



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**WELCOMING REMARKS FOR THE COMMEMORATION OF WORLD
WETLANDS DAY, INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FORESTS AND
WORLD WATER DAY BY, HON. ESME SOPHIA ISAACK, GOVERNOR
HARDAP REGION**

2019

FRIDAY, 15th MARCH 2019 AT OANOB DAM

Director of Ceremonies,

- Honourable, Alpheus G. !Naruseb, Minister- Agriculture, Water and Forestry
- Honourable Bernadette Maria Jagger, Deputy Minister – Environment and Tourism
- Ambassador Christian-Mathias Schlaga, Germany Ambassador to the Republic of Namibia
- Honourable Laurena Christ, Rehoboth West Councilor and other Regional and Town Councilors present
- Mr. Moussa-Elkadhum Djaffar, United Nations Representative (UNESCO Head of Office)
- Ms Nathalie Goagoses, MURD Representative to Rehoboth Town Council
- Mr. Joseph Hailwa, Acting Deputy Executive Director, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
- Mr. Abraham Nehemia , Chief Executive Officer- NamWater
- Mr. Benedict Libanda, CEO, Environmental Investment Fund
- Mr. Ernest de Waal, Manager –Infrastructure, Town Planning and Technical Services, Rehoboth Town Council
- Other senior government officials present;
- Representative of Community Forests
- Representatives from cooperating partners and our sponsors;
- Captains of Industries;

- Members of the Media;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

I feel indeed honoured to stand here today and welcome you all to this very important occasion of joint commemoration of the 2019 World Wetlands Day, International Day of Forests and World Water Day.

I am highly pleased by the collaborative efforts from our various partners who have jointly worked together to make this event possible. I am also glad that you chose Hardap Region for this important event. Your efforts are most appreciated. I am also privileged to be joined by the Honourable Ministers for Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Deputy Minister for Environment and Tourism, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Republic of Namibia, CEOs of various institutions, United Nations Agencies representatives in Namibia, other invited guests, sponsors and school learners (the future generation). Let me welcome you all to this auspicious occasion and the Hardap Region.

Ladies and gentlemen, the United Nations have designated these specific three days each year to commemorate and appreciate the significance of our precious natural resources amongst other; the Wetlands, Water and Forests.

Let me begin with the first one. Internationally, World Wetlands Day is celebrated each year on the 2nd of February to raise global awareness on the value of wetlands for people and our planet. Namibia acceded to the Convention 24 years ago in 1995, and to date Namibia has five sites

designated as Wetlands of International Importance namely the Orange River Mouth, Sandwich Harbour, Walvis Bay Lagoon, Etosha Pan and the Lower Okavango-Bwabwata. Each year a theme is chosen, and the 2019 World Wetlands day theme is **“Wetlands and Climate change”**. The theme is chosen to raise awareness on the impacts of climate change on our wetland ecosystems.

Secondly, International Day of Forests is commemorated on the 21 March to raise global awareness of the importance of trees and woodlands and emphasise how sustained forests can provide many benefits. This year, the International theme is **“Forests and Education”**, which was chosen to highlight how forests contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

World Water Day, which is commemorated on the 22 March annually aims at highlighting the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. World Water Day calls for actions to reduce water related crisis. Although freshwater is a renewable resource through rain, freshwater continues to be under severe pressure due to increased demand and low rainfall limiting our ability to provide adequate water to our communities and other users. This year the international theme for World Water Day is: **“Leaving no one behind”**. A theme that we in Namibia can easily associate with as it links to our own Harambee Prosperity Plan. Internationally, this theme links directly to one of the key promise of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, namely that sustainable development needs to ensure that **“everyone must benefit.”**

Today we will thus jointly commemorate World Wetlands Day, International Day of Forests and World Water Day under the theme **“Climate Change Affects Forests, Wetlands, Water and Us - Leave No One Behind”** with the aim to provide a platform for on-going awareness on issues related to wetlands, water and forests by promoting the **“wise use”** of these valuable natural resources. The youth and school learners are always part of this annual commemoration, as they are the future, and must keep the message for the future generation and sustainable development.

Having said this, ladies and gentlemen we will hear more about these precious resources from the different speakers lined up at this special occasion. Therefore, I invite you to be attentive and not only listen, but to hear, understand and appreciate. It is also my sincere wish that we will not only end here but we shall put in practice what we will learn here today in order for us to bring about positive change, and working together to ensure sustainable use of our natural resources.

Without further a due, allow me; to wholeheartedly and warmly welcome you all to Hardap Region, it is my wish that you all feel at home. Let the celebrations begin!

I thank you!