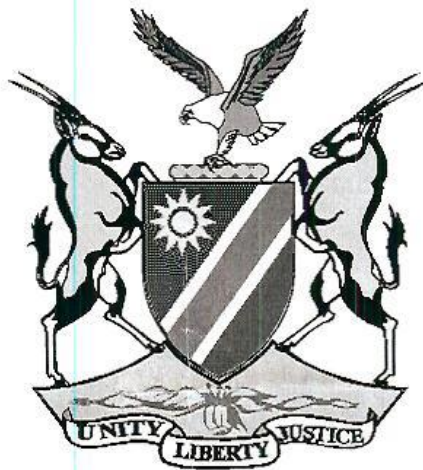


MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

**Hon. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah
Minister of Environment and Tourism**

**At the occasion of the Green Economy High- Level Briefing
15 November 2011
Windhoek,
Country Club Resort**

**Director of Ceremonies,
Honorable Ministers,
Members of Parliament,
Your Excellency's Members of the Diplomatic Corp,
Government Officials,
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 High Level Briefing meeting on the subject matter of Green Economy in the context of poverty eradication. It is my distinct honor to thank you on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and to express our gratitude for honoring our invitation.

Director of ceremonies,

The international community has decided to take advantage of the forthcoming twentieth anniversary of the Earth Summit in 2012. The UN General Assembly decided to hold again a UN Conference on sustainable development

in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2012. The aim of this conference is to arrive at a renewed political commitment to sustainable development, to assess the progress made since 1992, to see if there are any implementation gaps in the Rio and Johannesburg Agreements and to examine the challenges of today.

The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) will discuss two main topics:

“a green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development” and “ an institutional framework for sustainable development”. Important players in this process, are member states, are the UN intergovernmental organizations, UN agencies and others.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Namibia is confident 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 equally believes that the call for sustainable development made at United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, and the 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. The private sector and civil society must also play a major role 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 one of the key players in setting the international agenda on sustainable development. We can be a trendsetter in clean and renewable energy production. If we are a trendsetter in environmental protection, we can turn our natural resources into wealth in Africa. But there is no real progress possible without equity at national and international level. We therefore view Rio+20 as the political platform that must consider the eradication of poverty within the context of sustainable development as a priority.

Namibia views the Rio+20 Summit not about negotiating marginal issues but must address the fundamental challenges of the 21st century, the fundamental development challenges of developing countries.

This urgent need is also confirmed by the recently published 2011 Human Development Report that offers important new contributions to the global dialogue on the challenge, to seek a new consensus on global actions to safeguard the future of the planet and the right of future generations everywhere, to live healthy and fulfilling lives. The report shows how sustainability is inextricably linked to basic questions of equity—that is, of fairness and social justice and of greater access to a better quality of life.

The main methods of measuring political commitment to sustainable development appropriate to Namibia include:

- Budgetary allocation
- Mainstreaming of sustainable development into policies and programmes
- New legislation
- Establishment of institutions and capacity building
- Stakeholder participation
- Gender mainstreaming
- Awareness levels

Ladies and Gentlemen,

RIO+20 give us also an opportunity evaluates our achievement on developmental commitment made in 1992.

In Namibia, a sustainable development has and continue to be central in our programmes to reverse the inequalities and consequences of the apartheid era.

The government's overall budget allocation to social and economic sector has almost doubled between 2004 and 2009 to a figure of almost N\$24 billion.

Sustainable development has been mainstreamed into development planning at the highest level in Namibia. Vision 2030 serves as the long-term development framework for the country to be a prosperous and industrialized nation by 2030, developed by her human resources, enjoying peace, harmony

and political stability. Sustainable development is described as the cornerstone upon which this vision is to be built.

A number of policies and legislations have been enacted since 1992 aiming at guiding Namibia on a path towards sustainable development. Among other:

- **Namibia's Green Plan (1992):** represents an early plan to bring government, NGOs, the private sector and communities together to work towards sustainable development. It leads to the creation of a 12-point plan for integrated and sustainable environmental management, which was incorporated into Namibia's 1st NDP.

- **Nature Conservation Amendment Act (1996):** provides the basis for the communal conservancy programme.

- 66 conservancies are operational and benefiting the communities through sustainable utilization of wildlife and plants

- **Regional Councils Act (1992):** established Regional Councils and defined their mandates. Through the regional development communities, more people have access to services.

- **Primary Health Care Policy (1992):** mandated changes in the Ministry of Health and Social Services to promote primary health care and community-based health care focusing on immunisation against major infectious diseases, maternal and child health care, family planning, promotion of proper nutrition, safe water supply, basic sanitation and a secure and conducive environment for education and training.

- **National Agriculture Policy (1995):** promotes the sustainable use of agriculture to contribute to economic growth, alleviating poverty, reducing inequalities in income and creating employment opportunities. The green scheme has shown improvement in food production.
- **National Drought Policy and Strategy (1997):** concerned with developing an efficient, equitable and sustainable approach to drought management. It signals a shift away from regular financial assistance to farmers to measures that support the on-farm management of risk.
- **National Population Policy for Sustainable Human Development (1997):** aims to contribute to the improvement of the standard of living and quality of life of the people of Namibia – through the harmonisation of the dynamics of Namibia’s population with the country’s resource potential to accomplish development objectives.
- **National Gender Policy (1997) and National Gender Plan of Action (NGPA) (1998-2003) and 2009-2018:** affirms the principle of gender equality and acknowledges gender equality as a prerequisite for sustainable development and economic growth in Namibia. The NGPA is a framework and sets out principles for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of gender sensitive issues, towards enhancing effectiveness in the continued management and planning of the developmental process in the different cultural, social and economic sectors.
- **Affirmative Action Act (1998):** seeks to achieve equal opportunity in employment with special emphasis on advancement of women and gender issues, people living with disabilities and the San population.

- **Energy White Paper (1998):** promotes the use of renewable energy to contribute to overall energy policy goals of social upliftment, economic competitiveness and efficiency, security of supply, and sustainability.
- **Decentralisation Enabling Act (2000):** provides for and regulates decentralisation to regional councils and local authority councils of functions vesting in line ministries
- **National Forest Act and Policy (2001):** aims to protect and make Namibia's forests productive for the economic welfare of rural communities. Also lays down guidelines as to how forest resources may be used and the responsibilities of the users.
- **Environmental Investment Fund Act (2001):** provides for a fund to support various environment-related projects. The fund has had difficulty getting off the ground but was capitalized by N\$15 million in 2010.
- **Aquaculture Act (2002):** regulates and controls aquaculture activities and the sustainable development of aquaculture resources.
- **Communal Land Reform Act (2002):** represents an important part of the government strategy to empower citizens in communal areas with access, use and secure tenure of land and rights for a meaningful habitat, livelihood, recreation and sustainable social and economic development activities.
- **National Poverty Reduction Action Programme (NPRAP 2002):** seeks to reduce poverty through (i) more equitable and efficient delivery of public resources (ii) accelerate equitable agricultural expansion and (iii) non-agricultural empowerment through informal and self-employment options.
- **Inland Fisheries Act (2003):** deals with the conservation and utilisation of inland fisheries resources.

- **National Water Resources Management Act (2004):** lays the basis for devolving rights and responsibilities over water management to communities and basin management committees. It aims at improving the management, development, protection, conservation, and use of water resources.
- **Government of the Republic of Namibia – Civic Organisations Partnership Policy (2005):** encourages greater participation of civic organisations in development partnerships with Government and supports civic organisations in terms of capacity building.
- **National Policy on HIV/AIDS (2007):** geared towards guiding efforts related to an expanded national response to the epidemic. It encompasses the creation of an enabling environment; prevention; treatment, care and support; impact mitigation and workplace interventions and stewardship and management of Namibia’s response. More people on ARV.
- **Tourism Concessions Policy (2007):** promotes eco-tourism activities and the involvement of local communities in joint-venture tourism initiatives.
- **Environmental Management Act (2007):** provides for the wise management of the country’s fragile environment and the sustainable use of its natural resources. It also provides the legal basis for the assessment and control of activities (through EIAs and SEAs) across all sectors, which may have harmful effects on the environment.
- **Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Policy (2008):** aims at the environmentally sustainable development and efficient utilisation of the country’s water resources and the sustainable provision of sanitation services to address community needs. More communities have to potable water.

- **National Tourism Policy (2008):** provides a framework within which tourism development is to be promoted taking into account aspects of the economy, environment and society as a whole.
- **National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management (2009):** represents a framework and guidelines for management of HWC in a way that recognizes the rights and development needs of local communities as well as the need to promote biodiversity conservation
- **Coastal Zone Management White Paper (2010):** represents a framework of joint decisions by government and civil society on how the sensitive stretch of land and sea should be managed to ensure that its biodiversity is preserved and that sustainable development takes place in harmony with the natural environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is our task to identify pathways for people, local communities, countries and the international community to promote environmental sustainability and equity in mutually reinforcing ways. What we often still have to understand is that sustainability is not exclusively or even primarily an environmental issue. It is fundamentally about how we choose to live our lives, with awareness that everything we do ~~has consequences~~ has consequences not only for our people today but also for the generations to come. That is where the concept of Green Economy comes in.

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) defines Green Economy as the one that results in **improved human well-being and social**

equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. Using the UNEP definition and the general term, Namibia can do a lot for our people.

I believe for Namibia to benefit from Green Economy Programme there are a number of actions that we need to take, and these include and not limited to the following:

- strengthening national institutions for sustainable development;
- investment in renewable energy;
- strengthen national environmental policies, acquire adequate financing,
- (The development bank will play a key role in this respect as well as the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia EIF). I am happy to announce that we have recently appointed the CEO of the EIF and that we are expecting the office to be fully operational before the end of the year.
- integration of Green Economy in the context of poverty eradication concept in the drafting of fourth national development plan (NDP4), and
- Encourage and motivate strong private sector involvement in the whole process.
- Strong regional cooperation.

What green economy demands is innovation in persuasion of sustainable development pathways. Even more important is to implement these policies and laws.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The first Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20) began its deliberations on the green economy and the institutional framework for sustainable development on 17 May 2010, at UN Headquarters in New York, US. I thank the Namibian team that participated in that meeting and we must continue, as our views have to be part of the international agenda and decisions.

I know Namibia is a country that set trends. We were one of the first few countries to present our Green Plan at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Let us once again set the trend by presenting our roadmap to green economy at Rio+20. Let us take the opportunity presented through the introduction of green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to emphasize that green economy builds on the concept of sustainable development and is not replacing it. Therefore it is all our responsibility to work together to help change the economic landscape in Namibia, adopt the green economy and bring about benefits that are socio-economically and ecologically sound and sustainable.

In conclusion, I thank our developing partners, the GIZ and KFW for their financial and technical support. Your contribution does not go unnoticed and we would like to encourage and strengthen further relationships. In the same vein I invite the business and private sectors as our partners to invest in the

Green Economy. Such action will enable us to contribute to the realization of the Vision 2030, and Millennium Development Goals (MDG's). I am confident that united we can make a change in the lives of our people especially those living in poverty. To the staff in the Directorate of Environmental Affairs, thank you for your dedication and hard work. Under the leadership of Director Theo Nghitila, you are the movers.

To all present, you are all our partners, once again thank you for your time to be here.

Enjoy the dinner!