

CONTRIBUTION BY MR SEBASTIAAN KARUPU ON THE RATIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WALVIS BAY-NDOLA-LUBUMBASHI DEVELOPMENT CORRIDOR, MARCH 23, 2021.

HON. SPEAKER,

HON. MEMBERS,

I rise to add my voice to this important agreement, the agreement on the establishment of the Walvis Bay-Ndola-Lubumbashi Development Corridor, tabled by Hon. John Mutorwa, minister of works and transport on 23 February this year (2021), in this august House.

HON. SPEAKER,

Namibia's geographic area in SADC, presents her an opportunity to benefit greatly in terms of trade with her neighbouring states who seek to use her port for import and export of their goods. This agreement if ratified will facilitate development of long-term transport infrastructure that will provide an opportunity for future economic growth in the southern region.

The ratification of this agreement Honourable Speaker, will establish a solid foundation from which member states will commit themselves to the development of the regional economic infrastructures. Furthermore, the Walvis Bay-Ndola-Lubumbashi will become a leading transport corridor in the Southern Africa Region as it will link SADC to the outside world.

As we are striving towards regional integration, it is imperative for SADC member states to develop their own infrastructures in the region, to enable them to robustly trade among themselves and with the rest of the world.

HON. SPEAKER,

HON. MEMBERS,

SADC region's transport and logistic has become imminent within the SADC region as more and more commodities are being sought and transported by the giant economies within the globe. Walvis Bay in this case is the gateway of these global economies giants to SADC.

Honourable Speaker, the Walvis Bay-Ndola-Lubumbashi Corridor is yet another agreement Namibia has to ratify, Namibia has already signed agreements on the TransCunene -, TransCaprivi - and TransKalahari Corridors respectively.

It is against this backdrop that Namibia has established the Walvis Bay Corridor Group (WBCG), charged with the responsibility of developing strategies on how Namibia can draw benefit from this arrangements.

HON. SPEAKER,

HON. MEMBERS,

Allow me to appreciate the fact that Namibia has retained her status as having the best roads on African continent for five consecutive years. This was confirmed by the World Economic Forum's Global Competitive Report Index of 2020. The importance of road infrastructure development in Namibia is embedded in the objectives of Vision 2030 and the National Development Plan (NDP5) which call for sustained economic growth, infrastructure development, employment creation and improved income equality.

However such goals can only be attained through sustained investment in road infrastructure. Road infrastructure is one of the major enablers of economic growth in any given regional body and SADC is not exceptional.

Honourable Speaker, we must admit that Namibia is one of the country that spends excessively on maintenance of road infrastructures in SADC region. This is because of the major causes of roads damage due to excessive rainfall in some part of the country and abusive use of the road infrastructures, especially by overloaded heavy vehicles such as trucks and busses. These overloaded heavy vehicles reduce the lifespan of our roads in the country and attracts expensive maintenance cost.

In the year 2000, the Cabinet of the Republic of Namibia endorsed a weighbridge programme to construct thirteen weighbridges countrywide to control vehicles from overloading. So far at least ten weighbridges has been constructed countrywide. However overloaded vehicles still continue to abuse our roads, causing severe damage to this important economic infrastructure.

It is against this backdrop that I call upon the Roads Authority to ensure that all vehicles above 3 500kg are weighed to enforce the permissible carrying capacity and thus preserve road infrastructure, minimise maintenance costs, and also enhance road safety with the objective of protecting the roads and lives of the road users.

Finally Honourable Speaker, I would like to recommend for the construction of a rail line by the parties to this agreement when resource permits, to at least extend the rail line from Grootfontein rail station to Ngoma border post in Zambezi region, to facilitate smooth transportation of SADC member states' goods to and from the port of Walvis Bay.

With this brief contribution Honourable Speaker, I am registering my full support to the ratification of this important agreement by this august House.

I thank you for your kind attention.

