

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM



PRESS STATEMENT

BY

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

**AT THE MEDIA LAUNCH EVENT
FOR THE YOUTH CLIMATE CHANGE MUSIC FESTIVAL
AND THE
SUPPORT TO SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL CLUBS INITIATIVES**

20 MAY 2011

Director of Ceremonies

Honourable Dr David Namwandi, Deputy Minister of Education

Mr Joshua Udjombala, Director of Khomas Education Region

Mr Gernot de Klerk, Representative of Nedbank Namibia

Mr. Ernest Mbangula, Project Coordinator Africa Adaptation and Tourism

Representatives of Environmental Clubs (teachers, learners and students)

Distinguished Invited Guests,

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am joyful that you could join us here today to launch perhaps the most important milestone on the 2011 environmental education calendar – the Youth Climate Change Music Festival. The Festival is an important initiative of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and the Africa Adaptation Project (Namibia) aimed at providing a space and a place for the youths from around Windhoek as participants to share their experiences, thoughts, and to raise awareness and understanding the implication of climate change, and to work towards a brighter and greener future.

The momentum for Youth Climate Change Action is growing internationally, as more countries around the world are putting in place mechanisms for developing or expanding youth participation on matters related to climate. It is clear that there is a growing recognition that the ingenuity, solidarity and creativity of the millions of young people can be harnessed to address critical socio-economic, political and environmental issues facing our countries and the World at large.

Director of Ceremonies

Namibia, as a signatory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), has to fulfil certain obligations which includes amongst others promoting through education, training and raise public awareness on matters related to climate change. The initiation of Namibia Youth Climate Change Action Programme through the Youth Climate Change Music Festival, the 'Support to School Environmental Clubs' and the donation of the Atlas Books to the Ministry of Education are some of those actions in fulfilling these obligations.

It is through these initiatives of education and awareness raising that we can get people, especially the youth to change their attitudes towards the environment and to

take an interest in the environment as a career. It is quite commendable that the Ministry of Education is partnering with us in the implementation of this initiatives Article 6 of the Convention calls on parties to integrate climate change issues in education and training.

Director of Ceremonies

Up to 60 percent of the African population is under the age of 25. The United Nations (and Namibian) definition of youth ranges from 14 to 35 years. This means the youth make up the largest part of the continental population by far. The youth, especially those on the younger end of the spectrum, are often the most vulnerable to the deterioration that climate change can bring.

For instance, children cut off from their schools because of flooding lose out on their vital education. This is why youth as a group and individuals need to consider themselves as part of the process to bring about the solution to the problem. They should be given a sense of power. This empowerment, along with a passion for positive change and knowledge of their own social and environmental responsibility, translates into action hence 'the Namibia Youth Climate Change Action'.

Director of Ceremonies,

The conflict between environment and development has been on the agenda of the United Nations, governments, NGOs, faith based organisation communities and private sector for years, but in the beginning of the 21st century, the Climate Change has emerged as a new and serious challenge and become priority concern of various stakeholders. Climate change is one of the most serious and urgent global challenges, which demands a global solution taking into account different historical responsibilities we have for current levels of emissions, and the common responsibility we share for the future.

As a responsible global citizen Namibia is committed to contribute its fair share to the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We are identifying, the current and future impacts of climate change to inform the formulation of adaptation strategies and programmes more particular that we now have the national policy on climate change. We know there is a direct link between the impact of climate and poverty. Poorest of the poor can feel the impact in terms of water crisis, excessive heat waves, pollution

and floods all threatening their lives and livelihoods. Natural resources management becomes a challenge and sustainable development, peace and stability is threatened.

We all know climate change, is due to human activities, and human activities have to address those challenges. It is clear the consequences of climate change is unfairly and unevenly distributed across geographical, social and generational boundaries, and will increase global inequality and insecurity differently. But a clear international approach to the problem is a must.

Director of Ceremonies,

Experience has taught us that, for anything to be sustained, the mobilization of the youth, as future leaders and future implementers is necessary. Against that background, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has developed and is implementing different programme and activities to sensitise our young people on matters related to the environment in general and climate change in particular. For today I will take you through three of those activities, these areas, **Youth for Climate Change Music Festival, Support to School Environmental Clubs and Environment Atlas Book.**

Youth Climate Change Music Festival 2011

The Youth Climate Change Music Festival which is part of the overall Namibia Youth Climate Change Action Programme provides an opportunity for our youth to become aware of the phenomena due to climate change. During these festivities, youths will find ways towards green development by sharing on the “Go Green” theme.

The Music Festival is an edutainment approach aimed at raising awareness on the effects of climate change through entertaining yet inclusive of an educational and informative manner. It is an initiative aimed at reaching the young people who are the thoughtful citizens capable of participating in, and changing the Namibian society of which they are a part .Youth have an important role to play in addressing issues of climate change.

Through this event, about a thousand (1000) youths from secondary schools in Windhoek from grades 10 to 12, out-of-school youths and young professionals will have an opportunity to perform their own climate change related songs (kwaito/rap/hip-

hop etc), poetry/poems and drama in a competitive and fun manner. In each category (music, poetry and drama), winners will receive educational prizes.

Stakeholders such as the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF), Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN), UNAM, Polytechnic of Namibia, Nedbank Namibia, EduVentures, MTC, Leo and others, are expanded to set up environment and climate change related exhibitions for sharing information during the event. The Junior Mayor of the City of Windhoek, His Worship Charles Fourie (Windhoek High School) will be the keynote speaker at the music festival. May I thank his worship for accepting our invitation.

Director of Ceremonies,

At this stage I thank Nedbank of Namibia, the main sponsor for the Youth Climate Change Music Festival. Your support and presence at this event is appreciated and signifies strong relationship between the government and the private sector on matters of national importance. I believe that the Youth Climate Music Festival is only a beginning of the many great things to come for us to jointly address the challenges of climate change. The Music Festival will take place on the 10th June 2011 at the Zoo Park Amphitheatre starting from 12h30 to 18h30.

Support to School Environmental Clubs

I am indeed happy to have in our midst today, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Mr Alfred Ilukena, representatives of environmental clubs from various schools and UNAM as we launch the 'Support to School Environmental Clubs Initiative'. I think we all agree that the future of our environment lies in the ability of our youth to understand the local and global environments hence a need to invest in the knowledge and development of young people who will take the responsibility of advancing the importance of environmental policies to ensure the protection of our environment, the ecosystem and sustainable utilization of our natural resources.

It is gratifying to inform you that 10 schools and UNAM environmental clubs will be the first to benefit from this new initiative. The School Support Environment Club initiative must be linked to the Ministry's grant to young people who want to do environmental studies at the level of Masters and PHD. It is encouraging for me that many of our

young people are getting interested on environmental issues. Those 10 Environmental Clubs are selected from 36 applications.

I thank the panel of judges comprising of Mr David Sampson (NIED – Ministry of Education), Mr Samuel Fernandez (UNESCO) and Mr Ingo Lange (Solsquare Energy – Private Sector) who extensively evaluated each proposal and selected the ten (10) based on set criteria.

Through this support, we are not only helping to revive school environmental clubs, but is assisting the school learners, teachers and students to better understand environmental concepts and issues through various awareness and action-oriented environmental activities that they will embark on. I particularly hope that these selected schools will in the near future set an example of how effective environmental clubs are in implementing curriculum-based environmental education activities and contribute towards dealing with environmental issues in their schools and communities.

I express my appreciation to the Africa Adaptation Project Namibia for making a contribution of N\$50,000 to each of the ten (10) environmental clubs. To the beneficiaries, those funds must be used for the intended purpose.

Donation of Atlas Books

The Ministry of Education through the Namibia Institute of Educational Development and in collaboration with relevant stakeholders in the environmental sector has few years ago undertaken an initiative to ensure that environmental learning is well articulated and recognized within the National curriculum for all grades. As some of you may recall, MET through the Directorate of Environmental Affairs has been publishing various educational resources and learning support materials including the Atlas Book for the benefit of schools, academic institutions, and other relevant organizations.

I am glad that, we have now published the third edition of the 'Atlas of Namibia – a portrait of the land and its people'. The aim of producing these publications is to

Provide information to improve the knowledge and to foster an appreciation of all that makes Namibia the country it is. Two particular factors provided the motivation to produce the Atlas, first was the considerable amount of new geographical information

that has been assembled or updated in recent years, and second was the lack of any recent compilation on the geography of Namibia.

I am pleased that today we are donating thousand (1000) Atlas books to the Ministry of Education for distribution to libraries at schools and academic institutions. It is my hope, the PS, education that the contents of the book will provide an informative perspective of Namibia's environment (in terms of geography, scenery, climate, abundant plants and animals, land uses) and its people diverse in culture. It is also my hope, that the book will add more value to the National curriculum and inspire learners to follow environmental and conservation related careers.

Director of Ceremonies,

As we are preparing for COP17, may I extend an invitation to the youth to exchange their views on the environment and climate change, issues in order to fit into the national position on this matter. No doubt through platforms such as the youth music festival, we will enrich each others understanding and unleash the Namibian spirit of action towards climate change. In the build up to COP17, the empowerment and active engagement of our youth remain central to the Namibian, SADC and the African position.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism through the Environmental Education and Information Services Unit is committed to continue engaging and partnering with the stakeholders, more especially the youth and communities through various platforms on issues of the environment. These platforms include public participation engagements, exhibitions, workshops, conferences, programmes aimed specifically at the youth and a range of publications.

Finally, I must say the future of Namibia is in the hands of the youth and this is the time for the youth to prepare themselves. I am looking forward to a successful Youth Climate Change Music Festival and School Environmental Clubs.

I thank you