

## INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL UNION COMMISSION ON AFRICAN STUDIES LAUNCHED

*A reflection on Africa's challenges and possible solutions*

The International Geographical Union (IGU) recently approved the formation of the IGU Commission on African Studies.

The Commission, that was launched at its inaugural conference and hosted by the University of Namibia in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), aims to promote African and Africanist scholarship on issues around and in Africa. These usually range from social sciences to natural sciences, but is informed in the main by geographical, multi and interdisciplinary perspectives.

Officiating at the launch, Minister of Higher Education, Training and

Innovation, Dr Itah Kandjii-Murangi, dared conference participants to look into African challenges and provide possible solutions. "It is my sincere hope that during this inaugural conference you will allow adequate time to debate and provide solid scientific evidence to assist African governments in understanding global developments ranging from climate change, terrorism, migration and mobility, inequality, poverty and hunger, as well as political upsurges and geographical reconfigurations," said Dr Kandjii-Murangi.

Speaking on the aspirations of the launched Commission, UNAM Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research,



Innovation and Development, Professor Kenneth Matengu said: "As a University, it is our hope that IGU Commission on African Studies will become an international hub for research and a platform for sharing best practice regarding African issues as raised and addressed by Africans and international researchers working on Africa." Underlining the importance of research on the causes of poverty was UNDP Resident Representative, Ms Izumi Morota-Alakija: "It is absolutely necessary that we collect disaggregated data and robust research on the causes of poverty

and this can only be done if we fully understand the causes and drivers of poverty and inequality so that sound economic policies be developed."

The two day Conference themed, "What is Africa's response on global challenges: Understanding drivers of poverty and reducing inequality?", was attended by participants from Botswana, Finland, Germany, Nigeria, Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USA, Zimbabwe and Namibia – representing over 20 different universities.



Ms Izumi Morota-Alakija



Dr Itah Kandjii-Murangi



**Solar Power Systems for Namibia Conference with the theme "Solar Energy for Rural Development" successfully hosted by UNAM in Windhoek (16 -18 May 2018).**

## FIRST COHORT OF MASTERS IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY GRADUATE

Amongst the many firsts for UNAM 2018 graduation is the first graduating cohort of the Masters in Educational Technology programme from the Curriculum Instruction and Assessment studies (CIAS) Department in the Faculty of Education.

Mr Robert Mukelabai who graduated in Rundu and Mr Gerson Mwaamukange graduated in Ongwediva are the first graduates from the programme. According to an optimistic Dr Perien Joniell Boer, a lecturer on the programme, more students are to graduate by August or later this year. "I am so excited at the prospect of graduating these first students at this crucial time when the Ministry of Education is reviewing the ICT in Education policy," said an elated Dr Boer.

She adds that: "We believe the qualification from this programme will become an important element for teacher delivering relevant modern classroom teaching. It is important to generate a critical mass of educational technologists in Namibia to move education in a direction that embraces technology tools more fully and to improve the learning and performance of all Namibian learners."

The Masters programme is designed to help educational practitioners understand and facilitate the acquisition of 21st century skills by Namibian learners. "Although the programme is practically oriented, it explores the concept of technology integrated learning and also look at ways in which new technologies can alter the objectives of an educational system," Dr Boer explains. The programme is open to applicants from any discipline with an undergraduate honours degree. Graduates in this Masters programme will be able to contribute towards education and training development to meet the objectives from the Namibian ICT in Education Policy and the Tech/Na! implementation plan.