



**ADDRESS BY VERONICA DE KLERK  
WAD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
during the  
WAD OTJOZONDJUPA FIELD DAY - 2013  
of Women's Action for Development (WAD)  
OTJIWARONGO - WEDNESDAY, 26 JUNE 2013**

**Madam Director of Ceremonies;**

**The Hon. Petrina Haingura-----Deputy-Minister of Health & Social Services;**

**Hon. Samuel Nuuyoma-----Governor for the Otjozondjupa region;**

**Y/W, Cllr Archillaus Namaseb-----Deputy-Mayor of Otjiwarongo;**

**Mr Sebastian Uahengo-----Chief Control Officer – Otjiwarongo Const. Office**

**Mr Holger Haibach-----Res. Representative of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung;**

**Ms Mary Muyenga-----Chief Health Program Officer: Otjoz. Health Directorate**

**Ms Mariane Prinsloo-----Education School Counsellor – Otjoz. Edu. Directorate;**

**Mr Oscar Ngupandjara-----Old Mutual Branch Manager at Otjiwarongo;**

**Ms -----Nedbank**

**Father Matias Tshithigona-----From the Roman Catholic Church;**

**Ms Benjamen Amoomo-----Principal Adjudicator; and Co-adjudicators;**

**Representatives from the European Union; Spiritual leaders; Teachers; Learners and  
Parents; Friends from the Media; Cultural performers; and dear Graduants:**

**Good morning!**

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to address this esteemed audience at Otjiwarongo during the WAD 2013 Field Day and Graduation ceremony of unemployed young people and Police Officers who hail from Otjiwarongo and Otavi.

As I am looking over the audience, I observe with much appreciation, our distinguished leaders - and most importantly, our Graduants, who include members of the Police Force.

It is within this context that I take pleasure in acknowledging the presence of the Deputy Minister of Health & Social Services, the Hon. Petrina Haingura, who will deliver the Keynote Address later on in the programme.

Thank you, Honourable Minister, for accepting to deliver the Keynote Address and for leaving your busy schedule in Windhoek, to be part of this graduation ceremony today.

This attests to your profound interest in the empowerment of unemployed young people, which is greatly appreciated.

I further welcome, and extend my appreciation towards the Hon. Governor and speakers at the Head Table for their valued presence. We are indeed looking forward to your informative words of wisdom.

Ladies & Gentlemen: the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has acted as the main Sponsor of WAD since the organisation's establishment 19 years ago. I wish to express my profound appreciation towards the Foundation and the German Government, for its commitment towards WAD and the upliftment of the people of Namibia.

I welcome Mr Holger Haibach, the Resident Representative of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and Director of the 3-year project: *"My Rights as a Woman and Namibian Citizen"*, which is funded by the European Union and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, with great appreciation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, focusing on equally important sponsors - Old Mutual Namibia; Nedbank; and Mutual & Federal, have been WAD's trusted BEE partners since 2007. This "Field Day" would not have been possible, had it not been for their wonderful financial support towards WAD's Field Days across the country, for the past years.

**To the Old Mutual Group of companies, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung; and the European Union, I express my profound appreciation.**

**Ladies & Gentlemen: Please join me in giving them a big hand!**

The representatives of Old Mutual and Nedbank have introduced to the audience, their products and services.

I would therefore advise members of this audience to actively consult with our BEE partners during this event and to plan timeously and wisely for the future of their children, and not to wait until it is too late.

\*\*\*Most importantly – L & G: I wish to mention that all business which you will conclude with these companies today, is very important, because this will enable WAD to earn points for those business deals, which will eventually be converted into cash - and the funds will immediately be ploughed back into training and community development in the country.

Focusing on the training which was conducted at Otjiwarongo - I wish to announce that a total of 124 students enrolled for the training courses in: Computer Literacy; Office Administration ; Hospitality and Tailoring which were presented by the WAD Trainers during the past months.

However, I regret that a total of **8 students** who wrote the examinations in **Computers, Office Administration and Hospitality** were unsuccessful and did not meet the standard, but I would encourage them not to give up and to continue with undergoing training in these subjects.

I am particularly proud of a brilliant young woman from this town, namely Natasha Rusberg, who attained distinctions in both Computer Literacy and Office Administration, with an outstanding mark of **92% in Computer Literacy**, and **86% in Office Administration** – and I request her to stand. L & G – please give Natasha a big hand.....! Congratulations, Natasha, I am proud of you - well done!

I am equally proud of the 54 community members and Police Officers from Otjiwarongo and Otavi, who received training in the Contents of Gender-related laws; and Aspects of the Namibian Constitution, in order for them to know their rights within those laws. They will also receive their certificates this morning – Congratulations!

**Bearing in mind that WAD firmly believes in public-private partnerships, I respectfully appeal to the Honourable Governor and the Otjozondjupa Regional Council, to kindly take the lead in encouraging the students to go to the next level, and to connect them to public and private institutions within the region or in the capital, for “In-service training”, for which I thank you.**

**Focusing on a very important issue: Please allow me to express WAD’s sincere congratulations towards the SWAPO Party for taking the lead in resolving, at its recent Central Committee meeting at Swakopmund, to amend its Constitution to allow for a 50/50 representation of the genders, in all its party structures on Local, Regional and National levels. WAD is excited about this new development and victory for women, and wish to urge Government to amend the current electoral laws of Namibia, to compel all political parties to adhere to this 50/50 representation requirement on all their party lists, to speed up the attainment of this target to honour the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.**

Having said that, Ladies and Gentlemen, please allow me now, to touch on a topic which is very close to my heart and extremely disturbing, namely the shocking misuse of alcohol in the country which ever so often leads to violence against women; passion killing; rape; and broken family homes!

It is a most unfortunate tragedy, that it now seems as though Namibia has become a country of shebeens! From the South to the North, and from the East to the West, the trend seems to be the same over the past 23 years. Shebeens have mushroomed all over the country, just because we have ostensibly run out of ideas on how to reduce poverty and unemployment in the country!

It is time that we should turn the problem of shebeens and the misuse of Alcohol and drugs inside-out, to get to the bottom of, **why** so many Namibians misuse Alcohol; **why** many remain Alcoholics; and how to reduce this serious social phenomenon in our society.

According to media reports of last year, it is most disconcerting that Windhoek alone, currently has a most disturbing 5 000 shebeens, mostly in poor areas, of which 1 500 are unlicensed. **It now seems that Shebeens have become the NUMBER ONE income-generator for especially poor communities.** With so many shebeens mushrooming in the country, we have to admit to ourselves that this evil has become a social disgrace and an embarrassment in our country, because it touches the very core - the very fibre of our human dignity and the main cause of Gender Based Violence, Poverty and a destroyer of families.

In fact, Alcoholism is one of the most overlooked and under-rated evils in the Namibian society today. It is ironic that we are continuously expressing outrage about the numerous incidents of violence against women, but we are not addressing the evils of Alcoholism; At the same time, we are highly concerned about the raping and passion killing of women, but we are not addressing the evils of Alcoholism which is a main cause of these evils.

If we as a nation, is really serious about reducing these atrocities, in which women are losing their lives at an alarming rate, we should address one of the main causes of it all, namely the availability of alcohol in uncontrolled quantities to everybody and anybody with money, including the youth!

A few years back, WAD conducted a 2-year research together with the Social Sciences Faculty of the University of Namibia, to determine the root causes of violence against women and girls and to understand what goes on in the criminal mind when these acts of violence are committed. This research was conducted among numerous inmates in prisons country-wide where the most violent offenders were kept.

To say the least, the results were alarming - and showed that Alcoholism topped the list of causes of violence against women. The study further indicated that most offenders of gender based violence first experienced GBV, when their fathers beat up their mothers in their parental home; and secondly, when the perpetrators of such violence, were under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Ladies & Gentlemen: The rub-off effect of the misuse of alcohol and drugs and its negative consequences on children in their later life, are thus very clear!

A study during 1992 by UNICEF proved that 19,8% of children between 13 and 16 years in Namibia, had by then already experimented with alcohol. However, by 1998 that number rose to 50% of that age group, who were experimenting with alcohol.

The aforementioned figures are thus, clear proof that more and more children are drinking! And since alcohol misuse is an important factor in a promiscuous life, it is thus also a greatly contributing factor for young people to be infected with HIV/AIDS due to unprotected sex!

In fact, the misuse of alcohol by Namibians paints a very bad picture of Namibia the world over, because according to a United Nations report of 2007, a survey by the **“Social Impact Assessment and Policy Analysis Corporation”**, found that more than 50% of adult Namibians **consumed on average, 10 litres of alcohol per week!** This is shocking, to say the least!

In the same report, Windhoek was sited as the ***“drinking capital”***, with 70 % of the adult population, regularly consuming alcohol.

It is most unfortunate that the poor image which Namibians are painting of their own country, is carried out to the world, with one of the media headlines in the local press on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2012, which read: (quote): ***“Namibia is becoming a nation of drunks”*** (unquote).

This article also indicated that in the Kabila Informal Settlement in Katutura alone, 265 shebeens are found, which spreads over a small area of 4 square kilometres. It further states that 38% of men and 25% of women in the Kabila Settlement have exchanged sex for alcohol. The question is: Is this the kind of world we have created for ourselves - and is this the kind of world we want for ourselves?

Ladies and Gentlemen - the facts which I have stated before, are indeed very stressful and depressing!

But what is the solution to the problem of Alcoholism and the mushrooming of shebeens in the country?

Poverty and Unemployment are often cited as the main causes for the rapid proliferation of shebeens from which families claim to put bread on the table and to send their children to school.

But surely dear friends, there are more honourable ways to reduce poverty and unemployment!

The subject Life Skills in schools is a good start to sensitize learners about the devastating affects of alcoholism and drugs. This could be a first step towards preparing the youth for a sober life.

Most importantly, training, and more training to acquire skills and Job creation, should take centre stage in this regard across the entire country, and is obviously the counter-balance for poverty and unemployment. Poverty and Unemployment **can be addressed** by bringing back practical subjects to secondary schools, which can provide a basis for own home-based income-generating ventures, such as carpentry, welding, bricklaying and plastering, catering, tailoring, etc.

**It is a misconception that learners should only have a choice of theoretical subjects, with the exclusion of practical courses, since all learners are not endowed with an aptitude for theoretical subjects, but can with no doubt, make a successful career from practical professions.**

This situation is serious enough to justify a National Conference in which the Ministry of Health and Social Services should take centre stage and a powerful lead, supported by NGO's, churches, schools, the Private Sector and the community at large.

Stern Resolutions should be passed during such conference, which should be vigorously implemented by law enforcement officers, while other stakeholders should contribute towards educational programmes to dramatically reduce substance abuse in society.

With regard to tobacco, I wish to congratulate the Namibian Government, and in particular, the Ministry of Health & Social Services, on the explicit ban on the display, publishing and advertisement of tobacco products.

In this context, WAD appeals to Government to implement much stricter regulations regarding the control of the liquor trade in the country. This is imperative, bearing in mind the suffering of women and children at the hands of alcohol abusers, as well as the numerous broken homes as a result of alcohol abuse.

In conclusion, Ladies & Gentlemen - WAD is particularly concerned about the youth, who are slowly being sucked into the whirlpool of alcoholism and drug abuse from which they will not easily escape! ...And because our hopes for a prosperous future for our country are based on the youth, I wish to caution that we are currently facing a desperate situation with young people boozing their lives away, instead of preparing themselves to take up leadership roles in the country!

It is within this context that I am immensely proud of what you, the Graduates, have achieved today, because you have taken the first step towards finding a job or towards becoming self-employed. So, go out there now, and start marketing yourselves. Please refrain from Alcohol and drugs, or from visiting Shebeens, because that will destroy your young lives and future dreams for life.

**Start immediately to create your own CV** and don't only mention what you were trained in during these courses - also mention all your strengths, such as being confident; energetic; reliable; able to work in a team; willing to work overtime; willing to learn, etc. Then find any job attachment within Government offices or the business sector to market yourselves. Initially work free of charge to gain ample experience! Perform brilliantly during this time, to make it difficult for them to let you go!

**The next step is to set realistic goals with deadlines for yourselves;**

Concentrate on building your self-confidence; Be bold and take on opportunities; Be committed and be persistent!

Never give up! Even if the outcome is not always what you had hoped for – **persevere**, because it is those who keep on living their dreams and who take actions accordingly - no matter what happens - who eventually realize their dreams.

I salute the leaders and people of this region, for your dedication towards the upliftment of your communities. May God bless you, and may you never give up, and abandon your dreams. **Thank you!**