



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

STATEMENT BY HON. BERNADETTE JAGGER,

MP, DEPUTY MINISTER

**WORLD WETLANDS DAY, INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FORESTS AND
WORLD WATER DAY COMMEMORATIONS**

15 MARCH 2018

REHOBOTH, HARDAP REGION

- Director of ceremonies- Mr Johanness Shigwedha
- Cde. Alpheus !Naruseb - Minister of Agriculture Water and Forestry
- Cde. Esme Sophia Isaack- Governor of the Hardap Region
- H.E Christian-Matthias Schlaga- Germany Ambassador to Namibia
- Mr. Percy Misika- Executive Director- Ministry of Agriculture Water and Forestry
- Mr. Teofilus Nghitila- Executive Director, MET
- Mr. Abraham Nehemia- Chief Executive Officer, Namwater
- Mr. Bernedict Libanda- Chief Executive Officer, Environmental Investment fund
- Mr. Moussa Elkadhum Djaffar- UNESCO Head of Office
- Senior Government Representative, here present
- Dear learners
- Invited guests
- Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good afternoon...

I am delighted by the opportunity rendered to me to deliver a vote thanks at this significant event. Coming from the Ministry of environment and Tourism where our mandate centres around the protection of natural resources for the benefit of our citizens, it is really pleasing to see that public awareness is being created on these critical issues. Wetlands, forests and water are part of our ecosystem and therefore significant aspects of our environment. The same systems are also affected negatively by the impacts of the changing climatic conditions.

In the Ministry, we believe that the environment is a source of life and if disturbed it may not be able sustain our livelihood. It is for this reason that the Ministry is party to the international multilateral environmental agreements, the agreements that are aimed at mitigation the impacts of climate change, while at the same time promoting wetland conservation for sustainable development. Namibia is a dry country as it was sufficiently alluded to by the previous speakers and is currently facing devastating climate change affecting our wetlands, water, forests and ultimately hampering development of the country and affecting the livelihoods of the people.

Effects of climate change has always been regarded as farfetched and unrealistic in the public domain, but currently Namibia is experiencing devastating climate conditions with the extended and recurrent drought conditions. Rainfall patterns have changed with very little rain experienced all over the country. The change in climatic conditions of the country affects our food and water security.

Ladies and gentlemen...

Namibia is currently not able to produce enough food to meet the population's needs. The majority of our people in rural areas depend on small scale farming for their livelihoods, with the very little rain and prevailing drought conditions production is affected. A number of Namibians are adversely affected by the current insecurity and rely on the government for assistance. This is starting to negatively affect the country with the rising costs of imported foodstuffs.

The country is facing long term water insecurity. With the increased pace of industrialization and a decline in rainfall, Namibia is already facing an acute water shortage and this is likely to worsen over the coming years in the rain patterns do not improve.

Therefore, activities like this should remind all us to use our natural resources sustainably and ensure our activities have no impact to the environment. It is for this reason that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism is taking a firm stand against illegal activities of sand mining and tree logging. These activities are listed among the activities that should not be undertaken without an environmental clearance certificate under the Environmental Management Act no 7 of 2007. I would recommend that strategic environmental assessments be conducted to assess the negative and positive aspects of sand mining and timber harvesting for commercial purposes.

Director of ceremonies...

Our interventions against such activities should not be seen as sabotage to the developmental needs of our people and country. Rather our interventions should be perceived as efforts designed to protect our environment and by to doing so ensure that the environment will continue to sustain our livelihoods. In simple terms, we promote and support sustainable development that benefits both the environment and the communities that depend on it.

Today, we are commemorating International Day of Forests highlighting the importance of forests globally. In celebration of International Day of Forests, we are encouraged to undertake activities that promotes the wellbeing of our forests and trees, such as tree planting campaigns and avoid unregulated tree harvesting.

It should be noted that climate change is to a large extend caused by human activities such as deforestation. Therefore, there is a need for us join efforts and ensure timber harvesting is done sustainably by adhering to all the legislation and policies that governs such activities. I want to reiterate our call that no timber harvesting should be done without an environmental clearance certificate. I am also happy to have observed that a number of formal community forest areas were also launched, and I strongly believe that the newly gazetted communities will lead sustainable forest management.

I want to encourage further that our wetlands are protected as part of our ecosystem. Wetland ecosystems are severely affected by such impacts of

climate change such as sea level rise, and alterations in water availability and quality.

On this lighter note, I want to thank the Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry for availing himself to this important commemoration and for the message he delivered.

I also want to thank the Hardap Region Governor for welcoming us and Rehoboth Town Council for hosting us and their hospitality.

We extend our appreciation to all the presenters and speakers, school children, media, members of the public.

A huge thank you goes to our sponsors and those that has contributed in whatever way to the event

Lastly, I want to appreciate the organising committee for putting together this event, well done.

I thank you.