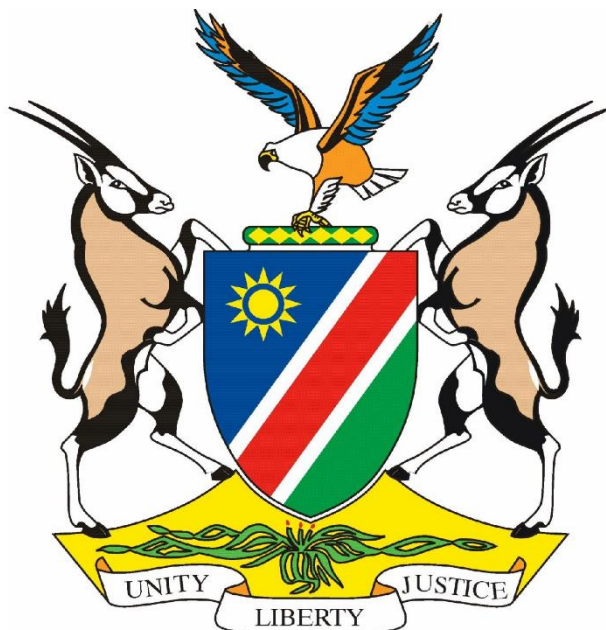




REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HON. POHAMBA SHIFETA, MP
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM**

**AT THE COASTAL PARKS INFRASTRUCTURE
GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY AND LAUNCH OF PARK
MANAGEMENT PLANS**

02 DECEMBER 2021, 09H00

CAPE CROSS SEAL RESERVE, ERONGO REGION

Programme Director, Mr. Golgar “Conservation” Sikopo, Deputy Executive Director responsible for Natural Resources, in the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism

Honourable Obeth Kandjoze, Director General of the National Planning Commission

Honourable Neville Andre, Governor of the Erongo Region,

Your Excellency Herbert Beck, Ambassador of Germany to Namibia,

Honourable Benitha Imbamba, Councilor of Arandis Constituency and all other Councilors present,

Comm. Nelumbu, NAMPOL commander of Erongo Region and other local NAMPOL commanders,

Traditional and spiritual leaders present,

I recognize our acting chief of the Topnaar traditional community,

Mr. Teofelus Nghitila, ED, MEFT, Officials of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism present,

Heads of other Government departments, NGOs and the private sector,

I recognize the CRO of Kunene regional council,

CEO/MD of public enterprises present,

Representatives from the German Development Bank KfW,

NamParks 5 project staff

All invited guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to meet you all here in the Cape Cross Seal Reserve at this conservation and economic event for the groundbreaking ceremony that will pave way for the construction of staff houses, park management offices, tourism receptions and tourism entrance gates for the Cape Cross Seal Reserve in the Erongo Region; Skeleton Coast Park in the Kunene Region and Namib Naukluft Park in the Erongo, Hardap and Karas Regions.

Today's event will also see the launch of the Management Plans for Skeleton Coast Park, Dorob National Park and Namib Naukluft Park.

The coastal parks of Cape Cross, Skeleton Coast, Dorob and Namib Naukluft Park are part of what has become one of the longest protected coastlines in the world, stretching from the Iona National Park in south-western Angola bordering the Skeleton Coast Park to the Ramsar Site at the Orange River.

With signing of the agreement for establishment of the Iona-Skeleton Coast Transfrontier Park between Namibia and Angola, there is an opportunity to establish a much larger Transfrontier Conservation Area that spans three countries of Namibia, Angola and South Africa along the

Namib coast.

Director of ceremonies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Namibia National Parks Programme, is a development programme of the Government of the Republic of Namibia executed by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism. The programme is co-financed by the Federal Republic of Germany through the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) via KfW Development Bank.

Earlier phases of the programme centered on Namibia's North- Eastern National Parks of Nkasa Rupara, Mudumu, Bwabwata and Khaudum National Parks as well as on the Tsau //Khaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park in the south-west of the country.

NamParks 5, which is the current phase, covers the four Namibian Coastal Parks that comprise of the Skeleton Coast Park, the Dorob National Park with Cape Cross Seal Reserve, the Namib Naukluft Park as well as the Tsau //Khaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park.

These Coastal Parks, with their linkage with the transfrontier conservation areas in the north with Angola and in the south with South Africa, and further linkages with numerous concessions, conservancies and private conservation areas, offer an exceptional conservation and tourism opportunities.

The parks are managed for wildlife, biodiversity conservation and tourism for economic development of the country and improved livelihoods of the people.

Through our Namibia - German cooperation we continue to invest in new infrastructure development for National Parks. Officials of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, particularly those working for wildlife and National Parks, need to be equipped with appropriate tools and equipment to conduct their day to day activities efficiently and effectively.

With this groundbreaking today, infrastructure development will take place at Cape Cross in the Cape Cross Seal Reserve; Ugabmund, Springbokwasser and Mowe Bay in the Skeleton Coast Park; as well as

Sesriem and Gobabeb in the Namib Naukluft Park.

New infrastructure will include new park entrance gates and signage walls; new offices; tourism receptions; vehicle garages and maintenance workshops; staff houses; service building with equipment stores, service pit and wash bays, and ablution blocks. We are convinced that this infrastructure development will improve the management of our parks, service delivery and tourists visiting the parks will enjoy Namibia's best kept secrets.

As mentioned, today we are also launching the new management plans for the Skeleton Coast Park, Dorob National Park, and Namib Naukluft Park.

These management plans set out the vision, objectives and guidelines for the management and development of the specific parks for the next ten years.

As such, the plans represents the policies and intentions of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism and provides for mechanisms to strengthen collaboration with user groups of the parks and other stakeholders.

Everyone involved with the park, including MEFT decision makers and management staff, personnel of other Ministries and Parastatals, private

sector companies and individuals, all contractors, partners, tourists and any entity and individual dealing in any way with the specific park, must ensure that any actions and decisions relating to the park are in strict accordance with the plans.

The management plans also makes provision for tourism development and management. It is in this section where new tourism concessions are identified. Where we have such new concessions, the award process will be done in the year 2022 so that the parks continue to contribute to economic development and improved livelihood of the communities.

Director of ceremonies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once again, I express our heartfelt gratitude for the Germany Government's continued friendship and generous support. You have become a "Friend of our Parks". I am also grateful to KfW and the Project Management Unit for making sure that the funding is being managed well and that projects are being implemented correctly and according to agreed plans.

I also wish to thank the staff of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, those working in the Coastal Parks and at head office, for their

ongoing commitment to wildlife conservation and tourism development.

Your work will contribute to the prosperity of the communities surrounding our parks, the national economy, and also to our national and international biodiversity conservation commitments. However, you must make sure that the infrastructure once constructed and complete, are properly maintained and that biodiversity is well managed for the current and future generations.

Last but not least, I thank the National Planning Commission, Traditional Authorities, Regional Councils and local communities for the support in regional planning, biodiversity conservation and tourism development.

I thank you all.