Statement of Budget Speech for 2011/2012

By Dr. M. Amweelo

Comrade Speaker

Honourable Members of the National Assembly

First and foremost I would like to congratulate Hon. Minister of Finance, Cde. Saara Naandjila Kuugonelwa-Amadhila, her Deputy Cde. Calle Schlettwein and the entire staff, as well as the Director of National Planning Commission (NPC) Cde. Tom Alweendo on a job well done in the preparation of this macroeconomic stability economic growth job creation welfare improvement

Comrade Speaker

The Namibian economy requires continuous transformation and diversification in order to further lessen commodity dependence and move to a more industrialized structure where all sectors of the economy contributed significantly to the country's GDP.

Comrade Speaker, Honourable members of the National Assembly

We are all aware that global warming and climate change could affect our economy and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, hence urgent action is needed. Marine biodiversity could be endangered by climate change. The adverse impact of climate change on marine and coastal biodiversity (e.g. sea level rise, ocean acidification, coral bleaching) and recognizing that the ocean is one of the largest natural reservoirs of carbon, can significantly affect the rate and scale of global climate change.

Our oceans give us life- they provide us with oxygen and food, and they contain over 80% of all life on Earth. In exchange, we plunder them of fish, choke them with pollution and heat them up through climate change.

Despite the critical role that oceans play in our lives, they are still the least protected areas of our planet. Currently, less than 1% of our seas and oceans are protected. The SWAPO Party puts strong emphasis on the protection and conservation of our environment.

The oceans regulate the Earth's temperature, cycle its nutrients, have taken up nearly half of anthropogenic CO2 emissions, and provide nearly half the oxygen in the atmosphere. More than 1 billion people worldwide depend on the marine environment for goods and services such as coastal protection, food, income and livelihoods.

Marine fish are critical to food security, particularly in coastal developing countries, in some places providing more than half of animal protein consumed (Zoological Society of London).

The oceans are in crisis, climate change is changing patterns of productivity in the oceans, altering the timing of natural marine cycles and causing coral bleaching and ocean **acidification** that, in turn, are impacting marine ecosystem services.

Coastal pollution, mainly arising from the use of agrochemicals and poor waste management, is causing extensive habitat degradation through **eutrophication** and harmful algal blooms, leading to the spread of dead zones and contributing to the destruction of coastal marine ecosystems.

Comrade Speaker, Honourable Members of the National Assembly

An oil spill disaster can be detrimental to several economic, cultural and social sectors of our beautiful country. It can affect our rich marine environment, natural amenities along our beaches, wild life, harbours and port operations as well as tourist industries.

The most important pollutant resulting from **shipping operations** is oil. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of the United States estimated in 1980 that as much as 3.54 million tons of oil entered the sea every year, some 1.5 million tons of which resulted from the transport of oil by sea; the remainder came from land-based activities and included industrial wastes, urban runoff and natural seepage.

Collisions and groundings account for roughly 80% of all major spills. The other causes of oil pollution include dry-docking (30,000 tons); bilge and fuel oil from all types of ships (30,000 tons); and non- tanker accidents (20,000 tons**). Oil affects the maritime environment in a number of ways.**

It blankets the surface, interfering with the oxygen exchange between the sea and the atmosphere, its heavier constituents blanket the seabed, interfering with the growth of marine life, many of its constituent elements are toxic, and can enter the food chain; and it interferes with the recreational uses of beaches. Furthermore, oil may enter seawater distilling inlets and it may be deposited on tidal mudflats, again with detrimental results. Our National Assembly has approved five International Maritime Organisation (IMO) conventions

related to the prevention and combating of oil spills in the Namibian waters.

Furthermore, we need as a country to conduct more training, financial resources and to implement the conventions and national policies so that we can achieve our objectives as outlined in the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan.

Overfishing, driven by poor systems of ocean and coastal governance, poses a significant threat to fish populations, the wider marine ecosystem, and the people dependent on these ecosystems for livelihoods, food and other services. Fisheries resources constitute a highly valuable economic asset for the populations of Southern Africa, where many people live near the coasts.

How will our seas in Southern Africa look in 2050?

Rising pollution, the effects of climate change and overfishing are threatening the future of marine biodiversity across the globe. More and more the harm to marine biodiversity can be traced not to natural events but to inadequate policies. The question is: Why have lawmakers paid so little attention to the degradation of the sea? Creating comprehensive policies that wisely conserve all the richness and bounty of the sea requires an informed understanding of biodiversity. Marine biodiversity describes the **web** of life that constitutes the sea. It includes three discrete levels: **ecosystems and habitat diversity, species diversity and genetic diversity.**

In Development Programmes Estimates of expenditure, medium term expenditure framework (2011/2012 to 2013/2014) NPC CODE 5081, project 18/02/12 (page 453) "Namibia Coast Conservation and

Management Project". This project could expand the network to include marine biodiversity research programmes and policies so that it could fully represent the range of Namibia's coastal, marine ecosystems and habitats. The total cost 8,917 million needs to be increased in order to cover all of the above mentioned activities.

Fishing is the largest export sector for Southern Africa. Marine and coastal ecosystems suffer from the intensification of anthropogenic pressure (over-exploitation of resources, degradation of sensitive environments such as mangroves or sea grasses, pollution, etc.). This situation requires prompt action by the States in the sub-region - with support from NGOs to implement a Regional Strategy for Marine Protected Areas.

The importance of collaboration and working jointly with relevant regional initiatives, organizations, and agreements in identifying ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), in accordance with international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, in particular in enclosed or semi enclosed seas, to promote conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in those areas. Within its territorial sea, (12 Nautical miles) a coastal State has sovereignty. Within its contiguous zone (24 nautical miles) it has functional Jurisdiction relating to its customs, fiscal, immigration or sanitary laws and within the exclusive economic zone (200 Nautical miles) State has sovereignty rights over its living and non-living resources, including the production of energy from the water.

Marine protected areas are increasingly being used by governments as instruments for conservation and management of coastal and marine biodiversity. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has set a

target of bringing at least 10 percent of oceans under protection by 2012.

Scientific Advice: Governments should direct marine species management authorities to create science based decision-making frameworks that operate at a range of levels (local, provincial, national, regional and global). These frameworks should include:

- Interdisciplinary scientific research integrating bio-physical and socio-economic information;
- Provisions that prevent decision-makers from setting catch limits above scientific recommendations, especially in cases where target stocks are at risk of collapse.

The big questions directed to us as Parliamentarians are:

How can we solve the problems of marine biodiversity at the regional and national level?

What is our role to play in marine biodiversity at the local level?

Parliamentarians play a central role in developing, ratifying and monitoring the enforcement of domestic marine biodiversity legislation, as well as in holding our government to account over international commitments. The Namibian National Assembly has ratified the Convention on Biodiversity to serve as an action plan for parliamentarians, recommending a range of international and national measures where legislators can make an important difference in addressing the divers of marine ecosystem degradation.

Protected Areas and Planning: Fully protected marine reserves can build resilience in marine ecosystems, protect biodiversity and are

increasingly being considered as an important tool for ecosystem-based fisheries management in combination with other measures. Government and regional management bodies should implement Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Networks in coastal waters and on the high seas as part of integrated marine policy frameworks incorporating marine spatial planning. To achieve these goals it is necessary to:

- Define clear objectives for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), which may include species or habitat conversation, fisheries management, or both, and develop common indicators and standards for successful implementation.
- Provide funding and support for network designation, building capacity, for local fishes if requested to reduce fishing activities or re-orient activities to other sectors and further Marine Protected Areas (MPA) research.
- Ensure Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are monitored, ensured and effectively managed by creating a well-coordinated Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) network at all levels of governance including community-based and co-management initiatives for small-scale fisheries as part of integrated coastal zone management.
- It is very important for the parliamentarians to help all the managers concerned to increase communication and to address the disagreement between marine stakeholders and research scientists on the potential costs and benefits of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), particularly in coastal waters.
- Parliamentarians need to encourage Government and relevant organizations to cooperate, as appropriate, collectively or on a regional or sub-regional basis, to identify and protect ecologically

or biologically significant areas in open-ocean waters and deep sea habitats in need of protection, including by establishing representative networks of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in accordance with international law and based on scientific information.

The marine pollution need to be reported regularly and better information is needed to fashion the management that will sustain marines' species, conserve diversity, reverse marine biodiversity losses of habitat, reduce impact of pollution, and respond to global climate change. Hence, there are biological, economic, philosophical and political reasons to push for greater exploration and understanding of the ocean and its inhabitants. Indeed, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity requires signatories to collect information on living resources, but, as yet, no nation has a complete baseline of such information.

We as Parliamentarians should strongly support the need to bring marine biodiversity protection concerns to the attention of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and to ensure that they implement conservation and management measures to protect and mitigate marine biodiversity of targeted species.

I fully support the appropriate Bill

I thank you