



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

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MINISTER MINISTRY OF MINES AND ENERGY

AT THE INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY SYMPOSIUM

29-30 OCTOBER 2015

WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

Director of Ceremony;

Let me take this opportunity to acknowledge in our presence:

Honourable Members of Parliament;

Your Excellency, the Ambassador of the United States of America in Namibia, Mr. Thomas Daughton;

Your Excellency, the Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Finland in Namibia, Ms. Elisabet Kivimäki;

The Rector of Namibia's University of Science and Technology, Professor Tjama Tjivikua;

Our speakers from abroad and from within Namibia;

Distinguished Delegates;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning to you all.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia I take this opportunity to welcome you all to the Land of the Brave, and to the African continent, for those who are coming from overseas. Today marks a very important day for Namibia as we host this symposium, which aims to provide a platform for exchange of ideas towards 100% access to energy and economic prosperity in Namibia.

It is indeed an honour for such a prestigious event on Renewable Energy to take place here in Namibia after 82 countries around the globe adopted a declaration that calls for the up-scaling and increased deployment of renewable energy worldwide, at the closing of the South African International Renewable Energy Conference (SAIREC) on the 6 October 2015.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is envisaged to improve global energy access and security and strive towards mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

The SADC Energy Ministers Meeting that took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 24 July 2015 endorsed the establishment of the SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE) and Namibia has been selected to be the host country.

The selection of Namibia is testimony of our enabling conducive environment, which will ensure that the SACREEE exercises its functions and fulfils its objectives in an efficient and effective manner. We urge all SADC Member States to work together with us as we set up this important Centre.

Distinguished Delegates,

The objectives of this conference are congruent with the United Nations Framework on Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 7, which addresses the issue of ensuring “access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all”. I am encouraged by the work that is in progress through the 2015 Turkey G20 Energy and Sustainability Working Group regarding the “Acceleration and Deployment of Renewable Energy”.

There is no doubt that Renewable Energy is at the forefront of development initiatives and a priority for all countries. The Africa Energy Outlook (of 2014) by the International Energy Agency states that, "Sub-Sahara Africa is rich in resources, but very poor in energy supply and that Africa's energy sector is vital to its development and yet is one of the most poorly understood part of the global energy system".

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The SAIREC declaration has set the target to make universal electricity access a reality by 2030. This is expected to be achieved through the increased deployment of both on and off-grid solutions. In Namibia people in the rural areas lack access to clean forms of cooking energy, which needs to be addressed in order to achieve the universal access target.

An important factor, which has been given focus by the SAIREC declaration is the need for transparent procurement processes,

Which according to the declaration has been identified as one of the restrictive enablers in increasing the rollout of Renewable Energy projects in Africa, and especially in SADC.

A topic that has been placed high on the national agenda is the localising of the value chain. That simply means, we will only be able to drive economic growth and development by investing in the upskilling of local communities, and re-investing money and knowledge into the same region.

The SAIREC declaration also noted that: “Whilst growing African energy economies, we need to ensure localization of supply chains for not only the supply of equipment and plant, but also the maintenance and operation of facilities”. Please pay more attention especially on how Namibia and the rest of the developing world can manage their Offgrid Minigrids.

I am informed that installations with local ownership can make sure that the local communities benefit directly and that they are involved in the planning process. This will create jobs and grow skills as well as reduce costs and substantially increase social acceptance.

For equitable development of nations across the world, it is essential that access to energy, and appropriate availability of energy in the desired form, should be guaranteed to all. However, with nearly half the world's population surviving on less than two US Dollars a day and a third on less than one US Dollar a day, access to secure energy supply continues to elude many a developing nation.

The situation is compounded by the fact that the majority of the rural population in developing nations, especially in Africa, is still dependent on traditional fuels. This at best meets basic human requirements, but does not improve the quality of lives of the poor and marginalised.

Therefore, to ensure equitable development within and among nations, we have to work towards equitable and sustainable access

to, and availability of appropriate energy sources, with a heavy lean on environmentally friendly renewable energies.

In this era of globalisation, attaining this should not be impossible. Indeed, globalisation offers immense possibilities of developed and developing nations working together in the energy sector to their mutual advantage. Developed countries have access to technology, financial resources and expertise while developing countries offer an expanding market for energy technologies.

Economic liberalisation and globalisation have led to an increasing demand for energy - to run industry, to create infrastructure and to meet rising domestic requirements. This has further strengthened the case for partnership in the energy sector.

In Namibia, we are determined to keep pace with the rest of the world to ensure rapid socio-economic development, and have taken several significant steps in the energy sector. Extensive power sector reforms have been undertaken and regulatory mechanisms established to optimise the performance of the electricity sector,

through fixed tariffs and ensuring quality supply. Furthermore, there is no cap on foreign direct investment in power generation.

Namibia has its eyes set on cleaner energies: According to Namibian environmental legislation which is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia (Art. 95), environmental considerations, especially the promotion of renewable energies, shall prevail in all energy projects.

Distinguished delegates,

We know that Energy contributes to a better quality of life. To those that have it, modern energy unlocks access to improved healthcare, improved education, improved economic opportunities and, even longer life. To those that don't, it is a major constraint on their social and economic development.

Although investment in new energy supply is on the rise, two out of every three dollars put into the sub-Saharan energy sectors since 2000 have been committed to the development of "resource export". This

is indeed a dim picture provided by the IEA which calls on all of us to do something about this status.

Namibia is struggling to meet fast-growing energy demand. At the same time, the technology cost of renewable energy has been experiencing remarkably steady falls over the past decade. South Africa at SAIREC encouraged us to use their experience in pursuit of renewable energy programmes Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme and to be used as flagship for the SADC Region.

I am standing here today and thinking that Namibia could not have missed the opportunity of having this renewable energy symposium this year so we could use it as a platform to act on this worrying picture. I could not agree more with the analysis that a shortage of essential electricity infrastructure is undermining efforts to achieve more rapid economic development and social justice in our region.

To this end, we are indeed enthused at the opportunity to hosting this symposium, and we trust that as delegates meet to deliberate on

matters of Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and other forms of energy during these two days, they will do so with the purpose towards shaping possibilities to forge partnerships to improve our short and long term infrastructural development and to create and exploit the country's natural resources responsibly in order to improve the quality of life of all our citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The challenges of energy infrastructure constraints and stunted economic growth remain stubbornly in place for the developing economies, particularly in most parts of the SADC Region. Notwithstanding these challenges, we see the balancing of sustainable development while protecting the environment as an opportunity for Namibia to accelerate its potential growth and economic transformation.

While it is important to emphasise that it is likely to take time for Namibia to transform from the traditional grid connected generation from fossil fuels, we should continuously seek ways to devolve

renewable power generation distributed through mini-grids. We should exploit platforms such as this symposium to seek better ways to meet the energy needs of the poor, women and children in a sustainable manner. We need to develop solutions for heating and cooling, cooking, lighting, water purification and sanitation.

To this end, it will be important for Namibia to review the current policies and practices that affect energy provision and that inhibit private sector investment in the country. I would like to thank all our Partners for good progress made in solar thermal capacity development, and development of relevant sustainable energy curricula at various levels.

I am confident that this symposium will be able to seize the opportunity to reflect upon the global progress made on the deployment of Renewable Energy technologies in particular, and energy efficiency and other forms of energy in general, and identify gaps, challenges and opportunities, so that we map a clear way forward.

In conclusion ladies and gentlemen, let me thank all the participants and organizers who have made this symposium possible. It is a step in the right direction that we deliberate the way forward and develop a common vision.

I look forward to your interactive deliberations and wish you a successful Symposium.

Thank You!