



ERONGO REGION
Office of the Governor

STATEMENT

BY

**THE GOVERNOR OF THE ERONGO REGION,
HONORABLE NEVILLE ANDRE**

AT THE MEDIA BRIEFING

HELD

ON

FRIDAY, 11th September 2020

AT THE

SWAKOPMUND MUNICIPAL CHAMBERS

DIRECTOR OF PROCEEDINGS- Mr Alpheus Benjamin – Chief Executive Officer of the Swakopmund Municipality

Your Worship the Mayor of Swakopmund – Honorable Salomon Ndara Nehemia

Commissioner Andreas Nelumbu- Regional Commander of NAMPOL

Captain Shuumba - Commandant of the Namibian Marine Corps

Ms. Anna Jonas – Regional Health Director and our Health Colleagues present.

Mrs. Ehrenfriede Stephanus-Regional Director of Education

Mr Ivan Lombard – CEO of the Usakos Town Council

Ms. Natasha Emvula- Arts Extension Officer

LADIES AND GENTLEMAN

MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA

Good Morning,

Over the past weeks and months, we embraced the new normal of staying home, wearing masks, washing hands and sanitizing, keeping a social distance, avoiding large gatherings and limiting our movements.

The past few months have also learned us to do things differently, such as limiting the numbers of people attending funerals, allowing only two people to view bodies, limiting

the operational times of bottle stores, bars and shebeens, limit large sporting and outdoor entertainment.

These were all not easy sacrifices; but we did it to contain the virus. Now that our numbers are significantly reducing and our hospitals are not so full anymore. We need to sit down and do self-introspection as we are going forward. We need to look at the impacts, both negative and positive of our interventions over the past couple of months and as we are going forward to embrace the new normal. We need to keep healthy communities, sober people, reduced crime, reduced road accidents and adapting the way we have been doing things before COVID -19 and adjust to the new realities of keeping a healthy family and community environment.

I know as Africans, we have our own customs and traditions on the way we are doing things during burials and celebrations, in fact we are our neighbor's keepers, we stand by each other when there is death and even when there are celebrations.

The lessons we have learned during COVID-19 pandemic should help us to move forward and embrace the new realities against our own cultural and traditional norms.

Talking about culture and tradition, it is indeed a sensitive issue. However, from both the socio-economic point, does it warrant us to have large gatherings or do we give space to make funerals private family events and respect family wishes? Do we have smaller private family parties, like we

are already doing in some urban areas or do we continue to invite the entire village?

We need to start interrogating the way we are living. One does not need to live in an exclusive mansion to have a healthy life style. We need to start thinking at looking after ourselves, by making that small plot that we have, more livable by constantly keeping it hygienically clean.

We need to redress the inequalities in our communities without advocating violence or discrimination because of race or color.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further taught us to embrace new ways of doing business. We embraced the virtual space for our meetings, for selling our products, for ordering supplies, for watching our favorite outdoor sporting events.

We believe that innovative opportunities are forthcoming during this period, and we are encouraged to build on this, with innovative ideas.

During this time, we also learned to embrace the importance of self-reliance and food self-sufficiency by producing products locally to break dependency on importation of goods.

I am not saying that we have now defeated COVID-19 and need to go back to our normal ways of doing things, COVID -19 will still be here for some time. All I am saying is that it will not be business as usual, as we are moving forward, we need to adapt to the new realities and change where necessary.

I therefore call on all the citizens, to take charge of the new opportunities COVID-19 presents, to grow our local economies, to grow our regional economy and Namibia at large. Many of the things will never be the same again.

Once again I am encouraged by the total low numbers recorded in our Region, where the former epicenter, Walvis Bay recorded zero cases on Tuesday, 08th September 2020. I would thus like to thank all stakeholders for their part in ensuring that we contain the virus, our health workers, our security cluster, our private sector partners, our civil society, our faith based institutions, our traditional leaders, our youth and volunteers, our international partners, our politicians, our administrative heads and staff of Offices-Ministries and Agencies, for their outstanding work and commitment so far.

We still have a long way to go and a lot to do in order defeat COVID -19, infect COVID-19, therefore let us redouble our efforts in raising awareness to our communities on preventative measures as well as providing general COVID-19 information to our people.

The Erongo Region will soon welcome tourist, under the Tourism Revival initiative, which is aimed at boosting our ailing tourism industry. The initiative came into effect on the 01st September 2020. The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism has planned adequately and put in place appropriate protocols to ensure that the visiting tourists adhere to the regulations and are safe.

Let us welcome and embrace the tourists who will be visiting the various tourism destinations in our region, let's make sure they enjoy their stay amidst the difficult times.

National Youth Service Donation:

Last Saturday, I went to accept a donation from the National Youth Services in Rietfontein, Otjozondtjupa Region. Despite our current challenges of drought and COVID-19, it is indeed encouraging that our youth through the National Youth Services has continued with their production activities and as a result of their yield they donated 300 bags of 25kg's of maize meal and 200 bags of 25 kg's of mahangu as well as one ton of beef. I would therefore like to thank the Board of Directors of the National Youth Services for identifying the Erongo Region and the Otweya Informal Settlement as recipients of the donation.

We commit that these donations will reach the intended beneficiaries.

Opening of Schools:

Schools provide more than just academics to children. In addition to reading, writing and math, students learn social and emotional skills, get exercise, and have access to mental health support and other services that cannot be provided with online and homebased learning. For many children, schools are safe places to be while parents or guardians are working. For many families, schools are where kids get healthy meals, access to the internet and other vital services.

The pandemic has been especially hard for children living in low-income families and informal settlements. One in 5 teens cannot complete schoolwork at home because they do not have a computer or internet connection.

Our Schools opened this week for face to face classes after a long lay -off.

I have invited the Regional Director of Education, Mrs. Ehrenfriede Stephanus to give an update on the first week.

For today's Media Briefing:

For today's media briefing, as alluded last week, I have invited Ms Natasha Emvula to give a presentation on the COVID-19 relief funds for artists.

Over the past few days we witnessed how Usakos Local Authority area has picked up in confirmed cases, I have invited Mr. Ivan Lombard, the CEO of the Usakos Municipality to present their readiness and response amidst the increasing numbers of COVID-10 cases.

We will then have our esteem partners from the Security Cluster and Health to give their usual weekly updates.

Conclusion:

It's often said that change is the only constant in life. Yet humans are evolutionarily predisposed to resist change because of the risk associated with it. Despite this resistance to change, it is more important than ever.

Napoleon once said, "One must change one's tactics every 10 years if one wishes to maintain one's superiority."

In today's society the pace of change is immensely faster, and it will only continue to accelerate. Therefore, Organizations and people that don't embrace change are bound to lose ground and stagnate.

I thank you