

**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM,
HON. NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH, AT THE NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE
POLICY CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP, HELD ON THE 22ND SEPTEMBER 2010, AT
SAFARI COURT HOTEL.**

Director of ceremonies

Hon. Members of Parliament here present

Permanent Secretaries

Members of the National Committee on Climate Change

Directors of various directorates

Representatives of International Development Partners and Agencies

Representatives of various Regional Councils

Members of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great honour and privilege that I stand here to make some opening remarks at this important consultative workshop on National Climate Change Policy of Namibia. The purpose of this workshop is to seek for your inputs and contributions in order to ensure that our climate change policy is inclusive and covers the needs and aspirations of the Namibian people.

There is overwhelming scientific evidence that the global climate is indeed changing and human induced climate change poses a huge threat to the world today. Over the last 100 years the earth has warmed about 0.75 degrees Celsius and the speed it is warming at is getting faster. Since Industrial revolution, Carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels in the atmosphere have gone up by 38%, a rise directly linked to human activities like burning fossil fuels and clearing forests. There is a clear link between more greenhouse gases in the

atmosphere and global warming, which result in changes of mean temperatures, shifts in seasons and an increasing intensity of extreme weather events such as floods and droughts.

Under developed countries, particularly those in Africa, are among the most vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change. They, including Namibia also have the least capacity to adapt to climate change due to their limited financial resources, skills and technologies, and their high dependence on climate-sensitive sectors such as rain-fed agriculture, wetlands and inland fisheries. Approximately 70% of Namibia's 2.1 million people live in rural areas and are directly reliant on subsistence agriculture for at least part of their livelihoods. It is a well known fact that the poorest people will bear most of the impacts and costs of climate change directly, as they are reliant on the land, ecosystem and natural resources, and do not have access to capital that would enable them to adapt or avoid the worst effects.

Extreme weather, crop failure and famine caused by changes in the climate are already causing disastrous consequences for millions of people around the world and Namibia is no exception.

Namibia's climate is predicted to become hotter and drier in the future with the temperature rise ranging between 2 and 6 degrees Celsius by 2100. Rainfall is expected to become even more variable than now. While some areas will become hotter, others could potentially benefit from more humid and wet conditions. In the last few years we have witnessed extreme weather events in north central and north eastern Namibia, with 2008, 2009, 2010 characterized by severe and devastating floods. The tsunamis, the hurricanes and flooding events in other parts of the world are also well documented.

Ladies and gentlemen,

While Namibia has done much to address climate change impacts, a national climate change policy is needed to serve as a legal framework within which the government can effectively manage the risks posed by climate change in Namibia. My Ministry together with your various organizations and networks need to agree on a common overarching framework within which we can adopt measures and strategies that are suitable and appropriate for Namibia. During July 2010, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism had conducted three regional consultative workshops at Oshakati, Otjiwarongo and Walvis Bay in order to solicit the public inputs for incorporation into the draft national climate change policy. Today's workshop marks the final round of MET's-led consultation process because we would like to engage you, our esteemed partners, stakeholders, implementers and watchdogs, to make your final contributions before the policy document is finalised. Therefore, I would like to urge you to actively participate and interact in order to bring the policy to its realization and subsequent implementation for the betterment of our beloved Namibia. I am happy that we are here because we have a certain degree of awareness, understanding that we need this policy; it is therefore my wish that we aim to complete this policy to enable us to operationalise it as a matter of urgency. My Ministry, having been given the mandate to coordinate issues related to climate change, is pledging our continuous support to ensure that we provide you with regular, updates and information on the global, international and national debates. I call upon you all to make use of my staff in this regards.

It is also my understanding that the majority of the participants in this workshop are Namibians, and therefore, I'm expecting a realistic and implementable policy as opposed to a document with all nice internationally adopted words and phrases that have no meaning to the Namibian situation. Similarly, if there is any document that needs to be

understood by the broader members of our society, it is the policy on Climate Change, especially by vulnerable people and those living in rural areas. It is therefore my hope that funds will be found for the policy to be translated into some local languages, especially those used by national broadcaster.

Finally I would like to thank the Government of Japan and the UNDP for financial contributions through the MET's Africa Adaptation Project for Namibia (AAP NAM) which is aimed at building a foundation for a national approach to climate change adaptation in Namibia. It is the initiatives like these that we welcome as they are addressing our key strategic priorities.

Ladies and Gentlemen; it is now my singular honour to open this important national consultative workshop for the national policy on climate change and I wish you fruitful deliberations.

I thank you.