



Institute of Distance Education Newsletter

Issue 4— April, 2011

Institute Of Distance Education

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IS PUBLISHED TWICE A YEAR.

IDE Making a Mark in the Academic World

Read more inside.....

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IDE Presents Papers at the 6th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning



IDE Facilitates Commerce Writers Orientation Workshop



Commonwealth of Learning Open Distance Learning Template Workshop

Enquiries and comments should be sent to the IDE Copy Editor, IDE Block. Office # 014, Private Bag No. 4, Kwaluseni Campus. Matsapha. Tel: (00268) 5184011 Ext. 2438 Fax: (00268) 5187083 Email: gnsibande@uniswa.sz
The IDE Newsletter is issued free of charge.

Foreword- IDE Director

I am pleased to write this foreword of the second edition of the IDE Newsletter for the Academic Year 2010/2011. As is customary, there are several interesting articles in this edition of our newsletter, which will prove useful to our staff and students. Most of these articles, as you will discover, demonstrate IDE's pursuit of its Vision of becoming an International Centre of Excellence in Distance Education Access, Delivery, Practice, Research and Life-long Learning.

IDE continues to expand and develop, and in this regard I am pleased to welcome our newest member of staff – Ms. Karen Ferreira-Meyers, who joined IDE as Lecturer and Coordinator of Modern Languages in the Institute. Previously, she was with the Faculty of Humanities as Lecturer and Head of Department of Modern Languages. Having worked with her while she was still a member of staff in the Faculty of Humanities, we know her as an industrious, hard working and committed staff member, and are sure that she will bring this to IDE.

It is with pleasure that I report that in this upcoming academic year, 2011/2012, we will be starting another new programme, a Certificate in Psychosocial Support. This certificate is a result of the joint effort of several stakeholders and partners, notably the African Centre for Childhood at the University of KwaZulu Natal, the National Children's Coordinating Unit (NCCU) at the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, UNICEF and REPSSI. We shall continue to work and collaborate with these partners as we offer this sought after

certificate and or other similar programmes. I am also pleased that our computer laboratory is near completion. It will be useful to students enrolled in the Computer Foundation course and other programmes, and shall further assist them to access course materials that is available online.



Professor. C.W.S. Sukati

As the Final Examinations will be commencing soon, I wish all our students the best of luck in their examinations. I urge them to read the examination tips that appear in the **IDE Issue 2, April 2010** newsletter to avoid getting low marks or failing their courses. To our completing students, we wish them all the best in their future endeavours and we request them to become good ambassadors of Distance Learning in general, and the Institute of Distance Education in particular.

Enjoy reading our newsletter and if you have any questions, comments, criticism and suggestions on this newsletter or on any of our IDE activities and services, please feel free to communicate this directly to me or to any of my team members in IDE.

Professor C.W.S. Sukati

Problem Questions in Law Tests and Examinations by *Mr. C. Osei - Abankwah*

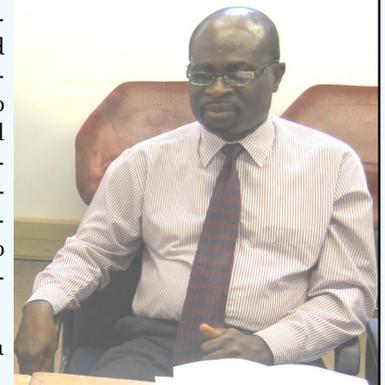
It has been observed that problem questions in law tests and examinations pose a challenge to Diploma in Law students. A problem question requires that the student should discuss or explain the application of the law in the context of a given scenario. Many students avoid a problem question, unless it is compulsory. However, a student who aspires to pursue further studies in law should know that problem questions are part of almost all law examinations. Students should be advised that even if a problem question is not compulsory, it is prudent to attempt it, because, usually, there is no "correct" answer to a problem question. The given set of facts in the question may raise uncertainties in the application of the law. Thus a student may argue a legal issue from different angles and come to different, even opposing, conclusions, provided he/she gives good reasons for these conclusions.

In a problem question, the student will be presented with a problem in the form of a "story." The first thing the student should do is to read this story very carefully, over and over again and identify the relevant facts. Identification of the relevant facts will provide

'In a law examination, it is of critical importance to cite cases, other authorities and where relevant, statutes, to support the analysis of legal issues.'

guidance to the student, in isolating the legal issues raised by the facts. For example; what is the legal consequence, if one person points an unloaded gun at another person who does not know that the gun is unloaded? This could be a legal issue arising from the facts. The student should be able to state clearly the law relevant to the legal issue. It is of utmost importance to identify the appropriate law, (e.g. law relating to assault, contracts, bigamy, etc), to ensure that the correct law is applied to the facts. The student may define the law applicable and then relate the definition to the legal issue. This should be followed by the application of the legal issue to the facts. It is advisable to deal with one legal issue at a time. It is not advisable to write everything one knows about the legal issue involved in the problem, without relating it to the factual situation.

In a law examination, it is of critical importance to cite cases, other authorities and, where relevant, statutes, to support the analysis of legal issues. Diploma in Law students should be advised that one may not pass a law examination (or obtain a good grade), without citing applicable cases and other relevant authorities.



Coordinator, Law Mr. C. Osei - Abankwah

Welcome Aboard



Pic: Newest IDE staff
Ms. K. Ferreira-Meyers

Ms. Karen Ferreira - Meyers has recently been transferred from the Faculty of Humanities to join IDE as Lecturer and Coordinator, Linguistics and Modern Languages. IDE welcomes her with open arms and regards her as an asset to the unit. She is wished the best in her new position.

A sneak preview at Karens current & on-going professional development plans:

'At present, I am preparing a doctoral degree in French Literature with the University of KwaZulu-Natal (director of thesis: Prof. B. De Meyer). My field of study is a comparative analysis of Francophone African and European 'autofictional' works written by female authors born after 1960.'

ALERT!!!

The final examination timetable is out and it is your responsibility to ensure that the courses you are writing this semester are all reflected on the timetable and do not clash. Do study the timetable carefully, copy down the dates, times and venues of your examinations to make sure you do not miss an examination.

S. Chakanyuka (Dr.) Coordinator, Academic Studies (April, 2010)

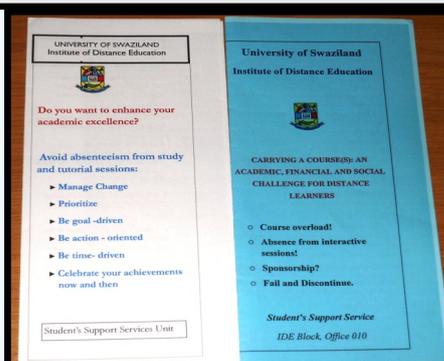
Student Support Services Unit

Guidance & Counselling

By Mrs. L.D. Vilakati

Kwaluseni - The IDE Student Support Services unit, is busy with various activities, one of which is to guide all those interested in enrolling in IDE.

The Coordinator of the unit, Mrs. L.D. Vilakati allocates time to explain the entry pre-requisites, reviews and discusses the symbols obtained at completion of high school and guides prospective students on the most appropriate programme for him/her and how to fill in the application form accurately. This task is critical in that it guides to ensure that 'right choices' are made with regards to whether the programme chosen is ideal for individuals. A correct choice, in terms of choosing a course to enrol in, automatically means that the chances of better performance are guaranteed.



All IDE learners are informed that two information brochures geared towards helping you achieve academic excellence titled 'Avoid Absenteeism from Study & Tutorial Sessions' & 'Carrying Course(s): An Academic, Financial, and Social Challenge for Distance Learners.' are readily available @ the IDE Print Shop.



Pic: Sr. Coordinator, Student Support Services Mrs L.D. Vilakati captured taking a prospective IDE student through the correct application procedure.

**Congratulations
Professor Sukati**

IDE is very proud of the recent promotion of the IDE Director, Dr. C.W.S. Sukati to Associate Professor. This is a remarkable achievement and we wish him the best in all his career endeavours.



Advocacy for a National Open Distance Learning (ODL) Policy and Association



Open Distance Learning can contribute significantly towards achieving the first world status His Majesty King Mswati III aspires for the Kingdom of eSwatini
WRITES
G.N. Nsibandé

The lack of a national open distance policy (ODL) is crippling the local education system. Such a policy is an essential ingredient which will ensure that the Kingdom of Swaziland has a quality education system.

I participated in a inspirational Open Distance Learning (ODL) seminar hosted by the Ministry of Education & Training (MOET) which was facilitated by Dr. Godson Gatsha, Director, SADC - CDE late last year (2010). Thereafter, I decided to take the initiative and write this article as the first step towards earnestly advocating for ODL to become a noteworthy, solid alternative teaching/learning method and an integral part of the country's education system. Creating an awareness about ODL and the need for a national ODL policy to provide the necessary guidance to manage key challenges in ODL, amongst educators and other stakeholders (which includes the public at large), is crucial in this advocacy for ODL, as well as establishing an association for it.

ODL is by no means a new concept in the Kingdom. Evidence of this is the existence of non-formal education centres such as; Sebenta, Emlalati Development Centre and the Institute of Distance Education. Previously, both ODL teaching and learning occurred via correspondence through the post and print and is still the dominant media ODL relies on to minimise the gap and simultaneously connect the learner and the teacher. In today's world where technology features prominently, information and communications technology (ICT) is used as an additional media which closes the distance. Globally, experience shows that education systems that competently manage large student numbers whilst concurrently improving access to education, develop visibly. ODL is one approach which can help achieve this development because

it is an alternative option for the delivery of education to those that require it. Because it upholds life long learning there is no age restriction, is affordable, uses a distance approach, is flexible and uses minimum contact sessions with tutors to clarify grey areas or, receive face-to-face feedback from learners.

Advantage of ODL

The flexibility in ODL automatically allows the learner to study anywhere and at any time suitable for him/her. Nowadays, as Calvert (2006) highlights, ODL is considered as the most viable means for broadening educational access while improving the quality of education, advocating peer-to-peer collaboration and giving the learners a greater sense of autonomy and responsibility for learning...for Governments ODL provides a means of increasing access to learning and training opportunity.'

Why Create a National ODL Policy & Association?

The scope of ODL delivery is wide. But one major constraint faced by ODL which hinders the ability to effectively implement it and incorporate it into the education system, is the lack of a comprehensive national ODL policy. A national ODL policy would prevent ODL institutions from offering un-accredited programmes, being fragmented, uncoordinated and unregulated. In fact, a national ODL policy would allow Swaziland to be in a position to discover and reflect on the current educational policy and draw a parallel on issues for articulation in a national ODL policy.

It's imperative that ODL practitioners and relevant stakeholders join hands to invest in ODL. As Fowler, Vilakati, Sukati eloquently state (2009) '[ODL] is one solution to providing education to all those who desire it, can afford it and will benefit from it.' An ODL policy and association would ensure that ODL is integrated successfully into Swaziland's education system and demonstrate the much needed support of it. A national ODL policy should be considered as a strategy to sustain and ensure the growth of the education system, which inevitably contributes to the national development. In conclusion, I have no doubt that ODL can contribute significantly towards achieving the first world status His Majesty King Mswati III aspires for the Kingdom of eSwatini.

IDE Presents Numerous Papers at Research, Publication & Capacity Building Workshop Indaba Conference in Maputo, Mozambique

Maputo- On the 3rd and 4th March, 2011 IDE personnel attended and participated in the Research, Publication & Capacity Building Workshop Indaba Conference. The papers presented there were well received and undoubtedly added valuable knowledge to those present and the academic world at large. The gist of each paper presented is reflected on this page.

SCHOOL-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION: A CASE FOR THE INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND.

The paper explored the possibility of adopting a school based teacher education model where students on such programmes as the B ED Primary and Secondary and PGCE would have all their sessions in the schools in which they teach. The students participants felt that the university led model would be best. University lecturers would go to the regions and conduct sessions there. All examinations would be written in the regions.

S.Chakanyuka (Dr.)



Academic Literacy at the University of Swaziland: incorporating the enquiry-based approach into Moodle as a possible response to literacy development?

Paper presented by K. Ferreira Meyers

The presentation focussed on resources and strategies proposed by the Department of Academic Communication Skills (English) and the Department of Modern Languages (French and Portuguese) to ensure that the learners' literacy skills are developed.

Academic literacy involves a combination of relevant skills and knowledge for learners to be effective in their studies. This includes appropriate use of academic language, technical literacy, information literacy, knowledge of the cultural context, etc. In addition to fostering the development of cognitive skills, the enquiry- based approach helps learners by providing an organizing

Enhancing professional skills of IDE students through web-supported learning

Presentation by N.T. Vilakati

The presentation was based on an exploratory study to probe the feasibility or not for IDE to design, develop and implement web-supported learning resources through a participatory design approach. The study probed whether or not students and course facilitators can become co-designers of their technologically-enhanced learning environment. Relevant learning theories and pedagogical models were explored as part of the study to inform the design of an optimized web-supported learning environment to cater for needs of IDE distance learners who are in professional courses. The study findings will help IDE to select the most accessible web-supported learning environment to IDE students through various learning technologies, including print-based study guides and mobile learning devices.



From left to right: Pictured here are Dr. Godson Gatsha, Director, SADC—CDE who facilitated the sessions, IDE Copy Editor G.N. Nsibandé & K. Ferreira - Meyers who delivered a paper in collaboration with J. Nkosi on Academic Literacy.

scheme for making sense of the mass of detail present in the reading and also have a cognitive framework on which to hang new facts. An enquiry-based approach is: versatile; flexible for learners; highly motivating, and connected to the real world. It reinforces multiple skills and allows learners to build the confidence to know where and how to get wanted information. E-learning and its tools such as Moodle (with its inbuilt features such as quick-mail, customizable content areas, document repository facility, efficient communication tools, etc.) have an added advantage in developing skills required for autonomous and self-directed learning within a learning community. Moodle itself that need to be tackled before the university community can fully benefit from this teaching and learning strategy. These challenges are centered around computer knowledge, lack of administrative/management support, time constraints, lack of technical support, lack of policy and roadmaps, attitudinal problems, gap between learners and faculty's perception of technology.

IDE Hosts Writers Orientation Workshops

By G.N. Nsibande



Kwaluseni—In November, 2010, a workshop for authors from the Library, the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Faculty of Education was facilitated by

Pic: On the right handside are members of the Faculty of Commerce listening intently and noting discussions during the IDE facilitated authors orientation workshop.



On the far left is Mr. S.T.M. Sithole. The Head Accounting with Mr. S. Shezi, IDE Part-time Lecturer. Above are Lecturers, Accounting Mrs. K. Vijayaa & Ms. J. Dlamini

IDE. Professional English, HIV/AIDS and Library Skills experts/academics convened at the workshop to prepare writing IDE modules in these specified areas.



Pic: Mr.s Tevera, Mr Dlamini, Dr Mngadi, Dr. Mathunjwa-Dlamini and Ms. Nguenya



Pic: Above, Director, Community Services, Ms. D.G. Nkam-bule & Lecturer, Business Administration Ms. P. Dlamini .

A similar workshop was again facilitated by IDE on 11 March, 2011 for the Commerce authors to prepare modules in line with the requirements of the new B.Com programme. During both workshops, it was explained to participants that the aim of the workshop was to orientate and train the designated authors on how to write the modules before they embarked on the 'actual' task of writing them. Emphasis on the importance of writers learning how to prepare and publish IDE materials to ensure they are fit for purpose was made. The delivery mode and materials design and development process was also delved into. The workshop outcomes were;



Ms. N.T. Vilakati captured stressing a point during the writers orientation workshop & Ms. K. Ferreira-Meyers, Programme Director seated next to her.

Lecturer, Business Administration Ms. N. Shiba

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Open Distance Learning Template Workshop

By G.N. Nsibande

Kwaluseni - On March, 18 2011, IDE Materials Design & Development hosted a workshop on the Commonwealth of Learning template.

expectation that the support staff helps to prepare this material as well and the need to train them appropriately.

The facilitators were K.Ferreira - Meyers, N.T. Vilakati and G.N. Nsibande. In the name of collaboration, participants comprised of support staff from the Faculty of Education and IDE.

K. Ferreira-Meyers clearly articulated the strategy of the workshop as interactive and hands-on, as there were practicals conducted on how to use the ODL template. She further explained that the aim of the workshop was to discuss the role of typesetting in the module development process and guide on how to use the ODL template for packaging the IDE modules.

The Coordinator, Materials Design & Development made the opening remarks on behalf of the IDE Director. She reminded participants that the IDE core business is to ensure that the teaching and learning materials are up to par in terms of quality. Also mentioned was the fact that IDE is gradually integrating multi-media to enhance teaching and learning, hence the

Papers presented during the workshop were titled 'The role of typesetting in ODL Materials' by Ms. N.T. Vilakati. The IDE Copy Editor, Ms. G. N. Nsibande delivered a presentation on 'Editing, Typesetting and the ODL Template.' Thereafter, a vibrant practical session on using the ODL template was led by the facilitators.



Pic: Participants of the ODL Template workshop pictured with some of the IDE facilitators at the workshop held on March, 18, 2011.

SEMESTERIZATION PHASE II

By Professor C.W.S. Sukati

The University is currently engaged in intensive consultations and discussions with both staff and students on Phase II of the Semesterization process at UNISWA. Students and staff members in the Institute of Distance Education are also urged to actively participate in these debates and discussions so that they can also have an input and a say in the future of semesterization at UNISWA. If they miss this opportunity, they cannot turn around in future and complain about semesterization because they will have refused/neglected to use this opportunity that has been availed to them.

IDE STAFF AT THE SIXTH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING (PCF6) *By Professor C.W.S Sukati*

The sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF6) was held in Kochi, India from 24th to 28th November, 2010. The Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning is an International Conference that is held once in two years and brings together practitioners, researchers, planners and policy makers in the fields of open and distance learning and development from over 70 countries, and has grown to become a leading International conference on learning and development. The Forum explores the contribution of ODL to international development goals, by opening up access to learning at every level. It also provides opportunities to share experience and expertise, and to contribute to future policy and provision of ODL. The aim of the PCF6 Forum was to consider what ODL has done and still can do in terms of success.

PCF6 was jointly organized by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) popularly known as "The People's University", and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). PCF6 had four main themes, all grouped under the overarching Theme of **Access and Success in Learning: Global Development Perspectives**. The four themes were: **Skills Development, Formal Education, Social Justice and Community Development**. Several topics and subjects were covered under each theme, such as skills development for national development, quality of education for all, education and employment, education quality issues, teacher education, technologies and open learning, community outreach, open education resources, innovative and knowledge society and regional cooperation.

Two IDE staff members attended this Forum with the financial assistance from COL. The two staff members were the Director, Prof. C.W.S. Sukati and the Coordinator, Academic Studies Unit, Dr. S. Chakanyuka. These two staff members also presented papers (which were well received) at this Forum as follows:

Prof. C W S Sukati presented a paper entitled, *In pursuit of Quality: UNISWA Lecturer's Perception on the Academic Performance of Conventional and Distance Education Students*. Dr. S Chakanyuka then delivered a paper on - a) *Head Teacher's Expectations of a Quality Teacher Produced Through Distance Education*; b) *Staff Related Factors Contributing to Quality in Open and Distance Learning*. Several other papers were presented at this Forum, and IDE staff members who would like to view and access these papers can contact the IDE Director or Dr.Chakanyuka.



Pictured at the 6th Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open & Distance Learning in Kochi, India is Professor C.W.S. Sukati IDE, UNISWA Director who is seated in the middle of Professor E. Chandraiah, Head Dept. of Commerce (left) & Dean of Science Faculty (right) who are both based at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University.

CONFERENCE REPORT EFRARD 2010 DAKAR, SENEGAL 7-9 DECEMBER 2010

By K. Ferreira-Meyers

Dakar, Senegal - The 2nd International EFRARD Conference was held in Dakar, Senegal 7-9 December 2010.

The first plenary session was themed cyberspace and social transformation and had presenters making contributions about virtual mobility and encounters, democratic e-participation, active and passive measures for geo-localization of webservers.

The second day opened with a roundtable regarding international collaborative research strategies, participants brainstormed on their individual 'best practices' in view of further cooperation. The interactive discussions revealed enlightening information on archiving and new ways of e-training in the field of libraries, digital networks and collaborative translation technologies.



Some of the participants of the 2nd International EFRARD Conference held in Dakar, Senegal 7-9 December 2010

IDE host Writer's Orientation Workshops

Continued from page 6

Student Support Services provides the following:

- ◆ General information with regard to your academic and social welfare.
- ◆ Your induction as a new student to the IDE teaching and learning system.
- ◆ Guidelines and procedures on student governance especially in presenting academic challenges to the IDE management and the IDE Academic Board.
- ◆ Testimonials and other confirmation letters on your fitness for academic study, your status and capabilities as an IDE student.
- ◆ Access to support services at the Regional Learning Centres through the Regional coordinators.

to commit to collaborate with IDE to produce module outlines, develop course modules and draw up schedules for the writing of the course materials.

Presentations made during the first workshop were informative and well received. Coordinator, Academic Studies, Dr. Chakanyuka, delivered a paper explaining 'The Concept of DE' and thereafter led a very interactive session, which allowed the participants to discuss the implications of distance learning for the teaching and learning in IDE. Implications on the learner as well as the lecturer/tutor, the module writer and on the institute was deliberated upon as well.

Ms. G.N. Nsibandé presented on 'Writing for the Distance Learner: Use of Appropriate Language and Access Devices.' Here, the importance of using interactive access devices and appropriate and consistent language when writing DE materials was emphasised. Ms. N.T. Vilakati delivered useful papers titled 'Planning for Developing interactive Learning Content' and



Library Assistant(s), Mr Anbu and Mr. Yamba.



Pictured here is Lecturer, Business Administration/Tutor IDE, Mr. T. Lukhele delivering a presentation on behalf of Dean, Commerce.

another on 'Rationale & Strategies for Specifying Learning Outcomes.' The specific outcomes of the commerce workshop (which was the second writers orientation workshop) were spelt out as to building capacity in the area of quality learning resources, including print as well as the integration of other media. Papers presented during the

commerce workshop were educational and titled as follows: Ms. N.T. Vilakati 'Designing for Distance Learning Courseware.' Ms. K. Ferreira-Meyers presented on 'Developing Module Content' and Ms. G.N. Nsibandé who doubled up as Programme Director, delivered a paper titled 'The Role of Editing & Use of Appropriate Language.'

A key issue stressed was that building quality into distance learning materials, by sharing skills and techniques for writing interactive learning content was priority. Developing content for learning materials that will arouse interest and motivate students to understand the intended unit learning outcomes was highlighted as a vital aspect to consider when writing the modules. Also highlighted as essential was the editing of the modules because it is a quality assurance mechanism which focuses on content presentation and layout. Illustrations of the use of appropriate language to create accessible distance learning materials were provided. Both author orientation workshops were enlightening, and this was gauged by the lively, interactive discussions and feedback gathered from the evaluation data received from participants.

Improvement and Enhancement of Teaching and Learning at IDE

The IDE has been using its current Distance Education delivery system since it started operating in 1996. This current system uses mainly the course modules and some face-to-face student support in the form of Lectures and Tutorials. However, with the problems currently encountered by the face-to-face sessions, and new developments in ICT's availability, accessibility, affordability, etc. it has been found to be imperative that the IDE delivery system be reviewed, with a view to improving and enhancing the teaching and learning at the Institute.

A discussion paper aimed at doing this has been prepared and presented for discussion at the IDE Academic Board. The Board resolved to send the paper to the Departments for comments and suggestions. Almost all the affected Departments have responded to the IDE on this paper, and the Institute is currently studying the feedback from the Departments with a view to revising its proposal. Departments that have not responded and staff members or students who would like to comment and make suggestions on this are welcome to do so. We request however that this be done as soon as possible – otherwise the boat will leave without them.

Professor C.W.S. Sukati, IDE Director

To reduce the stress related to studying at a distance, IDE is gradually integrating e-learning (MOODLE Learning Management System) to bridge the gap between the learner and tutor, thus enhancing the teaching and learning within IDE.

Sourced from the internet.



Institute of Distance Education
 Taking University Education and professional programmes to the people.

University of Swaziland
 Private Bag No. 4
 KWALUSENI
 Phone: 268—5184011/4545
 Fax: 268- 5187083

Time to Reflect
 "We shall not grow wiser before we learn that much that we have done was very foolish." - F. A. Hayek