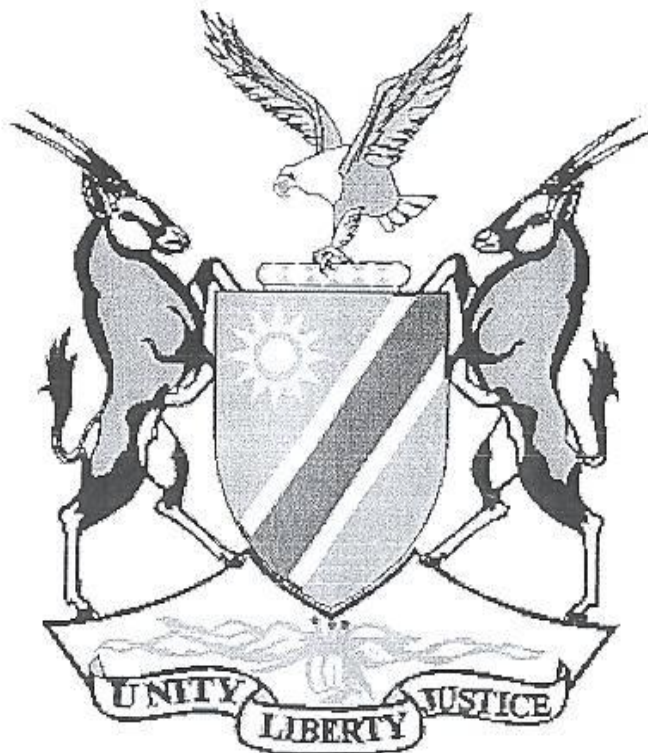


MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM



MEDIA BRIEFING BY Hon. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah (MP)
Minister of Environment and Tourism

ON THE TENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (COP-10)

02 November 2010

Windhoek, Namibia

MEDIA BRIEFING ON THE 10TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD), NAGOYA, JAPAN 18 – 29 OCTOBER 2010 By HON NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH, MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

Global Environmental Leaders converged on Nagoya, Japan from the 18-29 October for a landmark 10th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UN CBD).

The CBD was concluded in Rio 1992 during the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Namibia signed and ratified the Convention in 1994 and 1997 respectively. The Convention has three objectives namely the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of biodiversity and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the use of genetic resources.

In 2002 during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg South Africa, the Heads of States and Governments adopted a decision that a new international regime on access to genetic resources and equitable benefit sharing must be negotiated and concluded. This was to ensure that the third objective of the Convention is implemented.

The agenda of COP-10 was very comprehensive it included negotiations on the, Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Protocol, the Strategic Plan of the Convention for the next 10 years to guide international and national efforts to save biodiversity through enhanced action, and the Resource Mobilization Strategy that provides the way forward to a substantial increase to current levels of official development assistance in support of biodiversity and which will ensure that there are enough financial resources to implement the Strategic Plan of the Convention.

The meeting also considered issues pertaining to sustainable Inland waters biodiversity, Mountain biodiversity, Marine and coastal biodiversity, Biodiversity and Climate Change, Protected Areas, Biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands, forest biodiversity, new and emerging issues such as bio-fuels amongst others. All in all COP-10 adopted 47 decisions.

Four years ago African Countries appointed Namibia to serve as the Chief Negotiator for Africa on the ABS Protocol. Namibia accepted this honor and carried it out to the best of our ability. In fulfilling this responsibility Namibia hosted different consultation meetings on ABS both at the technical and Ministerial level. The African Ministerial Conference held in Windhoek, in March this year was a land mark event at which the African Position on ABS was agreed and approved by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in Mali Bamako. This Position provided a clear mandate to the African negotiators and ensured that the African position is taken on board in the ABS Protocol that was adopted on the 29th of October 2010 in Nagoya.

The Namibian delegation went to Nagoya with the mandate that the people who depend on biodiversity for their livelihood cannot afford a repeat of Copenhagen during the negotiations on Climate Change.

Our delegation was also inspired by the words of His Excellency Hifikepunye Pohamba who stated during the opening of the Pan African Ministerial Conference on ABS, in Windhoek, March 2010 and I quote "This year is the International Biodiversity, what better gift can we give the world and humanity than the adoption of the ABS Protocol in this year" end of quote.

Therefore as Chief Negotiator of Africa our delegation emphasized the importance of openness, consideration, and the need to ensure ownership of each and every final decision taken at the Conference.

It has to be recognized that this Conference was not an easy conference more especially the negotiations on ABS due to many interest groups, such as the Private Sector, Governments, Indigenous and Local Community and the Research Community and off-course the majority of our people who depends on biodiversity for their survival. Negotiators had to work day and night. From day one Africa's position with regard to the out-comes of COP-10 was based on a package which were the ABS Protocol, the Strategic Plan and the Resource Mobilization Strategy.

I am happy to inform His Excellency, President Pohamba and the Namibia Nation that the Access and Benefit-Sharing Protocol is adopted by the Parties to the Convention and together with it the Strategic Plan of the Convention and the Resource Mobilization Strategy. The Protocol will be open for signature at the

United Nations Headquarters in New York as from 2 February 2011 to 1 February 2012.

Once the Protocol comes into force the developing countries around the world are now in a position to profit meaningfully from their biological resources and associated traditional knowledge which has been exploited over the years without real benefit-sharing.

Members of the Media,

As I mentioned above Namibia was appointed to be the Chief Negotiator for four years. During this time, the Ministry has assigned a team of dedicated staff members to lead the African Negotiation team. I would therefore at this point like to thank Mr. Sem Shikongo, the team leader, Ms Kauna Schroder and Mr. Pierre du Plessis who have participated in all ABS negotiations held in all continents and provided leadership as delegated to us by Africa.

To conclude the chapter of ABS negotiations they had to spend three sleepless weeks in Nagoya Japan until 2:30 am on Saturday 30 October when the conference concluded.

At this stage I would also want to inform you the election of Ms Kauna Schroder into the Bureau of the Convention on behalf of Africa. The Bureau is the highest decision making body of the Convention. I congratulate her and have no doubt in my mind knowing her as I do she will serve this world body with integrity and in the interest of the people of the world Africa and Namibia in particular.

Finally, Namibia had a small but effective delegation which I led namely:

1. Dr. Kalumbi Shangula (MET Permanent Secretary)
2. Mr. Sem T Shikongo (Director: Tourism and African Group ABS Chief Negotiator)
3. Ms Kauna Schroder (Biodiversity and Sustainable Land Management Project Coordinator and ABS Negotiator) and
4. Mr. Pierre Du Plessis (CRIAA-SADC and ABS Negotiator)
5. Ms Anna Nangolo (Personal Assistant to the Minister)

I thank you for your attention.