

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Elsbeth Mmatladi Khembo

I would firstly like to thank the National Council for their encouragement and support since the last AGM (Annual General Meeting). It has not been easy leading this dynamic organisation.

The national secretary has given the report on the operations of the Association, and as such I would like to celebrate our achievements, reflect on the current challenges and highlight our plans for the future.

Achievements

Partnership with Old Mutual: AMESA published two articles in the ARGO Handbook, highlighting AMESA as a key project of Old Mutual. In addition to this, a Geometry article was published in the Mail & Guardian: The Teacher newspaper on the 10th of May in a series of three articles (all commissioned by Old Mutual). The next two Geometry articles will be published in July and September 2011 respectively. I would sincerely like to thank Jacques du Plessis, who has committed himself to writing all three articles.

I would like to state that the increased collaboration between AMESA and Old Mutual (in the media) is very significant, as it entrenches Old Mutual's commitment to the development of mathematics education in our country. As for the Geometry teaching articles, these will be published in the next AMESA News.

AMESA's position on the Optional Paper 3

It is encouraging to note that AMESA's position on the optional paper 3 (submitted in June 2010) was extensively used in the design of the FET Mathematics CAPS (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement) document. Euclidean Geometry is now central in the FET Curriculum, and this has given AMESA the challenge to up-skill the geometric understanding of all its members in preparation for the 2012 implementation of CAPS in Grade 10.

The JET Maths Challenge (Grade 4-7)
The R2million sponsorship for the JET South African Maths Challenge, which was organised by the SAMF (South African Mathematics Foundation) from Edcon, is a highly significant milestone in the development of the mathematical problem solving skills of primary school learners (from previously disadvantaged schools). The Problem Solving Short course for teachers will begin in 2012, and through this course we hope to enhance the problem solving skills of the teachers in previously disadvantaged schools. Finally and regarding the Maths Challenge, we also consider it to be an important project in the development of learners for the Maths Olympiad.

AOSIS Open Access (Pythagoras)

While we celebrate the publishing of Pythagoras by African Online Scientific Information Systems (AOSIS) Open Journals, we have to admit that it also comes with high operational costs. Despite this fact though, I must say the benefits are rather impressive in that AOSIS provides a professional manuscript managements system, all with excellent turnaround times for publication. Papers are published online as soon as they have been completed, and AOSIS now serves a global audience through the Directory of Open Access Journals, Google Scholar, Scopus, etc...all of which are phenomenal sources of information.

Challenges:

Membership

Minister Naledi Pandor indicated in her speech that the membership of AMESA has been declining steadily in the past ten years. We have found that there are many reasons for this. These include problems associated with registration at congresses, all the way through to the tight schedule of Districts nationwide (where teachers prioritise Departmental workshops over AMESA activities). In light of this, the National council has put measures and programmes in place not only to increase membership, but also to formalise the membership of AMESA through the SACE and the MST strategies.

High Operational Costs

The various developmental activities the National Council has initiated (focusing on regional and branch governance) have served to drastically increase the

Council's operational costs. However, we are beginning to see considerable progress in the running of various regions, which for the first time have all submitted audited financial statements in the National Council Meeting. This was also made possible by a special committee, whose job it was to monitor the compliance and adherence of all regional regulations with the national constitution.

Congress Registration

The registration at Congress 2011 has been particularly problematic due to a large number of participants who did not register. The National Council has set up a committee to look into the challenges, and to then propose measures which could improve matters going forward.

AMESA Office

We are grateful to the management of RADMASTE Centre for providing office space for our membership secretary. The work of the association has also grown to such huge proportions that a full time staff is now required to handle the work of AMESA. This new-found growth though also allows us to use our influence in order to collaborate with key stakeholders, as well as to apply the necessary tools in order to significantly improve the teaching and learning of mathematics in our country. We hope that with some concerted effort, we will ultimately influence the improvement of mathematics results, thereby improving the very 'quality of life' of our learners.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Although the Curriculum Committee is at present focusing on developing Geometry modules in preparation for the implementation of the CAPS in 2012, the National Council has also established a committee whose job it is to develop an (AMESA) model for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for all its members. Various other 'models' have also been practiced, and these include the Educator Support Project model which calls for teachers to be *immersed* in the nature of mathematics...thereby leading to 'lasting change' in their classroom practice.

In conclusion I would like to thank National Council members for their support and encouragement.

I thank you,
Elsbeth Khembo

