



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND MARINE RESOURCES

ANNUAL MINISTERIAL ADDRESS TO STAFF

BY

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MINISTER OF FISHERIES AND MARINE RESOURCES

AT

**NAMPOWER CONVENTION CENTRE
WINDHOEK**

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Staff Members

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning,

Since this is the first staff meeting this year, allow me to welcome you all to 2017. I hope everyone had a good break over the holidays and returned well rested, refreshed and ready to engage anew. Most importantly, I hope and sincerely believe that 2017 will be a remarkably productive year for our Ministry, when we shall achieve the goals that we as a Ministry have set, in our endeavour to serve the people of Namibia better on all aspects of fisheries and marine resources.

Budget Cuts

This financial year (2016/2017), our Ministry experienced a 10% (about N\$ 29.5 million) budget cut, which affected several of our operational and development budgets. Even though this budget cut was challenging considering that several planned activities had to be postponed, it was part of wider Government objective of reducing Government expenditure, and affected all ministries.

The financial year 2017/18, which begins in April this year, is a year of extreme efficiency in budget utilization, because of the planned Government budget cuts. Our Ministry's budget for 2017/2018 has

been further reduced by 42.3%, meaning that the vital lessons we learnt in 2016/2017 on 'doing more with less' will be useful in 2017/2018. These budget cuts require that we re-prioritise all our activities and focus mainly on those that produce tangible results.

Dear members of staff, I accept that these budget cuts will mean that several of the scheduled activities will not be undertaken because of lack of funds. The lack of implementation of some of our activities should however not be construed to mean that we will not fulfil our mandate as a Ministry in 2017/2018. I am convinced that if we all work smart and minimise wastage, we shall be able to fulfil our mandate effectively.

For example, we can use our Ministry facilities for meetings instead of hired premises, use technology such as skype and emails to minimise on need for travelling to some meetings, ensure paperless documentation and print only when necessary, and use pooled official transport as much as possible. We must also minimise on energy wastage by switching off lights and air conditioning units when not in our rooms, and leaving water taps off. In this way, we can save vital budgets which can be re-allocated to important activities in the Ministry.

In this regard, I have asked the Permanent Secretary to ensure that all Directorates identify and implement aspects where budget cuts can be realised without compromising on service delivery.

Dear members of staff, we have been informed that the current budget cuts may be sustained for another financial year, making our current efforts to 'do more with less' the new normal in Government. We should resist, at all times, to complain perpetually about lack of funds and use the cuts as an excuse to do little or nothing. It is during times such as these when one is able to distinguish between innovative managers who are creative enough to sustain service delivery, and those who offer excuses for their inability to meet their performance targets. Let me remind all of us that we have all signed Performance Agreements in line with Government Policy of enhancing service delivery to all citizens. I agree that some of the targets in the Performance agreements which are resource-linked may need to be revised in the light of budget cuts. However, all performance agreements are still valid, and we must all perform in line with the targets that we have committed to.

Public Service Principles

Dear members of staff, as a public servant you are part of a Government Ministry that offers a service to the public, and it is expected that the service provided is done in a professional manner and in line with the Public Service Charter. The public service is guided by reform tools such as the Public Service Charter which

highlights 10 principles, namely **Standards, Courtesy and Helpfulness, Non-Discrimination, Value for Money, Accessibility, Information, Consultation, Participation, Transparency, and Quality of Service.**

These principles are used as guiding principles for providing services to the nation. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Permanent Secretary, Deputy PS, Directors, Deputy Directors, Chiefs and all other staff to adhere to these principles when offering services, managing official information, government funds and property and attending to all other matters. We must, at all times, conduct ourselves in a professional and ethical manner. I urge those of you holding positions of responsibility to treat all staff below you with respect and fairness, remembering that all staff, senior or junior, must play by the rules as established in the Public Service Act.

Taking Responsibility

In 2017, I will continue to emphasise on the need to strengthen institutional structures as established in the Ministry's organogram, in line with the Public Service Act. Those of you who have been given positions of responsibility must perform accordingly. To be clear, Directors must be responsible for their Directorates, and therefore must take responsibility for success or failures under their watch, as shall be guided by the Permanent Secretary. Those of you in senior management cannot afford to complain about issues that you are

responsible for. The blame game, especially in senior management must stop. However, this requirement should not be construed as permission to establish a 'silo' mentality at the Ministry, whereby there is little consultation and coordination between the Directorates, or operation in isolation. I am happy we have a vibrant senior management forum where all issues are discussed, which greatly enhances this coordination.

I am reminded that in management, the higher you climb, the earlier you go to work, and the later you leave from work. Senior management staff must therefore continue to set a good example to all staff in our Ministry on the 10 public service principles I outlined earlier.

Planning Activities

Dear Staff Members, Our Ministry, together with other Government Institutions, is involved in the development of the National Development Plan (NDP5), which is now at its final stages. This Plan, which is in line with our Harambee Prosperity Plan, is instrumental in guiding Namibia to realise our Vision 2030. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all staff who have participated in this important national process. We have also embarked on developing the Ministry's Strategic Plan, since the current one comes to an end this year. The Ministry is also busy with review or development of several

fisheries management plans, which will greatly inform our operations going forward. From a policy point of view, I urge all staff involved in the development of these plans to ensure that they are harmonised with wider Government Policy, and that they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound.

Ministry's Reputation

You will agree with me, that we are a Ministry with a strong tradition of research excellence, effective monitoring control and surveillance, and a careful allocation of fishing resources to ensure stocks sustainability. As I look around, I see several of you who have spent your entire life in the fisheries sector, having spent most of the years here in this Ministry. Someone once told me that fisheries people never leave fisheries...once a fisheries person, always a fisheries person. I am beginning to believe that now. We must therefore all work together to ensure a healthy work environment in our Ministry. We spend the most productive part of our day, at least 8 hours, or about a third of our time together at work. Let us therefore ensure that we have a healthy work environment. I want to assure all of you that you have rights as civil servants to a work environment free of intimidation, favouritism.

Culture of Consultation

At this point, allow me to draw your attention to the need to strengthen the culture of consultation in the Ministry. I urge you all to take the process of consultation more seriously. Let us consult on all matters or issues of common interest and embrace the culture of team effort. Move away from isolation and personalization of decisions. Please consult with your seniors and subordinate. Do not entangle yourself in autocratic decision making, let us be inclusive. Inclusivity is the way to go as our President often reminded us.

Policy Decisions

I am happy to say that our Ministry staff have been a great team in collectively achieving the fisheries agenda for the Country. I have watched as you represent the Ministry in several international forums, and as you articulate Government Agenda in several stakeholder forums around the country, and am proud to say that you have the interest of this country at heart. Please keep up this spirit. We have great challenges ahead of us as a fisheries sector in this country, and we must operate as a team.

At this juncture, let me draw your attention to the fact that when we are assigned to attend meetings, workshops or conferences, we must always consult and obtain a mandate to share information on

issues pertaining to such gatherings. When you are back from a meeting, give an account of what transpired so that your colleagues can collectively own the outcome of the meeting you attended.

I must however clarify that if indeed you are in a meeting involving other countries, or persons outside the Ministry, and the discussion necessitates the pronouncement of Government or Ministry position on any matter – that is a Policy issue. In Namibia, only Cabinet makes Policies. The responsibility of submitting fisheries policy to Cabinet, and articulating Government Policy on fisheries outside Cabinet rests with me.

In this regard, I am instructing all staff to ensure that they only articulate the official written policy on fisheries in any forums outside the Ministry, and revert back to me on any aspects that may not be clear, or are not spelt out. Staff must desist from offering personal opinions or views, and at all times must never commit the Ministry on any matter without my direction.

Accountability & Timeliness:

We must try our best as civil servants to improve our planning and resource utilization through innovative ways of executing our responsibilities. We must demonstrate that we have the necessary capacity to manage our scarce resources for the optimum benefit of our country. This involves efficient application of not only our

resources but also our time in performance of our duties to achieve success in all that we do.

Particularly, I am calling upon all staff involved in capital projects to ensure that the budget allocated to our Ministry for development is utilised efficiently, and that we do not have any unspent monies being returned to Treasury due to non-implementation of projects.

Let us ensure that the capital projects are 1) relevant to what we need as a Ministry, 2) efficiently completed within project times, 3) implemented to the highest standards of quality, and 4) are cost effective and within allocated budgets.

Service Delivery

I wish to remind all staff members that we are employed to serve the people of Namibia on all matters relating to fisheries and marine resources. Our citizens, when they call on our offices or communicate to us must be treated with dignity and respect, because they are our ultimate employers.

The Ministry, in line with Government Policy, is implementing a Service Delivery Charter that entitles rights and responsibilities to all those who we serve. In this regard, letters and other media of communication must be responded to in a timely manner, telephone calls must be answered courteously, and office space

must be maintained as public service space, and not as personal property. We must be fair, accountable, transparent and free from corruption in all our service delivery at all times.

Conclusion

Together, we can all make our Ministry one of the most illustrious fisheries Ministries in the world. Our service delivery affects the way fisheries will create jobs for Namibians, attract investment from within and outside Namibia, and generate income which can be distributed to the rest of the economy through resource rent.

I encourage you to fully embrace commitment to team work and create a working environment that will foster service delivery as well developing the careers of all our staff.

Finally, I hope you share my excitement about the New Year and the endless opportunities we have to move forward with greater momentum.

I also hope that you share my pride in all that we have accomplished individually and collectively, and, importantly ... my resolve to make our Ministry even stronger in 2017 than it was last year.

With these few words, allow me to wish you all a productive 2017.

I thank you!