



SPEECH BY

HON. TOM ALWEENDO,

MINISTER OF MINES AND ENERGY,

**DELIVERED AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE OMAKANGE RURAL
ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT**

FRIDAY, 19 JUNE 2020

- **Director of Ceremonies**
- **Governor of Kunene Region – Hon. Marius Sheya**
- **Tatekulu Josia Shikongo Taapopi, Royal King of Uukwaludhi Traditional Authority**
- **Omusati Councillor for Ruacana Constituency - Hon Andreas Shintama**
- **Honourable Mr Weich Mupya, Councillor of Opuwo Rural – Kunene Region**
- **Mr David Tjimuhiva, Senior Traditional Councillor of the Uukwaludhi Traditional Authority**
- **NamPower Managing Director – Mr. Kahenge Simson Haulofu**
- **NORED Chief Executive Officer – Mr. Fillemon Nakashole**
- **Chief Regional Officer Omusati – Mr. Gervasius Kashindi**
- **Acting Chief Regional Officer Kunene – Ms. Emilia Alweendo**
- **Regional Police Commander of Kunene Region, Commissioner Nderura**
- **Members of the Omakange Community present**
- **Members from the Media**
- **Distinguished Invited Guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good Morning to you all.

As a Nation and as part of the global community at large, we are faced with the unprecedented and challenging times as we are affected by the novel coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has impacted and changed our outlook on: 1) how we work; 2) how we live; 3) how we do business 4) how we interact with one another;

and last but not least, how we should sustain and protect the continued well-being of all our people.

Nevertheless, Ladies and Gentlemen, despite the challenges we face, as Government, we implemented various controls and regulatory measures to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, to the extent of what is within our means, for the benefit of all of us.

Distinguished invited guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, coming back to the main reason for which we are gathered here today, I am indeed honoured to stand before you at the **Inauguration of this Rural Electrification Project**. This auspicious occasion signifies the successful completion of the electrification of the Omakange locality, in the Ruacana Constituency of the Kunene and Omusati Regions. It communicates government's resolve and drive to bring modern, sustainable and affordable electricity to all citizens. Electricity is one of the key drivers for economic and social growth.

Electricity gives you additional hours in the day for productive economic activities; electricity allows you to preserve food that would otherwise go to waste; electricity powers devices that allows you to stay in touch and informed about what is happening in Namibia and beyond; and in this perilous times of the pandemic it is essential that you are up to date on the latest at all times; electricity allows our children additional hours at night to study and makes it possible for students to study through e-learning. I could go on and on about the social benefits that electricity brings.

Providing these benefits come at a cost though. It took no less than N\$21m to bring this electricity infrastructure to Omakange. The overhead lines and transformers have to be maintained and on top of that, there are the continuous charges for usage of the electricity.

Although it is a general policy that electricity tariffs be cost reflective, evidence has shown that in nearly all countries affordable rural electrification is only achieved through special national programmes and financing arrangements. And this is no different for Namibia.

We must therefore make a concerted effort to ensure that our people have access to affordable energy. We will not be able to bring national development if our rural communities continue to live in energy poverty. This is a challenge, for us all.

In an effort to make electricity affordable to rural communities, in 2016 the Government developed and adopted a National Tariff Support Mechanism. The mechanism is intended to provide financial relief to low income electricity consumers through offering a subsidized tariff available on a low capacity connection only.

The project implementation was split in two phases: Phase 1 started with the implementation at a trial site in Oshakati for a period of six months. The trial run was intended to enable us to validate the intended process as well as the underlying assumptions and make any necessary adjustments before national roll out. Phase 1 was

completed successfully and we are now in Phase 2, which is being rolled out nationally.

Furthermore, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namibia's Energy Infrastructure Programme comprises of various energy projects which are planned to be developed during the NDP5 period. The programme is expected to increase the national installed capacity so that we become more energy self-sufficient. To this end, in 2018 the Ministry of Mines and Energy announced the allocation of power projects amounting to 220MW to be commissioned by 2023. This will comprise 150MW to be installed by NamPower and 70MW from Solar PV and Wind by Independent Power Producers (IPPs). Once complete, these projects are expected to increase our self-sufficiency from the current 35% to 70%.

Furthermore the programme is expected to increase the national electrification rate so that more urban, peri-urban and rural areas have access to electricity. An electrification policy with a funding mechanism and detailed masterplan, which will set the framework for an increased electrification rate is now being developed and is expected to be completed by mid 2021.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we believe that electricity is a basic necessity for quality of life and equality. These goals contribute to achieving the high level National objectives and will contribute immensely to the industrialisation of the country.

As the Ministry responsible for overseeing the implementation of the country's rural electrification programme, I am indeed proud to see corporate citizens such as NamPower also playing an active role to advance electrification in rural areas.

It is our serious intention as the Ministry charged with energy issues to speed up electrification of rural areas throughout the country. In this respect during the 2019/20 financial year an amount of N\$54m was spent on rural electrification. With this amount we were able to electrify 39 public institutions, such as schools, health facilities and constituency offices. During the same period 50 rural households and 13 formal and informal business centres were electrified. In the 2020/21 financial year, N\$139m is once again allocated to rural electrification.

I am also aware that it is not only the Ministry of Mines and Energy that is involved in rural electrification. It is the case that Nampower and all the Regional Electricity Distributors, such as NORED, CENORED and ERONGORED, do also carry out rural electrification projects. In order for rural electrification to be impactful, it is my hope that all of us who, in one way or another, are involved in rural electrification do collaborate. When we collaborate we avoid duplication and we will also reach more beneficiaries with the limited funds at our disposal.

Director of ceremonies, Ladies and Gentlemen

In closing, I take the opportunity to thank all stakeholders who made this project a reality. A special word of appreciation is

extended to NamPower, EMCON Consultants, the power network owner NORED, as well as the Contractor, Power Electrical and Construction. To the community of Omakange, thank you for your co-operation during the construction phase. I urge you to safeguard these resources at all times, as they are here for your benefit and generations to come.

With these words, it is now my distinct honour to officially inaugurate the Omakange Rural Electrification Project.

I thank you.