

San Chief delivers candid speech at UNAM Cultural Festival



Honourable Hendrik Martins

Dancing, feasting and a rich variety of cultural display in the form of attire, ornaments and artefacts were the norm at this year's UNAM Cultural Festival, themed "Culture, our way of life".

"Next to graduation ceremonies, the festival is the most anticipated

event on the university calendar", remarked Ms Margreth Mainga, the Dean of Students. The festival was themed "Culture, our way of life".

The real splendour of this year's festival was the presence of Honourable Hendrik Martins, a San Chief. He was the guest of honour and therefore, delivered the keynote

speech in which he candidly spoke about how development is at odds with some local cultures.

"I thank the University of Namibia and the organizers for creating this platform for all us to talk about culture and educate the young people about the importance of culture", remarked the confident Chief.

He further urged young people not to forget or despise their own cultures as they embrace the modern ones. "Even in our own nomadic way of life, we have strong moral values, norms and customs that impose a duty to respect the elders, take care of our immediate environment that sustains our existence and promote the culture of hard work", he elaborated.

He also appealed to the government and all stakeholders driving the development agenda, saying that development has negatively affected the livelihood of the san people and other nomadic

communities to such an extent that their economic and social life has been seriously disrupted.

"In the past, our people used the forest for hunting to get meat for their families, as well as to gather fruits, tubers and other types of food and collect water to sustain their families. Now, because of development, farmers have fenced of large tracks of land as private farms which they claim is private property and restrict our people's movement and capacity to produce enough food for themselves and their families",

said a distraught Chief Hendriks.

He concluded by asking the government to fast-track and accelerate the efforts to intensify the programmes to assist the nomadic and marginalized communities affected by the fast pace of urbanization and development.

The Chief's speech was followed by an exhilarating cultural performance by members of his community along with some San students studying at UNAM.



German Section students engage Moreson Special School

Recently, 28 Students from the University of Namibia (UNAM) German Section volunteered at Moreson's School Athletics day. Located in Khomasdal, Windhoek, the school gives special care to those who suffer from cognitive impairments.



The school principal gave a short brief about the institution before assigning the group of volunteers to explain the various activities to the learners. The students had a fantastic day with the pupils. After their activities, they closed off the event with group photos as well as some impromptu Talent showcases.

Moreson special school for the cognitively impaired is one of two schools in the Country which provides

an adaptive environment for the healthy development of its pupils. Many learners come from less affluent backgrounds. Some to the extent of being orphans and others from environments filled with discrimination. Specially trained teachers and volunteers help run the school with the main goal of teaching the learners to become independent.

The institution accommodates about 160 learners.

Linguistics Professor elected to lead two Associations

A leading UNAM Professor was recently elected as President of two associations following their respective annual general meetings.

Associate Professor Herman Beyer, teaches Afrikaans linguistics in the Department of Language and Literature Studies in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Namibia.

The African Association for Lexicography (AfriLex), recently elected him to serve as President.

AfriLex was established in 1995 as an international academic association for lexicographers and lexicographic scholars. The association held its 24th annual international three-day conference in Windhoek this year.

Subject experts and postgraduate students that attended hailed from as far afield as Denmark, Germany, Italy, Russia, the UK and the USA.

Similarly, earlier this year in March, Prof. Beyer was elected to a second term as President of the Professional Association for Afrikaans Language Teaching in Namibia (PVATN). Afrikaans is still the lingua franca in Namibia, boasting the title as the most widely spoken language.

The PVATN facilitates the continuous professional development of Afrikaans teachers in Namibia and provides complementary subject support through conferences, which attract about 250 Afrikaans teachers



from all over Namibia, as well as publishers and experts from South Africa.

The PVATN is an initiative founded by Prof. Beyer nearly two decades ago, and this year held its 19th national conference.

Apart from teaching Afrikaans, Prof. Beyer's primary research interests are pedagogical lexicography and contrastive linguistics.