



SPEECH  
BY:

**HONOURABLE POHAMBA SHIFETA, MINISTER OF  
ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM**

AT THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
AWARDS

NAMPOWER CONVENTION CENTER, 13 MAY 2015,

TIME: 18H00 – 20H30

WINDHOEK

KHOMAS REGION

Director of Ceremonies

Permanent Secretaries

Chief Executive Officer

Board Members of the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia

Members of the Sustainable Development Advisory Council

Representatives of the Private Sector

Captain of industries

Award nominees and recipients

Distinguished members of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

**A VERY GOOD EVENING TO YOU ALL,**

It is with great pride and joy that I address you here on the occasion of the first ever Namibia Sustainable Development Awards. This is a new and exciting initiative for which I heartily commend both the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia and the Sustainable Development Advisory Council.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

The subject of this address “The Importance of a Green Agenda for Namibia” gives me great pleasure and excitement. If we think back to

the national green economy stakeholder dialogues, which took place in 2012, a green economy in the Namibian context was described as an economy “that improves and balances human well being for all Namibians through the efficient and sustainable use of all resources”.

I believe that a transition to a greener economy offers us great potential to address some of the critical challenges we are facing as a nation including the scarcity of resources vital to development such as water and electricity, unemployment and income inequality, and the need for us to take sustainability into account as we go about our daily business.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namibia is by no means immune to the global trends we are seeing today - increasing populations and demands on natural resources and goods and services, higher standards of living, growing economic uncertainty and inequalities, and the continued existence of widespread poverty. Business as usual will not work in this context, and we need to change the way goods and services are offered and consumed for the welfare of human kind and the environment.

That is why I am happy to see this awards come into being – we need to reward and honour those individuals and institutions, which are so

committed and bringing new innovations to the table to ensure the sustainability of this nation. I thank all of you for the valued contribution you are making in this regard.

As we pursue our National Development Agenda as guided by the Vision 2030, industrial production is set to increase by a factor of four to six by the year 2030, so decoupling economic growth from increased resource use and negative environmental impacts is a fundamental prerequisite for any future sustainable development.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism fully supports and believes that industrialization is critical for overall socio-economic progress and poverty eradication, the creation of jobs, generation of income, and for bringing modern goods and services to everyone. Yet we need to foster particular forms of industrialization that are socially inclusive, resource efficient and climate resilient. All stakeholders need to be engaged to foster this type of industrialization and I would be glad if the Sustainable Development Advisory Council, as a multi-stakeholder body, can offer support to the coordination of this process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me take this opportunity to inform the nation that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism is taking the lead in this regard. The Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia is providing particularly strong support to our transition towards a greener economy. In its three years of operation, it has achieved some remarkable milestones and I would like to share some of these briefly with you:

- The Green Soft Loan scheme that is implemented in partnership with the SME Bank has provided a total of N\$6.2 million in micro financing to over 120 people, mainly for solar water geysers, solar water pumps, and solar lighting.
- The Fund has further provided loans worth N\$18 million to environmentally based businesses and enterprises in the areas of recycling, eco tourism, smart agriculture, and manufacturing.
- This support resulted in the creation and sustenance of at least 375 “green” jobs.
- Moreover, grants amounting to N\$14 million have been awarded to different institutions, benefiting more than 18,800 people.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Despite the above-mentioned interventions, the scale of financing required to fully attain sustainable economic growth under the banner of

the Green Economy are huge. According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism in 2011, the incremental costs of climate change adaptation for livestock farming in Namibia is estimated at N\$20 Billion in the next 15 years. To maintain and increase productivity under climate change scenarios, Namibia requires further investments and a transformational approach that places the green economy at the center of sustained economic growth.

As Government, it is vital that we put the right enabling environment in place to stimulate the investment needed in areas such as renewable energy, climate smart agriculture, eco-tourism, community-based natural resource management and the environmentally friendly management of waste. Environmentally sound businesses and sectors have the potential to create more and decent jobs that do not necessarily require high specialization, which is directly in line with our National Employment Policy.

As more and more international attention focuses on ways to green our economies, we also need to think carefully and be strategic as a nation in terms of how we access emerging international windows of support

such as the Green Climate Fund. These can potentially leverage large amounts of resources to complement our national needs and priorities.

As government, it is my belief that we also need to put legislative frameworks in place to discourage practices and incentives, which are having a negative impact on the environment. For this reason, I am pleased to highlight that the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia has finalized a proposal for environmental levies and the specific products that are targeted will be announced once the proposal is tabled and approved by Cabinet. This will be a groundbreaking step towards enhancing and financing the transition to a greener economy in Namibia.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

I would like to use this opportunity to ask for collective support to the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia and the Sustainable Development Advisory Council. Sustainable development is a complex and dynamic concept, which requires the engagement and involvement of all of us. Conventional wisdom dictates that, “a stitch in time, saves nine”, meaning the longer we postpone the transformation to a greener economy, the higher the costs and damages will be later. It is therefore

wise for Namibia to make its economy 'green' now. We need to act now, we need to act strong and we need to act together!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to again thank the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia and the Sustainable Development Advisory Council for initiating the Sustainable Development Awards and I congratulate all the nominees and winners at this the edition of the Awards. I encourage all of you to continue integrating sustainable principles into your operations and for educating the nation on issues of sustainable development. I hope that other institutions will learn from your innovations and dedication and help us in the transformation of the Namibian economy.

**I thank you for listening.**