

Remarks by the Honourable Minister of Works and Transport, Hon. Alpheus G. Naruseb at the inauguration of the members of the 5th National Road Safety Council

Honourable Deputy Minister, Sankwasa James Sankwasa

Honourable Deputy Minister Kilus Nguvauva

Acting Deputy Permanent Secretary for Transport

Newly Appointed Members of the NRSC

Executive Secretary of the National Road Safety Council

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning to you all.

1. I have invited you here this morning to introduce you to the newly appointed Members of the 5th National Road Safety Council and to outline the Ministry and Government's expectations in relation to the country's road safety performance.
2. Namibia's road safety performance is looming towards becoming a crisis as accidents and their resultant loss of lives and human mutilation continue to escalate at an alarming rate. The situation becomes even more precarious given the country's small vehicle and human population. The World Health Organisation's road safety performance analysis of 2013, placed Namibia's fatality rate per hundred thousand

population at 25 which is above the African regional average set at 24, both of which are way-way above the global average at 18. It is disheartening to note that hardly a day passes without someone being killed on our roads. Recent media reports indicate that out of 2202 accidents reported since January country wide, more than 370 lives have been lost in addition to more than 3 800 that were left with various degrees of injury. This is despite the fact that Namibia's roads have been recently ranked by the World Economic Forum to be the best in Africa at par only with that of the United Kingdom and Puerto Rico.

3. As the Minister responsible for road safety I view the current road carnage as an issue that seriously threatens the country's development. This is particularly so mainly due to the fact that those who fall victim are the economically active, hence the need for us to find a lasting solution as opposed to wait for things to get better.
4. As a country we have made good gains in the fight against HIV and Aids. We need to draw lessons from this experience and develop aggressive programmes and forward looking policies that are capable of producing a sustainable downward trend towards a single digit fatality rate per hundred thousand population.
5. In support to both the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, the African Union and SADC Road Safety Action Plans, Namibia developed her own Chapter for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020. This policy position provides the overall road map for road safety management in the country. The outgoing Council did a very good

job in developing this road map and in introducing road safety in the National school curriculum. What is expected now is for you as the incoming Council, to build on the foundation laid by your predecessors.

6. I am cognisant of the fact that many steps are required to further cement and solidify the requisite national road safety management system and culture. To this end, the establishment and continual strengthening of the lead agency function is an essential building block, therefore, I expect you to finalise the remaining work on the transformation of the National Road Safety Council into a fully-fledged lead Road Safety Agency, as doing so will enable Namibia to fully respond to the requirements of the Namibian Chapter of the Decade of Action and the African Road Safety Charter approved by the African Ministers of Transport in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in April 2014.
7. In relation to challenges facing the NRSC, I am aware that inadequate funding and institutional set-up are some of the issues that need urgent intervention, therefore, I invite you to provide the Ministry with your proposal for consideration in consultation with the relevant stakeholders.
8. In November this year God willing, global Ministers of Transport will convene in Brazil for the midterm review of the Decade of Action for road safety 2011-2020, the NRSC is expected to coordinate Namibia's position to the conference. Similarly, the Millennium Development Goals are coming to an end this year, in its place the United Nations is expected to convene and adopt seventeen (17) Sustainable

Development Goals that has road safety components under Goal 3 and 11. These goals are aimed at insuring healthy lives and wellbeing of all at all ages as well as making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

9. As we move forward we should subscribe to good road safety management practices such as the internationally renowned “Safe System Approach” to road safety where road safety issues are looked at in a more holistic way.

Lastly I would like to assure you all the political support you may need in carrying out your assignment.

I thank You.