

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



KEYNOTE REMARKS

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
SUB-REGIONAL BASIC COURSE ON EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO
CHEMICAL INCIDENTS FOR THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN
DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) STATES PARTIES**

BY

**HON. LUCIA IIPUMBU, MP
MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE**

09 MAY 2022,

HON. VERNA SINIMBO – DEPUTY MINISTER, MIT;
HON. NEVILLE ANDRE – GOVERNOR OF THE GREAT ERONGO REGION
MR. SIKONGO HAIHAMBO - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MIT;
THE OPCW TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT;
SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS;
ESTEEMED PARTICIPANTS;
MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA;
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN;

1. It gives me great pleasure to be with you this morning at the opening of the Sub-Regional Course on Emergency Response to Chemical Incidents for Southern African Development Community (SADC) State Parties. As a country, we are honoured that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) approached Namibia to host this very important workshop. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia, may I extend a very warm welcome to all participants in this workshop.
2. Namibia attaches great importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), hence the Government's concurrence to host this workshop.

DIRECTOR OF CEREMONIES

3. Namibia signed the Convention when it was opened for signature on 13 January 1993 and her instrument of ratification on 27 November 1995. This is indeed a testament to the importance that the Namibian Government attaches to the Convention. As a country and with the assistance of the OPCW, we have made concerted efforts to domesticate the Convention. In this regard, the Government has established the National Authority and designated the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade as the Chair of the National Authority.
4. The National Authority consists of various key stakeholders with the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs serving as the Deputy Chair.

One key achievement of the National Authority, amongst various other achievements, with the assistance of the OPCW Legal Division is the development, of a Chemical Weapons Prohibition and Control Bill. During the stage of developing the Chemical weapons Bill, I am informed that a myriad of local laws were considered, namely:

- 4.1. Atomic Energy and Radiation Protection Act 5 of 2005;
- 4.2. Minerals (Prospecting and Mining) Act 33 of 1992;
- 4.3. Research, Science and Technology Act 23 of 2004; and
- 4.4. Import and Export Control Act 30 of 1994.

Allow me at this juncture to extend a word of gratitude to the OPCW and in the same vein request that they continue providing necessary technical assistance to Namibia when it comes to matters related to the Convention.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

5. It is my hope that this workshop will dispel myths related to the Convention that it merely deals with chemical warfare which is not the case. In this regard, participants should be at ease as the workshop is not aimed at equipping them with techniques on how to engage in chemical warfare but rather to enhance their knowledge on responding to chemical incidents.
6. Although Namibia is not known to have developed, produced, stockpiled, or use chemical weapons, there may be a risk of non-compliance of producing chemicals. This puts a vital responsibility on the National Authority to educate chemical industries on the need for security of their facilities and proper declarations particularly of scheduled chemicals used in formulations such as herbicides, insecticides and other mixtures. I am indeed pleased to announce that the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade has received declarations from industry in respect of scheduled chemicals.
7. I trust that the workshop will enrich and equip us with useful information we can apply when we go back to our respective countries. Moreover,

I was very delighted to observe that the workshop has a component of practical training as opposed to only being theoretical. It is also my hope that workshops of this nature are not once off events but rather organized frequently to ensure that member states to the Convention are continually trained.

8. With these few remarks, I declare the workshop officially opened!

I THANK YOU.

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