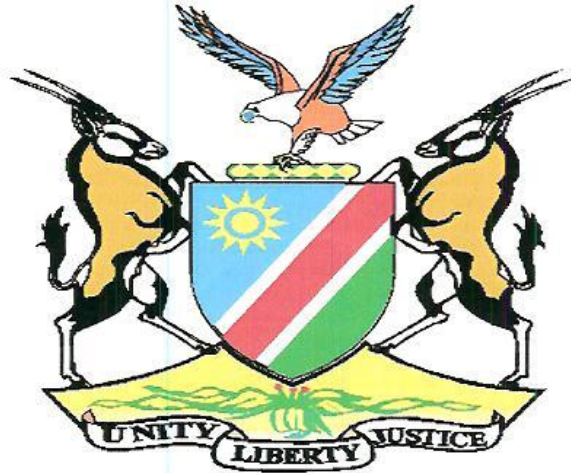


MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM



**Keynote Address by the Deputy Minister of Environment and Tourism, on
behalf of the Minister, Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah**

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

Green Economy Synthesis Workshop

16-17th November 2011

Country Club Resort

**Director of Ceremonies,
Line Ministry Representatives,
Partners of the NGO and Private Sector,
Partners of the Donor Community,
Partners of the Business Community,
Management and staff of Directorate of Environmental Affairs,
Distinguished Guests,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is my pleasure to have you here at the Green Economy Synthesis Workshop. It was during July this year that we as a Ministry organized the first dialogues on the topic Green Economy in Namibia. I can remember that it was not a topic that was easily accepted, understood and adopted. There were mixed and different definitions of what green economy really means and what it would mean for Namibia as a country. Consensus of a definition were reached and working groups were formed. There was a sign of interest to further unpack and explore the possibilities, opportunities, benefits and challenges of “greening the economy”

Namibia as a country is revising its National Development Plans after every five years. This year, the National Planning Commission has already started to work on the NPD4. We have noted that they have three key focus areas namely; reduction of inequality, employment creation and sustained economic growth. My questions to us this morning would be, how best can we harmonize green economy into our fourth development plan? How far are we willing to commit ourselves through our joint efforts to the greening of our economy? Did we take stock of our achievements and challenges on sustainable development? What do we have to offer in terms of economic sustainability to our future generations? If there is anything to offer, what tools do we have in place that can help us

reduce poverty and the high unemployment rate ~~in~~ particularly for the younger generation?

The green economy dialogues established a platform for a kick off on possible answers to these questions. Today, you are gathered to discuss and further deliberate on the outcomes of the kick off conference and draft reports of the working groups. I would like to repeat and emphasize what our Honorable Minister said last night during the High Level briefing;

Director of ceremonies,

Namibia is a country with a lot of opportunities and great future. Namibia is a country that seize opportunities and maximize them for her greater benefits. Let us seize opportunity presented through the introduction of green economy in the context of sustainable development. Namibia is a country that set trends. It is true that we were the one of the first few countries to present our Green Plan at the first Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Let us once again set the trend by presenting our roadmap to green economy at Rio+20.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Namibia still believes that the first principle of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development that human beings are at the center of sustainable development is still relevant. Namibia still believes that the call for sustainable development made at United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1972, World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, remains relevant. Since these major world events, the sustainable development process has mainly being led and spearheaded by the

Governments with a very minimal or peripheral involvement and engagement of the private sector and other role players in the socio-economic development sectors. What we now need is to scale-up the means of implementation for sustainable development, make finance available, bolster technical diffusion and cooperation and build our capacity and strongly involve private sector and civil society in this process. Overall, the Rio+20 should be about assessing progress towards sustainable development and meeting challenges through an action-oriented plan and enhanced means of implementation.

Namibia can be a key player in setting the international agenda on sustainable development. We can be a trendsetter in clean and renewable energy production. If we are trendsetter in environmental protection, we can be a trend in turn our resources into wealth in Africa. We therefore view the Rio+20 as the political platform that must consider the eradication of poverty as a priority.

Namibia views the Rio+20 Summit not about negotiating marginal issues but as a means to address the fundamental challenges of the 21st century, the fundamental development challenges of developing countries are facing.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The application and adoption of the concept of Green Economy has gained momentum recently and everyone is talking about ^{it} now. But how do we understand the concept and what does it mean for Namibia. Green Economy in general terms is about integrating environmental issues in the economic activities and decision-making thus making the economy green whereas United Nations Environmental Programme defines Green Economy as the one that results in **improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological**

scarcities. For Namibia it has the following meanings and possibilities.

- reduction of inequality; more jobs; opportunity for value-additions to our natural resources; curbing of flight of our raw materials; more investment in clean and renewable energy sources that is so in abundance in Namibia; increasing agricultural outputs; grow and sustaining our nature based tourism; diversification of economic opportunities and expand growth; investment in science and technology -technological advancement; diversification of services; quality of life improvement; better facilities; equal partnerships; equity in international trade; better prices for export products that can provide funds for internal development; ownership of raw materials; access to productive lands; etc; all the above constitute our understanding of green economy.
- We do not expect trade barrier, and trade protectionism; and development conditionalities; over-exploitation of natural resources and degradation of the environment;
- Furthermore, emerging consensus from the Rio+20 preparatory meetings on what a green economy should not be, including: a top-down approach to development; a pretext for green protectionism or green development conditionalities; and the corporate control of nature.

For Namibia to realize these possibilities, there are number of actions that we need to take and these includes the following:

- strengthening national institutions for sustainable development;
- investment in renewable energy;

- in order to adopt the green economy concept there is a need to strengthen national environmental policies, attain regional integration and acquire adequate financing,
- our development bank will play a key role in this respect as well as Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia (EIF)
- integration of Green Economy concept in the drafting of fourth national development plan, and

Encourage and motivate strong private sector involvement in the whole process.

What the green economy really demands is the innovation in our policies and strategies in the persuasion of our sustainable development pathways.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The follow up gathering of today is to look at the concept of green economy and to identify opportunities and challenges resulting from adoption of such a conception. Let me again remind us that we are gathered here to workshop those issues and challenges you have identified in your working groups. I take this time to wish you good luck with that process and thank you in advance already for your efforts and good quality product that would result at the end of the workshop because our inputs to the subject "Green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development" at the Rio+20 summit is of paramount importance and as a country we must be ready with our positions and submissions!

Conclusion

Green economy builds on the foundations of the sustainable development concept as it works towards creating an economic environment that is socio-economically and ecologically sound and sustainable. By the end of this year, the world population is estimated to be over seven billion people. Our numbers are increasing rapidly, so is our need to consume more resources putting more pressure on our ecosystems. Innovative and

responsible approaches such as that presented by green economy are required to ensure sustainability and long-term integrity of the ecosystems.

I declare this workshop officially opened.

I thank you!