

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM



STATEMENT BY HON. UAHEKUA HERUNGA, MP
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

AT THE

**OFFICIAL INAUGURATION OF THE NEW ROOF MOUNTED
PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM AND RECEIVING OF
TRUCKS AND ROAD MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT**

14th MARCH 2013

**MET HQ, TROSKIE BUILDING
KHOMAS REGION**

Director of Ceremonies;

H.E. Onno Hückmann, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Namibia;

Dr. Romeo Bertolini, Councillor of the German Development Cooperation, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany;

Dr. Friedrich Von Kenne, Country Director of GIZ;

Members of the Business Community present;

Staff Members of MET;

Distinguished Invited Guests;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning!

I am immensely pleased and honoured to address you today at this important event and gathering that is marking yet another highlight in the cooperation between the Governments of Namibia and Germany.

Today, we are inaugurating the new roof mounted solar system installed at the MET Head Office. This 212KWp (kilo watt peak) solar system, directly converts sunlight into electric power. The MET is also receiving equipment in the form of five 4x4 trucks, three graders and two back hoe loaders, all together to the value of N\$ 18,6 million, funded through the German Government and

implemented by the GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer international Zusammenarbeit).

It is a natural move for the Ministry of Environment and Tourism to show-case environmentally friendly solar energy because it provides an answer to the question of many tourists visiting our country: Why does Namibia not make more use of solar power?

The effort of MET is also a boost to the effort of NamPower to add 10% of renewable power generation to the national electricity grid. The new system with a maximum output of 212 kilo watt has been built and brought on line within the record installation time of just 10 weeks. It is currently the largest system run by a government institution and it demonstrates that renewable energy systems from local suppliers can play an important role to fill the immediate power gap which might be felt already during the coming winter period.

As a daily average throughout the year 1050 kilowatt units of clean electricity will be produced which currently is more than the MET complex requires. Thus the Ministry is very much interested in the implementation of a national net-metering scheme which has been urgently addressed by the honourable Minister of Mines and Energy during the inauguration of the NamPower solar system.

Although this is the first “on-grid” solar system the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has just started to use, the ministry and the private lodging sector have been using “off-grid” solar power for many years and very successfully for providing rural energy and ground water pumping. Renewable energy can obviously help

to reduce the “Carbon Footprint” of the tourism industry. The efficient management of our ecosystem cannot be emphasized enough and issues of climate change and renewable energy remains a national priority. More than ever the urgency for alternative energy sources and in particular renewable energy to be put in place is increasing with eminent power shortage looming in 2016.

This is further our direct response to the call by his Excellency President Hifikepunye Pohamba in his address of 2010 to the Permanent secretaries and I quote “Our nation stands at a critical juncture, where effective leadership must be provided at all levels as we address the development challenges facing our nation. Some of the critical issues include the ongoing negotiations towards Economic partnership agreements, the search for new electricity generation potions, the search for new markets for our products and other economic development issues” end of quote. Therefore this support from the German Government could not have come at a better time.

Furthermore, this initiative clearly demonstrates our commitment to the realization of medium-term goals in NDP 4 and long-term Vision 2030. Similarly, this initiative also demonstrates actual implementation of our National Policy on Climate Change as approved by Cabinet in 2010 and its associated Strategy and Action Plan. Our National Policy on Climate Change calls for the optimum exploitation of our renewal energy sources. This initiative is a practical example. Namibia has so much potential and opportunities in renewal energy sources. What are required are

capital investments that can make us all (whether at household or institutional level) producer of energy in this country. If each farmer, business facility, government institutions, etc are all installed with solar panels to produce energy, they will certainly become energy self-sufficient. The surplus can be fed into the main grid of NamPower. This means, less import of energy from outside Namibia, less demand from our only hydro scheme in Ruacana and more electricity for our industrial development and of course, more access to electricity to all our rural community. What we need is the bold step and hard decision to make in terms of investment in this sector. We in Namibia have comparative advantage here. Let us seize this opportunity. Our national policy is in place, our strategy is there, and thus, the framework is in place. We therefore expect the private sector to emulate from this example.

We recognize that our sustainable development endeavors ultimately lead to an improved quality of life for all Namibians that cannot be achieved without environmental conservation, as all life on Earth depends on healthy ecosystems and their services. Using more renewable energies is an important step towards ensuring such conservation, as opposed to exhaustible fossil fuels.

Let us make every effort in investing in renewable natural resources that are constantly replenished and will be available also for future generations. And, as stated in our Vision 2030, our prosperity is the future we all want in harmony with our environment for all Namibians both present and future.

**Director of Ceremonies,
Ladies and Gentleman**

Our Protected Areas are vital tools for conserving Namibia's essential biodiversity. By managing our protected areas properly, we will leave the irreplaceable assets and the unlimited potential they possess to future generations. Our protected areas and wildlife also draw hundreds of thousands of tourists to Namibia. The international fascination with Namibia's Parks is growing annually and, as more visitors arrive, they generate employment and stimulate development, not just in the Parks, but nationwide.

Namibia is committed to the sustainable use of wildlife resources, provided for in our national constitution. By now it has become common knowledge that tourism has grown to be one of the most important industry in Namibia in terms of its strong contribution to the Gross Domestic Product, employment creation and the well-being and social upliftment of rural people.

As alluded to earlier, MET is also receiving equipment in the form of five 4x4 trucks, three graders and two back hoe loaders in order to improve and maintain the infrastructure in our protected areas.

I am pleased to inform you that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has undertaken a long term programme of constructing and rehabilitating the road network in the protected areas. The MET has significantly increased the development budget allocation to this activity from N\$800,000 in 2007/08 to N\$19million in 2012/13 and has successfully completed major

road rehabilitation projects, such as the upgrade of the 15km long main road at Mahango Core Area of BMM National Park, the rehabilitation of more than 100km of tourist roads in Etosha NP and road rehabilitations at Namib Naukluft Park, Hardap and Daan Viljoen Game Park. In this current financial year, MET plans to start with the upgrade of the road infrastructure in the Dorob NP including the angling roads along the coast.

Therefore, this donation could not have come at the right time as it is going to help ensure the maintenance of the roads, cutlines and firebreaks in our protected areas, focusing on Dorob, Namib Naukluft, Skeleton Coast and Bwabwata, Mudumu and Mamili National Parks. Thus, this support will further contribute to sustainable management of our protected areas and natural resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I will fail in my duty as leader, if I don't acknowledge that inauguration of the Solar system for MET and the handing over of the equipment was made possible through the commitment of a great team of staff in my Ministry.

I, would therefore like to use this moment to officially thank the staff of MET, the office of the PS in particular Ms. Erica Akuenje who was acting at the time, the Directorate of Planning and Technical Services and the CIM expert and MET Engineer Mr. Christian Lerch for the great joint effort and prompt action that led to the successful implementation of this support in such a short

span period of three months. I'm so proud of that illustration of efficiency as it cemented the great spirit of cooperation between the Governments of Namibia and Germany.

In conclusion, let me express Namibia's highest consideration and gratitude to the German Government for this demonstration of your commitment to our country and its economic sustainability. I am confident that this solar system will raise awareness that renewable energy not only a factor of environmental protection but also a concrete contributor to sustainable development and a vehicle for living together in harmony and understanding of our ecosystem.

I THANK YOU!