



# **REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HON. CALLE SCHLETTWEIN**

**Minister of Trade and Industry**

**Air Namibia's Commissioning of a New Aircraft**

**Frankfurt, Federal Republic of Germany**

**Friday, 27 September 2013**

**Director of ceremonies;**

**Ms. Theo Namases, Managing Director of Air Namibia;**

**Distinguished Members of the Board and Management of Air Namibia;**

**Distinguished Captains of Industry;**

**Members of the Media;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**I am very pleased to be present at this auspicious occasion marking the commissioning of an important addition to Air Namibia's fleet, namely the first of two Airbus 330-200 aircrafts.**

**Air Namibia's relationship with the Frankfurt Am Main International Airport is a long standing one. Europe's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest airport serves as Air Namibia's traditional route-destination into and out of the continent. Namibia and Germany enjoy a special relationship, a fact that was acknowledged by the German Bundestag, the German Parliament in 1989. Air Namibia's presence at the Frankfurt am Main International Airport reinforces this special relationship.**

**The long-standing relations between our two countries are multifaceted and encompass both official and private exchanges in areas such as culture, politics, business and education. The strategic choice by Air Namibia to operate daily flights out of Frankfurt strengthens and promotes these exchanges and allows for visitors from all over the world to have direct access to our beautiful country.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**Although Air Namibia may be considered a relatively a small player in the global airline industry, it has nevertheless stood its ground and built a reputation as a safe airline operating in Africa as well as between Africa and Europe.**

**However, to remain competitive Air Namibia is required to ensure that its equipment and fleet of aircraft are continuously improved. I am convinced that with the entry into service of this brand new long-haul Airbus A330-200s, Air Namibia will assert itself in the lucrative and competitive market of global aviation.**

**The modern aircrafts will reduce costs, boost revenue, while at the same time providing safety, flexibility and first class comfort for their passengers.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**The decision of Air Namibia to improve its fleet comes at an interesting time for Namibia and the African aviation industry as a whole. Global air transport is changing and Africa is becoming an important player in the growing aviation market.**

**The demand for air transport in Africa has increased steadily over the past years in terms of passenger numbers and freight traffic.**

**Today's event shows the commitment of both the Namibian Government and Air Namibia to make a contribution to the growing African aviation sector. By upgrading its fleet, Air Namibia is tapping into the opportunities to expand and**

**feed into the growing African regional and domestic markets while at the same time connecting Africa to the rest of the world.**

**In doing so, Air Namibia is fulfilling its mandate to contribute to the promotion and facilitation of trade and tourism by providing air transport services between Namibia and other countries.**

**The benefits to the country are clear: because of Air Namibia, each year hundreds of thousands of international visitors are able to enjoy one of the most scenic countries in the world which offers peace and stability, a good quality of life, a pleasant climate and good infrastructure. Tourism is the fastest growing sector of our economy and Air Namibia plays a vital role in advancing the competitiveness of our country in this regard.**

**However, Namibia is not only a scenic destination, it is also:**

- a stable economy with average growth rates of above 4 % for the past 23 years; with**
- an investment grade sovereign credit rating by Fitch and Moody's,**
- a favorable investment climate,**
- good transport and communication infrastructure and;**
- financial services comparable to those offered in developed countries.**

**We are ranked number 5 on the African continent in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report of 2013. All of these factors make Namibia an attractive**

**investment destination and an excellent locality to set up business. In addition to this, Namibia is also well placed to function as a gateway into southern Africa. Our transportation corridors facilitate the quick and safe transfer of goods into a vast regional market with almost 300 million consumers.**

**The move to lease two brand new Airbus A330-200s enables the replacement of the aging Airbus A340-300s, which have been in operation for the past 7 years and have served us well. This is a pivotal step and it shows Air Namibia's commitment to continuously improve operational efficiency and align its services to rising market demands.**

**Director of Ceremonies;**

**I am pleased to note that the new aircraft has a conservative total configuration of 244 seats, with 30 seats in the business class cabin and 214 seats in the economy class. As a frequent traveler, I will be the first to say, "the extra leg room is much appreciated".**

**To conclude let me wish all of you good business, relaxed traveling, awesome vacations and profitable investments in Namibia.**

**I thank you!**