



Ministry of Environment and Tourism
Republic of Namibia

Address by the
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Minister of Environment and Tourism
to the National Assembly

**On the critical outcomes for Namibia from the 21st Conference of
the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on
Climate Change from 30 November – 12th December 2015 and the
12th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to
Combat Desertification from 12-23rd October 2015**

February 2016

WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

Honourable Speaker,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to brief this august House on the critical outcomes for Namibia from the recently held 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as well as the 12th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

Honorable Members,

The historic Paris Agreement, which unites all the nations of the world into a first-ever universal, legally binding global deal to tackle climate change, was the key outcome of the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

It is important to note that this legally binding treaty, which will enter into force in 2020, comes with domestic obligations and opportunities for Namibia. I would like to take this opportunity to inform this august House of the key elements of this Agreement, which I view as being of critical importance to Namibia's future development.

The Paris Agreement is considered very positive for African countries as it:

- (i.) Signals a high level of ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the impact of climate change globally;

- (ii.) Reflects a good balance between mitigation and adaptation; and
- (iii.) Contains commitments from developed countries to scale up financial support for climate change mitigation and adaptation actions in developing countries.

The Agreement also contains clear signals to move to the end of fossil fuels and to usher in a new era of development based on green technologies. This will have a major impact on the way business is done across the world and I believe we are now poised for massive investment into technologies linked to renewable energy; sustainable transportation systems; water supply and management; and alternative approaches to waste management. Each of these areas can make a major contribution to Namibia's national development.

Honorable Members,

A 2°C increase in the average global temperature above the pre-industrial level is scientifically regarded as the limit of safety, beyond which many of the effects of climate change - floods, droughts, heatwaves, sea level rise and more intense storms - are likely to become much more dangerous. The Paris Agreement aims to hold the increase in global average temperature well below 2°C and states the intention to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. This is a highly ambitious attempt to curb the catastrophic impacts expected from global warming, which

is good news for vulnerable countries such as Namibia and the Small Island Developing States.

The Paris Agreement adopts Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as the main vehicle for identifying national targets and priorities in mitigating and adapting to climate change. Namibia developed and submitted its first INDC to the UNFCCC in 2015. This document contains a commitment to reduce the country's Greenhouse Gas emissions by 89% of the projected emissions by 2030. This involves a range of strategic targets and actions to reduce emissions in sectors such as energy through moving towards renewable energy and cleaner transport; the adoption of cleaner technologies in industrial production and processes; a suite of actions in the agriculture, forestry and land use sector; as well as the recycling of municipal solid waste and wastewater sludge.

Under the Paris Agreement, Namibia must submit a NDC to the Convention every 5 years and these NDCs are expected to be progressive in ambition so that the global temperature reduction goal can be reached.

Honorable Members

Adaptation to climate change is a critical priority for Namibia. Therefore it is highly significant that the Paris Agreement contains a global goal on climate change adaptation to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and

reduce vulnerability to climate change. Greater international cooperation is also called for to strengthen adaptation in developing countries, particularly those vulnerable to climate change. This will allow Namibia to mobilize support for strengthening the resilience of farmers and rural communities to drought events and for the construction of climate-proof infrastructure.

Honorable Members,

It is built in to the Paris Agreement that developed countries must continue to take the lead in mobilizing climate finance for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries. It is also recognized that this finance should be scaled-up and developed country parties are required to report biennially on the amount of public financial resources made available to developing countries. Other Parties are also encouraged to provide financial support to developing countries but on a voluntary basis.

I am pleased to also report to this august House that the Green Climate Fund is now fully operational. The Green Climate Fund is expected to become the main global fund for climate change finance and US\$100 billion is expected to flow through this Fund annually by 2020. The Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia has been accredited to the Green Climate Fund and we are busy preparing six project proposals that will be submitted to the Green Climate Fund later in 2016.

Honorable Members,

The Paris Agreement will open for signature on 22nd April 2016, and I strongly motivate that we ratify this agreement without delay.

Honorable Members,

I would like now to turn your attention towards the outcomes from the 12th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. This Conference marked the end of Namibia's Presidency of this Convention and I am pleased to report that our tenure as President has been highly successful.

An important outcome of Namibia's presidency is the inclusion of issues of desertification, land degradation and drought as a target in the new post-2015 sustainable development goals (SDGs) framework. This was strongly influenced by the Group of Friends on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought, which was established by the UN Permanent Representatives of Namibia and Iceland in 2013 to lobby for the inclusion of these issues within the SDGs. COP12 decided to recognize the UNCCD as the lead organization for desertification, land degradation and drought and it was directed to seek cooperation for the achievement of this target of the SDGs. I am confident that this decision will help to mobilize greater resources for countries such as

Namibia to tackle critical problems we are facing including drought and land degradation.

Honorable Members,

There is a new concept known as land degradation neutrality, which is also breathing life into the UNCCD. The achievement of a land degradation neutral world was first mentioned in the Rio+20 summit outcome document and relates to the need to set quantifiable targets for the prevention of land degradation and the rehabilitation of degraded land globally. COP12 strengthened the momentum behind this concept by:

1. Adopting a broad definition of land degradation neutrality which has made the concept of global importance;
2. Inviting all country parties to formulate voluntary targets for land degradation neutrality; and
3. Committing the UNCCD Executive Secretary to investigate the establishment of financial mechanisms to support the achievement of land degradation neutrality.

Honorable Members

I am pleased to inform you that Namibia is one of the most advanced countries with regard to implementing the concept of land degradation neutrality, having been one of 14 countries to be involved in a pilot project on this issue. We have

completed phase I of this project and now have targets in place for Namibia to be land degradation neutral by 2040. Phase II of this project, which will implement on-the-ground interventions, commenced in February 2016.

Honorable Members

During UNCCD COP12, I had the honor to chair a roundtable session during the high level segment on *“Drought adaptation: mainstreaming drought management policy in national agendas and mitigating the effects of drought”*. This was partly in recognition of Namibia’s efforts as COP11 President to increase the role of the UNCCD in the mitigation of drought. In addition to the roundtable, a decision was adopted requesting the UNCCD Secretariat to continue improving partnerships fostering capacity development for national drought preparedness planning, drought early warning, risk and vulnerability assessments, and enhanced drought risk mitigation.

Honorable Members,

In line with this decision and the outcomes from the roundtable session, it is proposed that Namibia will host an international conference in August 2016 focusing on the development of a strategic framework to improve drought resilience in Africa. It is no longer acceptable for us to be caught unaware by drought events, especially as these events are set to become even more frequent under the climate change scenario. This conference will look at solutions to

enhance our preparedness for drought events and will be held in partnership with a number of international partners including the UNCCD and the World Meteorological Organization.

Honorable Speaker,

I would like to use this platform to highlight that a first ever UNCCD Gender Day was held during COP11 in Windhoek in 2013. The University of Namibia was instrumental in organizing this event and was again closely involved in the organization and hosting of a second UNCCD Gender Day at COP12 in Turkey. The Second Gender Day was held under the theme “Women’s Empowerment for a Land Degradation Neutral World” and delivered a number of recommendations on policy actions, institutional frameworks and capacity building. It was decided that Gender Day will continue to be held alongside future UNCCD COPs, which serves as a good Namibian legacy for furthering the empowerment of women on issues of sustainable land management. I would like to commend the University of Namibia for their efforts in this regard.

Lastly Honorable members,

I would like to re-iterate at this platform that this Convention is particularly important for Namibia. There is a wealth of experience and good practices out there in areas such as drought mitigation, climate smart agriculture and the sustainable land management of rangelands. It is critical that we continue to

adopt and apply these good practices so that we can reduce our vulnerability to desertification, land degradation and drought over the long term.

I thank you for your kind attention.