freedom and social progress have caused divi-

sion, political instability and economic sabotage in some sisterly countries on the African continent.

The enemy embarks upon maneuvers and machinations in order to mislead and converts some of our fellow African compatriots and turns them against their own people in order to reverse the gains of our freedom and independence. These deceptive attempts are the main causes of chronic marginalization and under-development on the African continent.

As Namibian youth, and as Africans, you must therefore be on the full alert and remain vigilant against deceptive attempts by opportunists and unpatriotic elements that attempt to divide you. As the future leaders of our country, you should act with dedication and commitment; to always promote the interests of the SWAPO Party and the national interests before your own. It is only through that manner that the SWAPO Party will grow from strength to strength and continues to rule Namibia for the next ONE THOUSAND YEARS.

Remember, a united people, striving to achieve common good for all members in the society, will always emerge victorious.