

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

\*Check Against Delivery



**STATEMENT BY MR. HENOCK YA KASITA**

**DEPUTY MINISTER OF MINES AND ENERGY OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**ON THE THEME OF**

***“TURNING COMMITMENTS INTO ACTION, WORKING  
TOGETHER IN PARTNERSHIP”***

**DURING THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE 15<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF  
THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSD-15)**

**NEW YORK**

**11 May 2007**

Mr Chairman

My delegation to this session of the Commission on Sustainable Development wishes to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau for the way in which you have been directing our proceedings.

We have requested the floor to contribute to the debate on “Turning Commitments into Action, Working together in Partnership”.

Both in Stockholm, Rio, Johannesburg and other fora, we as governments and countries, members of the United Nations have made various commitments to drive forward the cause for sustainable development in the context of our common but differentiated responsibilities.

Among others, we did commit ourselves to eradicate poverty, changing the unsustainable patterns of consumption and production and to protect and manage the natural resource base for economic and social development as well as for the protection of the environment.

At the same time, we have committed ourselves to working together to help one another gain access to financial resources, benefit from the opening of markets, ensure capacity building, use modern technology to bring about development and make sure that there is technology transfer, human resource development, education and training to banish underdevelopment for ever and consign poverty to the archives.

We have also committed ourselves to making sure that the available resources are used to the benefit of humanity.

Today, we are meeting here not only to review what we have achieved so far, but also to map out the way forward in the areas of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change.

Mr Chairman

With regard to energy for sustainable development, Namibia has been pursuing a mixed sustainable energy policy based on hydropower, fossil fuels, including the possibility of utilizing nuclear energy for the generation

of electricity, natural gas and renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar energy.

Furthermore, we are active members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) sub-regional power pool where by we both import and at times export power to other members of the power pool.

However, currently we are faced with the crucial shortage of electricity supply, as increasing demand in our sub-region has not been matched with corresponding development of and investment in energy supply sources. This is negatively affecting our rural electrification programme, which the Government embarked upon right at independence in 1990.

Furthermore, our attempts at diversifying energy sources have not been successful due to various factors. Firstly, the Government's efforts to generate hydropower on the Kunene River has been met with resistance from both the environmental community and potential financial supporters, who invoke environmental concerns that may result from such developments despite studies that indicate that the projects are both economically viable and environmentally sound.

On the other hand, both solar and wind energy sources have proved to be costly, especially given our status as a lower middle-income country with no qualification for significant financial grants and/or concessional loans.

With regard to air pollution, I wish to highlight the following:

As a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Namibia faced out the use of leaded petrol at the end of 2005. My Government has also banned the importation of second hand vehicles from a number of countries, as they are believed not to meet the minimum emissions of carbon dioxide. To this one should also add my Government's programme of subsidies to businesses that attempt to switch to more environmentally friendly practices, such as replacing cooling systems that emit greenhouse gases with more environmentally friendly ones.

Of course our democracy continues to be vibrant while our policies to combat both desertification and land degradation have scored some successes, as communities continue to adapt to climate changes. As an example, more and more communities are now switching from unsustainable

agricultural activities towards community based conservancies and/or tourism. This will hopefully make the land that could otherwise have become useless due to persistent droughts and desertification, again usefulness.

Mr Chairman,

When it comes to working in partnership, it saddens me to say that the global partnership for development is failing us as developing countries in general and as middle income developing countries in particular.

Firstly, our classification as a lower middle-income country has made our access to financial resources very much limited. This limitation has negatively affected our rural electrification programmes and hence our poverty reduction and industrialization processes.

Secondly, our country, like the rest of Africa, continues to suffer from the effects of climate change. Namibia is among the driest countries in the world and this fact alone has made us prone to recurrent bouts of drought. Indeed, it is rare in Namibia to experience two consecutive good rain seasons.

The continuation of this situation may, if not properly addressed, likely lead to instability given that about sixty per cent of our population live in rural areas and depend on rain-fed subsistence farming. Even conservancies and community-based tourism are unimaginable without the availability of sufficient water.

Furthermore, Namibia is sandwiched between two deserts, which make the combating of desertification and land degradation a matter of life and death. Desertification and insufficient rain as a result of global warming is threatening the very livelihoods of our people as the desert continues to claim more and more of the agricultural and range land and rendering it inhabitable. Continued reckless emissions of greenhouse gases and inadequate financial and technical support to our efforts to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change will therefore only exacerbate this already worse situation.

Namibia is also both a coastal and mountainous country, which is further making our lives more precarious. Rising seas as a result of climate change

culminates in flooding of coastal areas. It is indeed hard to contemplate a situation were heavy rains to fall in our coastal areas because the loose desert sands on which coastal towns are built will not stand the force of floodwaters.

Insufficient rain has also led to water scarcity in some parts of the country while other parts experience floods annually due to their proximity to perennial rivers that we share with a number of our neighbours. These factors have also made our ecosystem very fragile and the country vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Mr Chairman

It is frightening that we are faced with these challenges at a time when aid flows to our country have continued to decline steadily from US\$110 per capita immediately after our independence in 1990 to US\$ 60 per capita in 2005. In addition, the number of bilateral donors active in Namibia also declined from 22 in the 1990s to 17 in 2006. There are also indications that three of these might be leaving the country next year (2008).

Another symptom of climate change that is becoming evident in Namibia is the spread of malaria to areas hitherto considered free of the disease.

Historically, this disease was prevalent in the northern and northeastern parts of the country only because the central and southern parts had colder temperatures. However, with the change in temperatures since a few years ago, malaria-carrying mosquitoes are found nearly everywhere in the country spreading the disease. Meanwhile, our fight against malaria is being hindered by the high costs of medicines while our own efforts to produce cheaper generics have been met with resistance as multinational pharmaceutical companies invoke their ownership of intellectual property.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman I wish to appeal to the international community, and especially to our developed partners to fulfill their commitments to assisting us both financially and technically to achieve sustainable development. They should also reduce the levels of greenhouse gasses emissions.

I hope that the document we will adopt at the end of this session of the Commission on Sustainable Development will encourage us all to do more to further sustainable development.

I thank you.