

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HONOURABLE ALPHEUS G. !NARUSEB MINISTER
OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT, ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTH ANNUAL
ROAD SAFETY CONFERENCE

8 –9 OCTOBER 2015

SEA-SIDE HOTEL AND SPA, SWAKOPMUND - NAMIBIA

The Honourable Governor of Erongo Region

Chairman and Members of the National Road Safety Council present

Adam Eiseb Deputy Chief Windhoek City Police

Eben Platt, Chief - Walvis Bay Traffic

Captains of Industries

Esteemed Delegates

Members of the media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning to you all,

As you are aware, October marks my seventh month as Minister responsible for Transport and this is my first time to attend this prestigious Annual Road Safety Conference, hence it gives me a great pleasure to be here this morning and to deliver the key note address.

As the portfolio Minister, I regard this event as unique on one hand and historical on the other. It is unique mainly due to its role in the country's

quest to curb the ongoing carnage on the road and its place on the road safety calendar. It is at the same time historical as it is the first under the new administration.

At this juncture, allow me director of ceremonies, to also extend a warm word of welcome to all participants particularly those visiting this beautiful coastal town of Swakopmund. I trust that you will not only find the Conference informative and engaging but you will also find time to enjoy the serenity presented by the accommodative Atlantic sea breeze.

Director of ceremonies,

As you might all be aware, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as they were popularly known are coming to an end this year. Namibia on her part performed very well in the delivery of some of the MDGs compared to other countries that have been in existence longer than us. The closing of the chapter on the MDGs presents an opportunity for a consensus on a better way of doing things as we evoke and apply the wealth of experience learned over the years.

The United Nations member states met from 25-27 September 2015 for the purpose of adopting the final Post 2015 Agenda and successor to the MDGs. The summit culminated, among others, in the adoption of

the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Of concern are goals 3 and 11 which deals with issues of “Good Health and Wellbeing” as well as “Sustainable Cities and Communities”. Goal 3 calls for the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents to be reduced in half by 2020 while goal 11 seeks to provide access to safe, affordable and sustainable transport system for all, improving road safety by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations by 2030.

As you are all aware, Namibia was not only represented at the Summit, but also pledged commitment to the implementation and attainment of the SDGs. It is therefore incumbent upon us as a sub sector to fully mobilise and galvanize our efforts if we are to achieve our objectives.

Director of Ceremonies, notwithstanding the target to reduce the global deaths and injuries by 50% in 2020 Namibia can do better. I am convinced that Namibia needs an ambitious goal to stimulate action and innovative thinking. As minister responsible for transport, I subscribe to the understanding that “one life lost is one life too many”, hence my stance to see a reduction in fatalities and serious injuries to the level of a single digit per hundred thousand population.

The world’s best performers in road safety have much higher vehicle and human population than what we have in Namibia but they have

managed to keep their fatality rates per hundred thousand below 10. With the right thinking, right policies and strategies and relentless focus on results, I am convinced that we can surprise many.

After having implemented various strategies and programs, not much effect has been recorded. The multipronged intervention approach the NRSC has decided to pursue is, in my view, correct and timely as there is an urgent need for all functional areas to come to the table as doing will bring about the needed effective collaboration and partnerships.

Moving forward, we should be mindful of the need for accurate, reliable and timely data which is a prerequisite for proper and effective decision making. To this end I call upon the NRSC to work towards translating my expectations into tangible performance indicators for the subsector for the next five years. In the same vain, I appeal to those responsible for data generation and management to take their responsibilities seriously to enable evidence based road safety management to take effect in the country. Specialist training in all facets of road safety should also be pursued to ensure a critical mass of qualified Namibians for sustainability.

Ladies and gentlemen,

A good transportation system is an important nerve centre of any economic system. Namibia is aspiring to become a multimodal logistics hub for the purpose of providing the much needed gateway to outside markets for the landlocked countries. Should the current rate of accidents and their associated injuries and fatalities continue, our aspiration could remain a dream as those we would like to attract might avoid using our transport facilities.

Director of ceremonies, allow me to take a moment to congratulate and applaud the National Road Safety Council and all stakeholders involved for creating this inclusive platform where views could be exchanged for the benefit of all road users.

Finally, I would urge all road users to be considerate and share the road, responsibly.

Director of ceremonies, ladies and gentlemen, it is my distinguished honour, to conclude by declaring the 5th Edition of the Annual Road Safety Conference officially opened.

I thank you!