



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF FISHERIES & MARINE RESOURCES

ANNUAL FISHING INDUSTRY ADDRESS

BY

THE HON DEREK KLAZEN, MP

MINISTER OF FISHERIES AND MARINE RESOURCE

AT

NARAVILLE COMMUNITY HALL

WALVIS BAY

23 NOVEMBER 2023

**Director of Ceremonies,
Hon. Hafeni Ndemula Deputy Minister of Labour, Industrial
Relations and Employment Creation;
Hon. Neville Andre Itope, Governor of Erongo Region;
Your Worship, Trevino Forbes, Mayor of Walvis Bay;
Regional and Local Authority Councilors Present;
Mr. Matti Amukwa, Chairman of the Namibian Confederation of
Fishing Association;
Captains of the Fishing Industry;
Leaders of Organized Labour Unions;
Esteemed Right Holders in the Fishing Industry;
Staff Member of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources;
Members of the Public;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Good morning,

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you all to the 2023 Annual Fishing Industry Address.

Furthermore, it remains a great honour to stand before you this morning to share and discuss with all of you, matters relating to and directed toward the Fishing Industry.

Our ocean, rivers, lakes, dams and other notable waterbodies hold immeasurable treasures, and our collective duty is to preserve and sustainably manage these invaluable resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

As such and in line with customary traditions in the Namibian fishing industry, we are to take stock of what happened in the past and current years regarding the state of play of the fishing sector hence this address.

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished Guests

It is for this reason, that I and my ministerial staff will provide to this august gathering an overview of the various fisheries focusing on the state of the stock, its associated economic performance, the performance of aquaculture and inland fisheries and an update regarding our mandated task of monitoring, controlling and surveillance of fisheries in Namibia.

I shall thereafter provide policy guidance on where we are headed as an industry and the challenges we must overcome going forward.

Before I begin, I want to at this juncture emphasize that the overarching policy priority of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources is sustainable fisheries management. Our waters are teeming with life and provides sustenance and livelihoods to countless humans. However, this abundance is not limitless. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that our practices do not deplete these resources. To achieve this, we should set scientifically informed catch limits, and implement regulations that prevent overfishing and ensure the recovery of depleted stocks.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as you know, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Namibia Dr. Hage G. Geingob, declared “2023, the year of Revival”.

As a country having emerged from the scathing impacts of Covid-19 Pandemic, the global economic slow-downs, drops in prices of commodities and other geo-social and political events, as a ministry we remain encouraged by the words of the President to continuously strive to revive our fishing industry with correct measures aimed at stimulating economic growth, creating jobs, and supporting communities that rely on fishing for their livelihoods amongst others.

Therefore, conservation and environmental protection must be our core endeavors because our ocean's health is interconnected with our planet's health. We must safeguard our aquatic ecosystems, minimise bycatches, and protect biodiversity within our waters. I hold the belief that preserving these ecosystems is not just an environmental imperative; it is also essential for the long-term viability of our fishing industry.

As you may recall, the Ministry and the Industry have been working hard to ensure that the hake fishery maintains its ecolabelling certification status by the Marine Stewardship Council. The Ministry has also conducted a stock assessment on by-catch and line fish species, such as kob, and will review the moratorium on kob fishing early next year.

Let me also take this opportunity to relay to you that the National Marine Aquarium has been temporarily closed to the public, as it needs major structural renovations to ensure the safety of our visitors.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ISSUES:

The Harambee Prosperity Plan II (Pillar 1) states that effective Governance is critical for socio-economic development and social cohesion, translating into improved livelihoods for Namibians.

Therefore, it is imperative for the board of Directors of fishing companies to continue implementing their fiduciary functions in line with the Companies Act, 2004 (Act No.28 of 2004) in managing companies ethically for the benefit of its shareholders. The Ministry has observed with grave concern that Ministerial information is not shared with all board members and during AGM with shareholders. Therefore, Board of Directors are expected to be transparent and inclusive in the management of fishing companies.

This issue of Corporate Governance has become a challenge for us, whereby the Ministry spend a lot of time trying to solve right-holding companies' problems. This kind of unhealthy practice must come to an end. I have however with great delight noted cooperation from the industry as most of you continue honouring your statutory obligation: to pay your quota fees and related levies towards the State. This milestone is commendable.

FISHING ASSOCIATIONS CONSULTATIONS

The Ministry will consult with the different fishing associations on issues impacting the operations of various sub-sectors during the first quarter of 2024. This exercise has been a regular platform to engage and exchange ideas to find solutions to challenges affecting the viability of the sector and the contribution towards the National economy.

Only through these types of engagements can the government be better equipped to deal with internal and external challenges beyond our control and find ways to mitigate such adverse impacts.

LANDED VALUE

The Ministry is in the process of reviewing landed values for all commercial species harvested in Namibia. The landed values have not been reviewed since it was implemented in 2017. The market conditions have evolved over the past six years, requiring reviewing the landed values. A comprehensive consultation per fishing association will be carried out in February 2024. It is anticipated that the process will be finalised by 31st March 2024.

BY CATCHES

The Ministry has observed a worrisome trend of bycatches in the fishing industry, specifically hake, mackerel, and pilchard in the horse mackerel subsector. This trend of high by-catches suggests that these landings appear to be deliberate, I hold the view that they can be avoided and are landed intentionally for their economic value. MFMR is considering strengthening measures to control this phenomenon.

Right holders are reminded that high bycatches are an indication of unsustainable management of the resource and may have a negative impact on our management system.

OVER CATCHES

The Ministry has noted with concerns that specific right holders are continuously catching beyond their allocated quotas.

Right holders are cautioned that the Ministry is observing, and this will have a negative impact on future allocations. Also, right holders should note that their allocation will be reduced by a percentage equivalent to their overharvest of the previous fishing season.

SCORECARD

The Ministry continue to promotes optimal distribution of fishing quotas. The pro-rata quota allocation mechanism seeks to provide efficient and equitable quota allocation for the development of the fishing sector. I want to highlight that the accessibility to fish quotas creates economic means to draw socio-economic gains. Therefore, it is crucial that the process for the allocation of fishing quotas is transparent, equitable, and sustainable. To ensure this, the Ministry commenced the process for a comprehensive quota allocation mechanism (Scorecard) in 2015, where the fishing sector and relevant stakeholders were consulted.

We acknowledge that the process has taken too long to be finalized due to its complexities, however, I am pleased to announce that the Ministry has prioritized the completion of the scorecard in the current financial year. There will be another industry consultation on the scorecard finalisation, considering the expansion in operations and socio-economic dynamics of the fishing sector.

DATA COLLECTION

The Ministry would like to appreciate all right holders who provide authentic statistics to the MFMR Officials whenever they knock on their doors.

In addition, the 2022/23 fishing seasons is about to come to an end, the Ministry urges the Right Holders and Operators' co-operation in providing Catch Landings and Zero Returns for Ministry to trace fishing activities.

REVIEW OF VARIATION OF FISHING RIGHTS CRITERIA

Let me inform the industry that during the 2024/2025 financial year, the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources will undertake a study to review the variation of fishing rights criteria. This exercise will ensure compliance, fairness and equity among right holders when varying the duration of their fishing rights. It allows the Ministry to assess if right holders adhere to the set variation criteria and implement applicable measures, which will inform the continuation or termination of such fishing rights. I therefore call upon all right holders to fully participate when the Ministry undertakes this vital exercise.

INLAND FISHERIES

The inland fisheries from our rivers, dams and oshanas play a vital role in the livelihoods of around 300,000 rural community members. This fishery currently produces about 6000 tonnes with a value of about N\$150 million annually.

Declining fish stocks in our inland rivers, lakes and dams prompted my ministry to engage communities to manage fisheries resources within their traditional customary land tenure systems legalised through the government gazette. These community-managed fisheries or fisheries reserves created under sections 22 and 29 of the Inland Fisheries Resources Act of 2003, made Namibia a leading nation in Africa when it comes to empowering small-scale fishers in climate-smart governance of tenure and equitable access to valuable inland aquatic resources.

Research indicated a 5-fold increase in the fish stocks at one of these reserves (Sikunga) as opposed to adjacent open-access fishing areas, thus enhancing food security and improving the nutrition of community members.

The trans-boundary nature of these shared inland fisheries and mainly small-scale community-run fisheries within these basins requires a harmonized trans-boundary approach to manage such areas efficiently. To this extent, my ministry participated with Angola and Botswana in the drafting of a new Transboundary Management Plan for the Cubango-Kavango-Okavango Basin with funding from USAID under the Resilient Waters Program on behalf of OKACOM (Permanent Okavango River Basin Commission) with Namibia Nature Foundation as the contracted mediating agent.

To address the challenges of Inland Fisheries, the MFMR is also implementing a National Plan of Action for Small Scale Fisheries (NPOA-SSF) in support of the Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines).

FRESHWATER AQUACULTURE

The main challenge to aquaculture in Namibia is its low economic viability due to cold climate, slow growth of local fish species and high cost of fish feed. Access to land and water, affluent communal areas and limited aquaculture finance contribute to limited investment opportunities. To address this challenge, the MFMR, with support from the FAO, developed a revised National Aquaculture Strategic Plan (2022-2026), which is aligned to the SADC Protocol on Fisheries and calls for intervention to introduce subsidy schemes (start capital, seeds and fish feed) in the aquaculture development sector to support small scale fish farmers towards household food security and improved nutrition.

The National Aquaculture Strategic Plan (2022-2026) further calls for a resource mobilization drive, where the MFMR and development partners are striving to pool resources together to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to develop and declare aquaculture development zones (ADZs) and the scaling up of small aquaculture projects.

MARICULTURE

The Ministry have established a Water Quality Monitoring System, Shellfish Sanitation, Research, Training and Advisory-Extension Services Programs at eleven (11) fish farms to support the development of the aquaculture sector.

The Namibian Mariculture sector produced around 493 metric tons during the 2022/23 financial year. The products exported were mainly oysters but also included abalone and seaweed. There are currently 11 active mariculture farmers employing about 205 full-time employees.

The Ministry is aware of the challenges of limited access to land and finance, environmental phenomena such as Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs, which causes Hydrogen Sulphide eruption, limited fish feed supply in the local market and cost of environmental impact assessment (EIA) studies. The MFMR has approached the Municipality of Walvis Bay, Swakopmund and Lüderitz Town Councils to avail land for Aquaculture. I am pleased to inform you that these local authorities have made land available for aquaculture development.

I am also pleased to inform you that the MFMR, with support from the Benguela Current Convention (BCC), is finalising an Environmental Impact Assessment Study for mariculture development in Lüderitz, Swakopmund and Walvis Bay.

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests

Let me now focus on:

MONITORING, CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE

The subject of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing has occupied a fair share of media space over the last twelve months; let me reiterate that the Ministry will continue to deploy all resources at its disposal to deter any fishing practices that compromise the sustainability of our aquatic living resources and credibility of our fishery, aiming to combat IUU fishing in our jurisdiction.

The Ministry will continue to adapt its surveillance program in response to non-compliance in our aquatic systems. The Ministry has received alarming reports of an increase in incidences linked or with potential links to IUU at our northern coastal border and have decided to dedicate up to 50% of our control monitoring and surveillance sea operations to the northern border with the Republic of Angola, It is our observation that by continuing our efforts in this way, the situation will improve, and IUU fishing activities can be reduced.

On the inland waterbodies, I am deeply concerned with the magnitude of illegal fishing activities, to the extent that citizens of our neighbouring countries are also culprits. I intend to engage my counterparts from our neighbouring countries on harmonizing our laws and enforcement.

Ladies and gentlemen

In concluding today's address, I want to emphasize the pivotal role each of you plays in preserving and sustaining our ocean's invaluable resources. Today's discussions have centered on the critical need for reviewing and developing new practices.

The fishing industry stands at a crucial crossroads where responsible stewardship and adaptive strategies are imperative. As we navigate the complexities of our changing environment, it is evident that periodic reviews are a necessity and a moral obligation we owe to future generations.

We must recognize the inter-connected-ness of our actions with the delicate balance of marine ecosystems. By staying vigilant, agile, and proactive in our approach, we can ensure that our fishing practices remain sustainable, equitable, and economically viable.

Let us foster collaboration, open dialogue, and a collective commitment to uphold responsible fishing practices. I encourage each of you to actively participate, contribute your expertise, and embrace innovation in our pursuit of a thriving, sustainable fishing industry. Through these principles, we will safeguard the health of our ocean, ensure thriving fishing practices, and leave a legacy of responsible stewardship for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention and unwavering commitment. Together, we can build a brighter, more sustainable future for all.

Thank you.