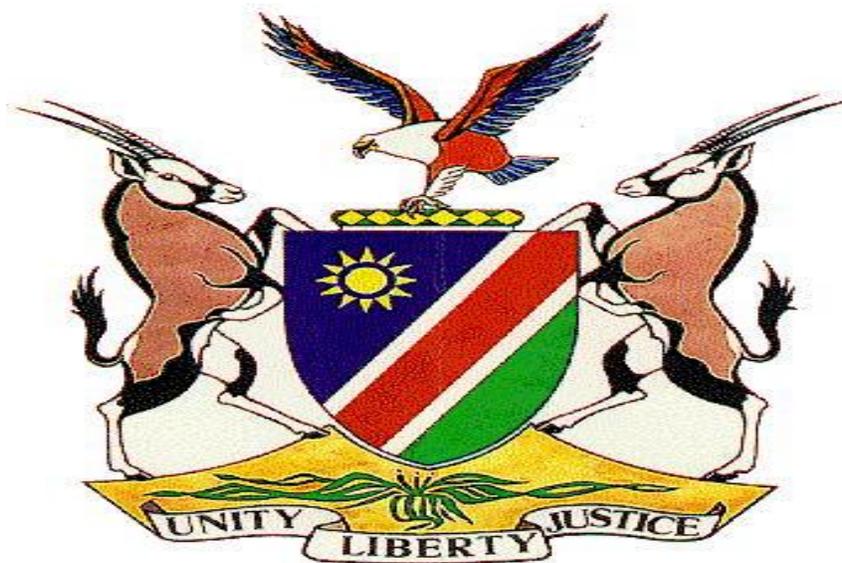


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



OFFICE OF THE ERONGO GOVERNOR

STATE OF THE REGION ADDRESS

BY

HONOURABLE NEVILLE ANDRE

SWAKOPMUND MUNICIPAL CHAMBERS

09TH JULY 2021

10H00

Director of Ceremony,

Honourable Ciske Howard –Smith: Chairperson of the Erongo Regional Council,

Honourable Regional Councillors from the Erongo Constituencies present,

Your Worship the Mayors

Honourable Local Authority Councillors who joins us virtually,

Distinguished CEO's from the Erongo Regional Municipalities joining us virtually,

Distinguished Representative's from the O-M-A's joining us virtually,

Distinguished Traditional Leaders joining us virtually,

Distinguished Civil Society Partners joining us virtually,

Distinguished Captains of Industry joining us virtually,

Esteemed Members of the Media joining us virtually,

Fellow Citizens of the Erongo Region,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Honourable Chairperson,

In line with our Constitutional provisions, specifically Article 110, subsection 5 and 6, I am delighted to, once again, stand before you to deliver my second State of the Region Address.

The year 2021 heralded the second wave, and most recently, the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, sweeping across Namibia and the world.

As of 4 July 2021, the Erongo region has recorded 14,146 cases, including 234 healthcare workers. Of those, 12,355 have recovered, which bring our recovery rate to 87%. But, unfortunately, on a sad note, 257 citizens of the Erongo region succumbed to COVID 19.

As of 30 June 2021, the cumulative number of those vaccinated were 15,037. A total of 12,559 received their first dose, while 2478 received their second dose. This translate into vaccination coverage of 10.3 % for the first dose, and the coverage of those who received first and second doses (fully vaccinated) amounted to 2% out of 121 682 target population.

Honourable Chairperson, allow me to extend my sincere condolences to all the families that have lost loved ones due to this dreaded pandemic. I wish everyone who has been infected by the virus a speedy recovery and pray that the Almighty spread his healing hand across the nation. **Kindly rise and join me in observing a moment of silence.**

I would also like to extend my gratitude to our frontline workers, who have worked tirelessly in the face of great adversity and under challenging circumstances to save the lives of the people of Erongo.

Honourable Chairperson, let me share highlights on projects being implemented by the Central Government, the Erongo RC and Offices, Ministries and Agencies across the Erongo Region.

As you are aware, last year was highly challenging for our Region. Our Region was the first to witness an epicentre of Covid-19. We have the unenviable record of having had the first community transmission and recording the first Covid-19 death.

Given this background, I am pleased to inform this august gathering that the following was done in terms of Covid-19 infrastructure

- **Renovation of ward 6** in Swakopmund District hospital that is used as an isolation facility. -Swakopmund-N\$577797.00—complete
- **Minor Renovations of ward 5** to prepare for isolation ward at Swakopmund District hospital-Swakopmund-N\$204,207.96-complete
- **Construction of the neonatal Unit** at Swakopmund District Hospital-Swakopmund-N\$ 26,663,673-Ground-breaking was held on the 20 November 2020-In progress to be completed **in Feb 2022**
- **Renovation of isolation area at Usakos hospital**-Usakos-N\$258,3530.35 –Complete
- **Construction of two (12x2 beds) self-contained** isolation prefabricated isolation facilities in Walvis Bay Hospital-Walvis Bay--July 2020-Complete
- **Minor renovations of the old nurse's home**, Omaruru District hospital (electrical)-Omaruru-N\$180,145.73—Completed
- **Plumbing and renovation of isolation area at Wad A**, Usakos hospital-Usakos-N\$262,397.80-Completed
- **Minor renovation at Maternity Hospital Nurses home** (civil)-Omaruru-N\$358,000.00 -Completed
- **Civil work renovation at BM606 Swakopmund**-Swakopmund-N\$529,105.13-August 2020-Completed
- **Remove and replace white coated wire fence** at DRC clinic-Swakopmund-N\$198,515.78-Completed
- **Minor work to Uis clinic** -Uis-N\$228,368. -Completed
- **Minor repair to Omaruru isolation ward** (Old TB ward)-Omaruru-N\$147,632.72-April 2020-Completed

Education:

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Councillors, Fellow Citizens of the Erongo Region, the class of 2020 grade twelves defied all odds and produced excellent results Despite COVID-19 and its restrictions.

I specifically want to single out the Grade 12 learners of Duneside High School in Walvis Bay, the Walvis Bay Private School and the Namib High School in Swakopmund for making it amongst the top five and top ten performing schools in the country.

The Erongo Region further prides itself in the following achievements by the Primary and Junior Secondary Grades of Grade 1 to Grades 10, who recorded excellent grades despite not having been in school for long periods. The fourth Industrial Revolution is upon us; we therefore need more investments to be done to teach our children ICT skills as well as equipping our schools with the necessary ICT facilities.

Covid-19 Infrastructure Grant:

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government of the Republic of Namibia rolled out the Covid-19 Infrastructure grant to enable schools with no ablution facilities to construct such facilities.

A total of N\$25,200.000.00 was allocated to construct ablution facilities with septic tanks and additional water tanks at the 42 schools across the Erongo Region.

With regard to the construction of Hostel facilities, an amount of N\$ 11 237,000.00 was allocated to the renovation of hostels in the Erongo region.

Regional Economy:

I would like to now focus on the economic activities within the Region.

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a public health crisis in every corner of the world, resulting in an economic crisis of unprecedented proportions, and Namibia is not exempted.

The response of the Central Government to the socio-economic impact of the pandemic was swift and targeted. Nevertheless, thousands of affected and vulnerable citizens were affected.

As early as June 2020, the Government announced a massive stimulus package that was aimed at the following;

- Offer once-off financial support to vulnerable persons in our societies
- Offer financial stimulus packages to support affected businesses
- Financial support for small and informal businesses;
- Financial relief through payment holidays on loan repayments;
- Assistance to municipalities for the provision of water during this crisis,

The Erongo Region welcomed the interventions while remaining mindful that these social safety nets must be augmented by creating sustainable job opportunities to drive inclusive and sustainable economic activity.

Economic Recovery:

My Office is committed to engaging all stakeholders to ensure we develop strategies for economic recovery. However, we are mindful of the effects that Covid – 19 has, particularly on our tourism industry, where some accommodation establishments and restaurants remain closed. The impact is also being felt by our local artists who make a living from tourism.

Honourable Chairperson, my Office, in partnership with NEDBANK Namibia, is currently undertaking a study to ascertain the impact of COVID - 19 on the Regional Economy. The baseline data from this study will inform a regional stakeholder dialogue that will deliberate on regional economic recovery strategies.

Mining:

CNNC Rossing Uranium has retained its workforce of 1000 employees, of which 98.7% are Namibians and (17%) are female. In addition, a total number of 1029 contractors work daily on the mine.

Swakop Uranium's Husab Mine has a designed annual mining capacity of more than 100 million tonnes at total production.

The mine continues to be the largest employer in the Namibian mining industry, with over 1600 permanent employees and 600 contract employees.

The Langer Heinrich Mine completed a Restart Plan during 2020, which provides a clear pathway back to production. The mine is currently not in production but under care and maintenance.

Orano Mining Namibia's Trekkopje Mine remained under care and maintenance in 2020, with a small core team maintaining the site. Orano plans to exploit the Trekkopje deposit as soon as conditions in the uranium market allow.

Gold Mining:

The QKR Namibia Navachab Gold Mine embarks on its most ambitious expansion plan, which includes expansion of the mining operations and the processing plant and a trial underground mining project. The project will cost an estimated one billion Namibia Dollars (N\$1bn) and has already created employment for 109 people, with an anticipated 70 more job opportunities.

The project will employ some 200 people during the construction phase and 28 permanent jobs after commissioning. This project will cost approximately N\$670 million. These are all positive developments

Marble Mining:

There are currently four registered marble mines in and around Karibib. From these companies, three are in the construction phase, and one is fully operational. I am happy to inform this august gathering that the employment figures from the fully operational mine are at 360 workers, whereas those at the construction phase employs approximately 91 workers.

The Fishing Sector:

The Government of the Republic of Namibia, through a Cabinet decision, initiated the re-employment of the following categories of Seagoing Workers:

- **Category A** : Namsoy workers who were retrenched in 2017
- **Category B** : Those who participated in an illegal strike of 2014 (at the Kuisebmond Stadium)
- **Category C** : The Rest (Those not taken care of in Groups A and B)

Despite persistent challenges encountered with the registration process and the finalization of the subsequent Master-list, I am pleased to announce that the re-employment of 1577 workers for categories A & B had been successfully re-employed by different companies through a designated agreement with the Government:

CATEGORY	FISHING COMPANY	NUMBER OF EX-FISHERMEN EMPLOYED
CATEGORY A	TUNACOR	173
CATEGORY B	SEAWORKS	113
	CAVEMA	645
	MERLUS	92
	HOTAGO	264
	HANGANA SEAFOOD	290

With the recent successful finalization of the categories above, my Office commenced with the verification of **CATEGORY C**, which, among other things, includes:

- ArticNam /Heineste crew members
- Ex-SAGA employees
- Ex-Namsov Crew
- Former Geyser Crew
- MVA-Leader Crew
- Ex-Sheriff Vessel employees

Furthermore, in collaboration with the fishing sector stakeholders, my Office is planning to host the first-ever Namibian Fishing Indaba to align the new with the old fishing right holders. This will ensure that all role players pull in the same direction, restore confidence in the fishing sector while ensuring its long-term viability.

The Office of the Governor will be the official host of this noble initiative. At the same time, MFMR will be the torchbearer, with funding coming from the Fishing Industry.

Agriculture:

The Agricultural Sector is struggling to recover from the prolonged drought of the past seven years, which resulted in significant losses in livestock and crops. These further impacted the livelihoods of many farmers, with many struggling to pay back financial commitments. Farmers in the communal areas also suffered major stock losses, but the Government, through the Small Stock Development Communal Areas (SSDDCA), distributed about 400 goats and 20 rams. This support intervention benefitted 11 female farmers and nine (9) males across the Region's rural centres, including Walvis Bay Rural.

Tourism:

The Erongo Region is well known as a tourist destination. Unfortunately, during 2020, the Sector was heavily affected by the lockdown, resulting in the closure of some well-known restaurants and accommodation establishments. There was, however, some glimmer of hope in September with the relaxation of some regulations and the opening of some of the borders. Nevertheless, from the recent statistics, only about 6000 tourists travelled to Namibia during 2020.

Plans for the future:

- The Erongo Tourism Forum will soon be established. We are just looking at the guidelines for the formulation of the Forum, but rest assured, everybody in the tourism industry will be involved because we believe in inclusivity.

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Councillors, Fellow Citizens of Erongo, the prospects for economic growth looks promising with the following planned activities:

- a) The development of a possible desalination plant as Namwater has completed a feasibility study in this regard – which will ensure additional jobs and boost the regional economy.
- b) The envisaged development of the Hydrogen Ammonia plant by CMG Group in Walvis Bay will further bring the much-needed impetus into our regional economy through the creation of 5000 jobs during the construction phase, including 1000 permanent jobs.

Industrial Relations:

Where there are industries, there will always be issues about working conditions, salaries, health and safety and other industrial relations aspects.

The global Covid-19 pandemic has had many ramifications, including issues about industrial relations. For example:

- We witnessed a regrettable situation in 2020 during which Rossing Uranium Shop stewards were dismissed.
- D&M Rail Road Construction at Swakopmund was under pressure over its employment selection process, which was based on allocating a quota to each tribe.
- Furthermore, we had a longstanding challenge in the fishing industry, and I am happy that we have employed most workers. However, already there are talks of unhappiness regarding the standardized remuneration packages, terms and length of employment contracts by the re-employed workers, but I am happy to inform you that the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources is dealing with the matter.

Effective Governance

My Office is committed to fighting corruption in the Region, and we have submitted to the Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate the Covid -19 School Infrastructure Project after some irregularities were found around the implementation of the project. The case is currently being investigated. I would implore the elected leadership to lead by example and report irregularities to the ACC for investigation.

Housing Delivery:

Honourable Chairperson, last year during my maiden State of the Region address, I mentioned that the Arandis Town Council availed land to the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia to construct houses. I am pleased to inform this august gathering that the formalization process has been completed and that the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia is currently busy servicing these plots with the assistance of the Arandis Town Council.

The Karibib Town Council has also completed the establishment of the Usab Informal Settlement, with the provision of 750 erven to the Shack Dwellers

Federation. The members of the Shack Dwellers Federation are currently busy with the servicing of the land.

The Karibib Town Council also allocated 650 erven to the Harambee Informal Settlement for residential purposes.

The Henties Bay Municipality has serviced 332 erven in Omdel Extension 7 and 112 in Henties Bay extension 14.

The fire at Twaloloka, which left 153 households displaced, was declared a disaster along with the involvement of the Central Government in assisting. As part of the assistance, NHE allocated a piece of land to the Walvis Bay Municipality to construct 121 houses for the affected families. I am pleased to report that the construction of the 121 has now been completed. However, we are sorting out some outstanding issues about the beneficiary lists before the houses are handed over. The planned handover of the constructed houses to beneficiaries is scheduled, in the near future. The remaining 32 houses have been constructed, with funds from the Shack Dwellers Federation.

In addition, 75 houses were constructed in Henties Bay in the Omdel Extension 7.

In Swakopmund, 115 houses were constructed in Matutura, 48 in the DRC settlement and 30 in the Build Together Program.

SANITATION AND WATER PROVISION:

1. Rural Sanitation Programme

N\$ 1 980 769.00 was received under the Rural Sanitation Programme to construct dry pit latrines in the three rural constituencies of the Erongo region, namely: Daures, Karibib and Walvis Bay Rural.

From the received amount (N\$ 1 980 769.00), 128 dry pit latrines were constructed in the three rural constituencies of the Erongo region. The 128 dry pit latrines constructed are distributed as follows: 61 in Daures, 35 in Karibib and 32 in Walvis Bay Rural constituencies.

A total of 90 mobile toilets were placed in the DRC Informal Settlement in Swakopmund for N\$ 1,300,000.00 for a total number of 2982 beneficiaries during the reporting period.

WATER PROVISION:

Honourable Chairperson, the Government through the Directorate of Rural Water Supply undertook the following:

Project	Area	Progress
Rehabilitation (Cleaning) of Boreholes	Tubusis, Uis, Okombahe, Omatjete and Spitzkoppe	100%
Drilling of Boreholes	Tubusis, Uis, Okombahe, Omatjete and Spitzkoppe	100%
Installation of WP's	Okombahe, Tubusis, Spitzkoppe, Uis and Omatjete	100%

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Councillors, the water situation in most of the Daures Constituency is still dire. Therefore, we need to look at short term solutions to supply drinking water mainly to Namab Post, Satamab South and North.

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION:

Erongo Red, through the Ministry of Mines and Energy, has during the reporting period, powered 913 houses in the Daures Constituency to an amount of N\$16.1 Million Namibian Dollars.

Other Infrastructure Projects:

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a ripple effect on the National Fiscus and the MTEF budgets. As a result, there were cuts across all departmental budgets in the 2020/2021 financial year.

The impact was also felt in terms of contract and project delays due to several restrictions introduced to contain the spread of the virus.

Completion of Ongoing Bitumen Roads:

- Upgrading of Swakopmund-Henties Bay-Kamanjab road. Phase 1 was completed in February 2020, pending Omaruru bridge. However, the construction of the remaining portion of the road will not be

completed due to financial constraints. The total length of this road is 402 Km.

- 30 Km road between Walvis Bay and Swakopmund (behind Dune 7) is being upgraded to a dual carriageway and completed **in 2021**.
- Railway renovation from Kranzberg to Walvis Bay, is still on going and will be completed by 2022.

Strengthening Namibia as a Logistics Hub:

Project	Progress
Port Automation	<p>Project execution was delayed due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent National State of Emergency and lockdown requirements. Although some project work was done remotely, most of the packages were only reactivated in September 2020. The status of the prioritized technology elements are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1). Equipment Control System and Zero Error System End-user training, user acceptance testing and preparation for go-live in progress, due for completion in Q1, 2021/22 FY.(2). Terminal Operating System for Bulk and Break Bulk, and Syncrolift Go-live commenced(3). Business Intelligence System (BIS)- feasibility assessment of business intelligence tools in progress for implementation in Q1, FY 2021/2022.
Regulatory Trade Forum – Indicator: National Single Window developed	<p>A National Single Window (NSW) Project Implementation Committee (PIC) has been constituted to manage and control the operationalization by NETS (the Namibian E-Trade Services) and implement a single national window.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) The PIC held its inception meeting on 23 February 2021.(2) Draft project charter and initial stakeholder consultations commenced.(3) Project planning scheduled for Q1, 2021/22

Erongo Regional Council's Projects:

Five (5) capital projects under the Erongo Regional Council were budgeted for and are as follows:

1. **Construction** of Services Infrastructure phase 4 in Omatjete (Construction of Gravity Waterborne Sewer Reticulation Network for Omatjete Township Phase 4) an amount of **N\$2,000,000.00, was spent on the project which was successfully**
2. **Construction** of Services Infrastructure in Wlotskasbaken Phase 1 (Construction of Bulk Water Infrastructure Network for Wlotskasbaken) an amount of **N\$2,000,000.00, the site was handed over to the contractor recently** – Ongoing.
3. **Construction** of Services Infrastructure Phase 2 in Otjimbingwe (*Upgrading of Sewerage Network & Lining of Oxidation Pond*) for a total amount **N\$2,000,000.00**, the project has been Completed
4. **Construction** of Services Infrastructure Phase 2 in Okombahe (*water provision to Kandaris*) for a total amount of **N\$2,000,000.00. The project has been Successfully Completed.**
5. **Construction** of Services Infrastructure Phase 2 in Uis (The Maintenance of Bitumen Roads at the Upper town of Uis) for an amount **N\$2,000,000.00**. The site was handed over to Contractor - Ongoing

Socio-Economic Projects supported by the Erongo Regional Council, during 2020/2021 Financial year

1. **Road Side Traders** (Anna Pot Ladies) in Omaruru Constituency , the project was assisted with N\$ 50 000.00
2. **Upukos Lucerne Plantation** in Karibib Constituency, the project was assisted with N\$290,000.00
3. **Extension of the current graveyard in Okombahe Settlement** in Daures Constituency, the project was assisted with an amount of N\$240,000.00
4. **Ellies Flowers and Vegetable Garden** in Arandis Constituency, this project was assisted with an amount of **N\$300,000.00**

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION:

The Erongo Region is linked to four Namibian Embassies Abroad, namely, the Namibian Embassy in Japan, Egypt, Malaysia and India.

Through these links, we can enter into bilateral cooperation with those countries on specific areas, like education, tourism, business partnerships, and investments.

My Office was also visited by the Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Congo. He informed me about the interest by the Congo Central Province who wants to establish and strengthen relations with the Erongo Region.

In addition, they are preparing a visit by the Governor of Central Province and the Mayor of Matadi. Furthermore, I received the Indonesian Ambassador for a courtesy visit at my Office- they came to inform us about a business delegation that will visit the Region once things normalize.

All these are positive prospects and will have far-reaching economic benefits for our Region.

Conclusion:

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Councillors, Fellow Citizens of Erongo, whilst we are pinning our hopes on a successful vaccination program, we must remain vigilant and not drop our guards against this monstrous Covid-19 pandemic.

Therefore, it is prudent that we wear our masks all the time, wash our hands, thoroughly sanitize, avoid large gatherings, and keep a social distance.

The vaccination campaign will take time to reach every citizen of this Region who needs it. I, therefore, appeal to our people to continue observing safety protocols.

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Councillors, we must remain positive. We must never forget that above the dark cloud, we see the sun continued to shine.

I would also like to take this opportunity to Congratulate Ms Chelsi Shikongo for winning the Miss Namibia title for 2021. In the same vein, I would like to congratulate our Boxer, Jonas Junias, as he will represent Namibia in the Olympic games.

Honourable Chairperson, I would like to take this opportunity in expressing my sincere appreciation for the cooperation I received from both the Regional and Local Authority Leadership as we move towards recovering our economy, maintaining our Region as a region of excellence and accelerate development projects to improve the livelihoods of our people, let us continue to work together as we need each other more than ever before to sail through our current storms.

To the Region's citizens, let us continue to be resilient and cooperate with the Elected Leadership to ensure prosperity.

Finally, the current surge in numbers is impacting on our health care facilities and I would thus like to appeal to the Business Community in the Erongo Region to assist in complimenting Governments efforts to ensure that we have the necessary infrastructure and facilities in place reduce the further spread of the virus. Let pull together in one direction.

I thank you