



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**CABINET MINISTER PROGRAMME
LIVE STATEMENT BY:**

**HONOURABLE
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MINISTER OF FISHERIES AND MARINE RESOURCES

ON

MONDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2023

1. Good morning! At the outset, I thank the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology for creating this platform. It is platforms like these that increases the awareness, open-ness and the visibility of Government institutions, serving as a bridge between public institutions and the Namibian people.
2. This morning, I am here to highlight key programmes and activities under the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources.
3. I want to start with the background. At Namibia's independence in 1990, fisheries was part of the Ministry of Agriculture. In 1991, a separate Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) was then established, with a mandate to sustainably manage the living aquatic resources and promote the aquaculture sector.
4. Since its establishment, the Namibian Government, through the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, successfully reformed the management of fish stocks and focused on developing the fishery sector as a national asset in terms of sound management of fish stocks and promoting national employment in the sector via domestic fishing effort and processing.
5. Our fishing sector has changed greatly in terms of Namibianisation of fishing rights, employment, value addition, number of fleet, processing plants, investment, regional development and corporate social responsibility for broader beneficiation. As it stands, at least 95% of all fishing right holders are Namibians.
6. On that note, I am pleased to state that the latest estimate from Namibia Statistics Agency 2022 shows that the fishing industry is worth over N\$ 20 billion and directly employs about 18 000 people, while contributing 4.5% to Namibia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), accounting for over 14 % of export earnings.
7. These numbers indicates that fishery remain one of the significant contributors to economic growth, employment creation, nutrition, and foreign exchange earnings in Namibia.

8. In addition, the industry provides additional support to the state revenue through:
- Company Income Tax
 - VAT
 - Export levies
 - Revenue from Auction
 - Other fees and levies such as (Marine Resources Fund, By-catch fees and Observer levies)
9. The success of the fishing sector is owed to the financial investment that we continuously make in **resources surveys**, environmental and coastal biodiversity surveys. These surveys are important for the Ministry in order to determine the level of biomass of the species and set the Total Allowable Catches (TAC) for the commercially exploited fisheries. Data collected under these activities is critical to the management of our resources and the conservation of our marine ecosystem.
10. During the 2023 fishing season, the Ministry, through Cabinet Decision, allocated a **Total Allowable Catch** for six (6) commercially exploited species namely; Hake, Monkfish, Horse Mackerel, Seals, Crab and Rock Lobster.
11. The Ministry however have set a zero (0) TAC for Pilchard, since the acoustic survey conducted in March 2023, indicated that this stock remains in an unhealthy state. The Ministry will continue its research programs to monitor Pilchard stocks closely and re-open the fishery once the stock has recovered to a biologically sustainable level.
12. Additionally, confronted with a request from the fishing Industry, more recently, the Wet Landed Horse Mackerel Association requesting to be granted permission to **conduct fishing within the 200m isobaths** during winter, stating that with climate change, lower water temperatures are experienced earlier than before and that the larger-sized horse mackerel fish move to shallower water closer to the shore.
13. The Ministry, through Cabinet endorsement, granted permission for an experimental research to the industry, in collaboration with UNAM and the Ministry's scientists to research on this theories. This is strictly for research purposes and not a means for the industry to fish within the 200m

isobaths. The result of this research will be made public in once the experiment is concluded.

14. The 200 meters isobath restriction on trawling and long lining is one of several management and control measures enforced in Namibia to regulate fishing activities.

15. Now allow me to move to the second part of our mandate, which is to promote the **Aquaculture sector**. As a follow-up on this mandate, the Ministry has established eight (8) operational fish farm centres, which are:

- Hardap Aquaculture and Inland Fisheries Centre in the Hardap Region;
- Leonardville Fish Farm in Omaheke Region
- Fonteintjie Fish Farm in Karas Region
- Onavivi Inland Aquaculture Center in Omusati Region
- Ongwediva Aquaculture and Inland Fisheries Centre in the Oshana Region;
- Mpungu Demonstration Fish Farm in Kavango West Region
- Kamutjonga Inland Fisheries Institute in the Kavango East Region; and
- Zambezi Aquaculture and Inland Fisheries Centre in the Zambezi Region.

16. These centres have a responsibilities of promoting fish farming, by providing the following extension services countrywide:

- Site inspection and assessment
- Fingerling seeding and distribution
- Water quality monitoring and sampling
- Fish health monitoring and disease control
- Quality assurance for aquaculture products

17. These services are aimed to boost aquaculture development in the country. To date, the Ministry supports around 150 small scale fish farmers.

18. I am pleased to note that through these centres, the Onavivi centre to be specific, the Ministry managed to **donate 2.5 tons of freshwater fish** to

the flood-affected communities of Omusati, Oshana and Ohangwena regions in March this year, through the Office of the Prime Minister.

19. On Inland Fisheries, **inland fisheries in Namibia** covers an area of 1 million hectares in total and contributed 126 million Namibia Dollars to GDP in 2022 while supporting 250 000 Riparian communities in Northern Namibia. Rural communities in the northern regions derives food, income and informal employment from inland wild fish resources.
20. These numbers demonstrates that we have stepped up and made essential contributions to the people of this Country, through inland and marine fisheries. In order to ensure sustainability and protection of our inland and marine fisheries resources, the Ministry conducts regular Fisheries patrols along and on waterbodies within the national jurisdiction as well as to make use of electronic means to monitor adherence to fishing restrictions in particular areas. These activities are undertaken under our Control, Monitoring and Surveillance programme aimed to deter, curb and eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities resulting in fines for offenders found to be violating the fisheries legislations.
21. IUU fishing in Namibian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is of serious and increasing concern as IUU fishing undermines efforts to conserve and manage fish stock in all capture fisheries. The Ministry will continue to strengthen its Management and control measures to curb and eliminate IUU fishing through collaboration with the fishing industry and our neighboring states.
22. During the current fiscal year, the Ministry carried out nine sea patrol missions and 688 patrols along the coast. The Ministry further carried 35 Aerial surveillance missions, 39 River patrol and 453 patrols on land along the inland waterbodies.
23. Additionally, the Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation is implementing the **Government Employment Redressing Programme (GERP)** to support and maintain permanent employment within the fishing sector. To date about One thousand two hundred and twenty (1220) workers are employed under this programme.

- 24.**In order to ensure that the Ministry and the fishing industry are working towards a common goal, the Ministry conduct annual industry consultation meetings to discuss pertinent issues affecting the sector and reach consensus for sustainable fisheries management.
- 25.**I am delighted to observe that the fishing companies continue to contribute towards corporate social responsibilities (CSR). Most of the donations are directed towards educational programmes, community uplifting programmes like drilling of boreholes for the community, food donations, sports activities, the construction of classrooms, and the provisions of medical supplies.
- 26.**With regard to the Blue Economy Policy, the Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee on Blue Economy will be finalizing the policy during the current financial year. The Blue Economy Policy once implemented, will enhance effective governance and management system that sustainably maximizes economic benefits from marine resources and ensure equitable marine wealth distribution to all Namibians.
- 27.**I would like to mention that our hake fishery has been certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), making it the second such fishery to be certified in Africa, after the South African hake. This certification is proof that Namibian fisheries are managed sustainably.
- 28.** Namibia is a member of the High-Level Panel (HLP) for Sustainable Ocean Economy where the President, His. Excellency Hage Geingob has nominated myself, in my capacity as the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources to represent him on the HLP, as his Sherpa. This platform provides an opportunity for Namibia to contribute to long-term solution on sustainable ocean management, environmental protection and conservation, and economic production.
- 29.**On a final note, I am pleased to announce that the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources will launch its functional and institutional Customer Service Charter on Friday, 20th of October 2023 in Windhoek.

30. With this launch, we are renewing our social contract with the Namibian people and demonstrating that our commitment lies with the people and our sole objective is to serve them to the best of our ability.

31. I thank you and I now invite questions and interactions.