



VOTE 18

**2024 / 2025 FINANCIAL YEAR
BUDGET STATEMENT**

**BY
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MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM**

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

04 APRIL 2024

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee, Honourable Members

I am gladly honored to rise today to present the budget vote 18 of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism for the 2024 / 25 financial year to this August house for approval.

Honourable Members,

I am pleased to inform you that the Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism has been allocated an amount of **seven hundred and twenty-five million, five hundred and thirty-three thousand Namibian dollars (N\$725,533,000)** for the 2024 / 25 financial year.

This amount represents:

- **Six hundred and twenty-five million, two hundred and sixty-three thousand Namibian dollars (N\$625,263,000)** for the Operational Budget and
- **One hundred million, two hundred and seventy thousand Namibian dollars (N\$100,270,000)** for the Development Budget.

Notably, this is an increase of 22% in the Operational Budget and a 20% increase in the Development Budget compared to the budget allocation in 2023 / 24. This results in a 21% overall budget increase for the Ministry in 2024 / 2025.

The Ministry is grateful to the Minister of Finance and Public Enterprises and the Director-General of the National Planning Commission for this substantive increase in budgetary allocation. Although this is still not sufficient to execute all our operational programs as we would like, we shall continue to prioritize efficiency and ensure that we maximise positive impacts for our people and environment with the limited resources at our disposal.

Honourable Members,

Allow me to now briefly highlight some of the key achievements, challenges, and priorities in terms of the six programs of the Ministry.

The first program of the Ministry is **Wildlife and Protected Area Management**, which is allocated an amount of **two hundred and seventy-nine million, two hundred and sixty-nine thousands Namibian dollars (N\$279,269,000)**.

Namibia has an impressive network of protected areas. The twenty (20) state-run Protected Areas or National Parks cover about 17 per cent of the country's land surface. Protected Areas continue to play an important role in conserving our wildlife, important habitats and landscapes, and they are the leading attraction for tourists visiting Namibia.

The Ministry has stepped up the implementation of measures to reduce the impact of human-wildlife conflict. The Ministry conducted human-wildlife conflict awareness and outreach activities in all affected areas and provided training on human-wildlife conflict management to conservancies in Kunene, Zambezi, Otjozondjupa, Oshana, Erongo, Omaheke, Oshikoto and Omusati.

Furthermore, the Ministry trained thirty-two (32) lion rangers and one hundred and seventy-two (172) game guards on human-wildlife conflict.

As part of efforts to mitigate the impact of human-wildlife conflict on farmers and communities, the Ministry undertook the following activities during the period under review:

We provided fencing materials to three hundred and ninety (390) farmers to deter elephants.

We constructed twelve (12) predator-proof kraals in the North Central regions, twenty-four (24) in Kunene, thirty-five (35) in the Chobe landscape, fifteen (15) in the Kavango Transfrontier Conservation Area and three (3) crocodile enclosures in Zambezi.

We procured and deployed thirty-five (35) satellite collars for predators including lions, spotted hyena, leopards and crocodiles in the north-west and north-eastern regions.

We erected three (3) early warning towers in Kunene South. Two (2) boreholes for King Nehale Conservancy were equipped with elephant protection walls and solar panels and the Ministry maintained and cleaned twenty-one (21) boreholes in Kunene and the North Central Regions and drilled two (2) boreholes in Kunene North.

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House, Honourable Members,

The second program of the Ministry is the **Protection and Management of Key Species and Natural Habitats**, which is allocated a total of **forty-nine million and sixty-three thousand Namibian dollars (N\$49,063,000)**. This program refers mainly to monitoring and research to guide the sustainable conservation and management of species of high conservation value.

A number of activities were implemented under this programme in the 2023 / 2024 financial year. The Ministry dehorned 700 rhinos to minimize rhino poaching incidences in the country. As a prerequisite for effective wildlife management and protection, the Ministry conducted game counts in the northwestern, northcentral and southern conservancies. A rhino block count was conducted in Etosha National Park. Aerial Surveys were conducted in Mangetti Game Park, Waterberg Plateau Park, Nyae-Nyae Buffalo Camp and Hardap Game Park. The Ministry also conducted the northwest elephant survey and the survey of the wetlands of northeastern Namibia.

Protection of our species in Namibia is one of our priority areas. Recently we have experienced high rate of criminal syndicates targeting our Rhinos.

Since 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2024, 707 suspects have been effected. Out of these number, 589 suspects in custody/ awaiting trial, 91 suspects convicted, 21 on bail, 5 released, 2 acquitted and 1 deceased.

I must announce to this August house and the public at large that the Anti Poaching Unit made a breakthrough on the recent horrific poaching

incidences in Etosha and private farms since December 2023 in which 32 rhinos have been poached including 28 rhinos poached this year. Arrests of 14 suspects have been effected recently related to recent poaching incidences in Etosha National Park and more will follow. I must thank our personnel of Anti Poaching operations. (WPS, NDF, NAMPOL and NCIS) for that successful breakthrough.

Honourable Members,

- a. The third program of the Ministry is **Tourism Growth Development and Gaming Regulations**, which is allocated **twenty-five million, nine hundred and eighty-seven thousand Namibian dollars (N\$25,987,000)**. This program is focused on putting in place a favorable enabling and regulatory environment for the sustained growth of the tourism and gaming industry so that it contributes to the socio-economic development of the country.

Other interventions will focus on training and accrediting tourist guides, creating awareness at community level and training in heritage/cultural tourism product development, establishing regional tourism forums and scaling up tourism enterprise development (entrepreneurship) amongst the youth in rural areas.

The direct economic contribution of the tourism sector to the national Gross Domestic Product has doubled from 3.5% in 2015 to 6.9% in 2022, to the value of N\$14.3 billion of the total GDP (of N\$206.2 billion) according to the Sixth Edition of Namibia's Tourist Satellite Account Report of 2022. The sector now provides a total direct employment of 57, 571,00 (Fifty-Seven Thousand Five Hundred and Seven One), representing 7.9 percent of total employment in the country.

International tourist's arrival numbers continue to increase year-on year basis with latest indicating a record of 98.1% increase from 232,756 (2021) to 461,027 in 2022.

In terms of involving and empowering communities through tourism, the Ministry created approximately 150 jobs through the awarding of tourism and hunting concession contracts.

The concession contracts awarded are; Kavango South Lodge Concession, Kwetchi Lodge Concession; (which were both awarded to the Hambukushu Community with 75% to the Hambukushu community and 25% to Government), Sossusvlei Shuttle, Farm Arbeid Adelt Campsite Concession (awarded to Maltahohe and !Karkhoen communities with 75% and Government retaining the 25%). The ministry through tender procured an operator for this concession.

The Ministry further procured JV Partners on behalf of the Hambukushu communities through a tender to develop and implement the Concessions to the benefit of the communities.

The Kavango South Lodge Concession will be developed by Nyime Safaris and Lodges, while the Kwetchi Lodge Concession will be developed by Purple Rain Investments. Buffalo Lodge and Traditional Knowledge Centre Concession (was awarded to the Kyaramacan Association), Dorob National Park Head Concession Contract (which is the Dune 7 Concession was awarded to Sandwich Dune Tours and Safaris), Kwando North Concession (was awarded to the Kwando Conservancy and the community assisted by the ministry procured A.S.S Investments as a JV partner through public tender during the current financial year to develop and implement the Concession).

Three Namib Naukluft Park 4x4 Activity Concessions (Awarded to Desert Magic Tours, Namdrenaline Tours JV, Sandwich Dune Tours and Joan Car Hire)

Honorable Chairperson, Honourable Members.

The fourth program of the Ministry is **Environment and Natural Resources Protection**, which is allocated a total amount of **one hundred and sixty-six million, nine hundred and fifty-four thousand Namibian dollars (N\$166,954,000)**.

This is the second biggest programme of the Ministry and involves the implementation of the Environmental Management Act, 2007 (Act No. 7 of

2007), sustainable forest management, environmental awareness and economics, and the implementation of various multilateral environmental agreements.

In terms of the Environmental Management Act, the Ministry received and processed two thousand, five hundred and eleven (2,511) applications for Environmental Clearance Certificates during 2023 / 2024.

Out of these one thousand and forty-nine (1,049) Environmental Clearance Certificates were issued. As part of ensuring compliance with the Act, the Ministry conducted ninety-eight (98) environmental inspections and twenty (20) compliance orders were issued.

Eight (8) Waste Disposal Sites were gazetted in terms of the Environmental Management Act - Karibib Town Council, Rehoboth Town Council, Witvlei Village Council, Katima Mulilo Town Council, Mariental Municipality, Tsandi Village Council, Omaruru Town Council and Luderitz Town Council.

As part of the international effort to meet the objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the universal landmark of the Paris Agreement in general, the Ministry has revised and updated the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) that outlines robust medium and long-term measures that the country intends to pursue to reduce emissions across key sectors including energy, transport, industry, forestry, and land use, and some of the actions that Namibia can take across the sectors of agriculture, water, infrastructure, ecosystems, and livelihoods to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

There are 38 proposed measures in the NDC highlighting appropriate interventions in the low carbon pathways and resilience development for our local communities and the nation at large. The revised and updated Nationally Determined Contributions was approved by Cabinet during 2023/2024 and subsequently submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat.

Furthermore, the Ministry made significant progress in advancing the Carbon Market Framework development which involved regional public consultation

and a national validation workshop. The validated Carbon Market Framework serves as a basis for regulation as well as the operationalization of the framework to enhance the country's ability to access carbon finance through carbon credit mechanisms.

The Ministry has also been taking measures to enhance compliance with the Forestry Act.

The Ministry issued fifteen thousand, one hundred and fifty-seven (15,157) forest permits during the period under review and one thousand and twenty-nine (1,029) forest inspections were conducted. Three hundred and sixty-one (361) roadblocks were set up. A three (3) day law enforcement training workshop was held with the US Forest Service to improve effectiveness in the implementation of the Forest Act and Regulations and other related legislations.

As part of tree planting efforts, the Ministry produced sixty-eight thousand, four hundred and forty-nine (68,449) tree seedlings at its nurseries, and thirteen thousand and seventy-one (13,071) of those tree seedlings were donated to schools and public offices.

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House, Honourable Members,

The fifth programme of the Ministry is **Infrastructure and Development, Maintenance, Monitoring, and Evaluation**, which is allocated an amount of **sixty-nine million, eight hundred and seventy-seven thousand Namibian dollars (N\$69,877,000)**. This covers the repair and upgrade of fencing in protected areas as well as the construction and renovation of staff houses and offices.

During 2023 / 2024, the Ministry upgraded and electrified a combined total of ninety-eight kilometers (98 kms) of the Etosha National Park fence and upgraded thirty-six kilometers (36kms) of the road between Okaukuejo and Olifantrus. The Etosha National Park fencing project currently employs thirty (30) members of conservancies from around the Park and ten (10) youths from the National Youth Service. The Ministry graded a total of two thousand

and twenty- one kilometers (2,921km) of roads and cut lines in protected areas during the period under review.

Honorable Members,

The sixth and final program of the Ministry is **Policy, Supervision, and Support Services**, which is allocated an amount of **one hundred and thirty-four million, three hundred and eighty-three thousand Namibian dollars (N\$134,383,000)**. This program oversees the successful implementation and execution of the mandate of the vote by creating an enabling environment for the previously-stated programmes and is focused on enhancing organizational performance and improving the delivery of public services.

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee, Honourable Members,

Before I conclude, allow me to thank the Deputy Minister, the Executive Director, the management, and the entire staff of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism for their commitment and hard work.

Finally, once again, I thank the Honourable Minister of Finance for allocating **Six hundred and twenty-five million, two hundred and sixty-three thousand Namibian dollars (N\$625,263,000)** for the Operational Budget and equally thank the Director General of National Planning Commission for the **one hundred million, two-hundred and seventy thousand Namibian dollars (N\$100,270,000)** for the Development Budget.

I now kindly, ask this Honourable House to approve an amount of **seven hundred and twenty-five million, five hundred and thirty-three thousand Namibian dollars (N\$725,533,000)** for the 2024 / 25 financial year.

I thank you for your attention.

