

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. NANGOLO
MBUMBA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA ON
THE OCCASSION OF THE WORLD OCEAN DAY
CELEBRATION**

07 JUNE 2024

WALVIS BAY INDEPENDENCE BEACH

WALVIS BAY NAMIBIA

- **Director of Ceremonies;**
- **Honourable John Mutorwa, Deputy Prime Minister;**
- **Honourable Derek Klazen, Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources;**
- **Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers present;**
- **Honourable Members of Parliament;**
- **Honourable Neville Andre Itope, Governor of the Erongo Region and all Regional Governors present;**
- **Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**
- **Your Worship Cllr Trevino Forbes, Mayor of Walvis Bay and all other mayors and local Authority Coucillors present;**
- **Captains of Industry;**
- **Distinguished invited guests;**
- **Esteemed guests;**
- **Members of the Media;**

Fellow Namibians

- 1. The scenic location where we find ourselves this morning provides a fitting backdrop for the celebration of this most important occasion – World Ocean Day. As Namibians, and citizens of a seafaring and fishing nation amongst others, we observe and celebrate this day with keen interest, under the theme "Catalysing Action for Our Ocean and Climate." It is a day to reflect on the significance of our ocean, to renew our commitment to its preservation, its sustainable use and to acknowledge the critical role the ocean plays in sustaining life on our planet.**
- 2. In his message to celebrate World Oceans Day last year, the Secretary General of the United Nations, His Excellency António Guterres remarked that, "The Ocean is the foundation of life. It supplies the air we breathe and food we**

eat. It regulates our climate and weather. The ocean is our planet's greatest reservoir of biodiversity. Its resources sustain communities, prosperity and human health around the world."

- 3. Taking this compelling statement into consideration, it should be clear to all of us why this day is important and why Namibia should join the rest of the world in celebrating the foundation of life that is the ocean, not only for today but in the years and decades to come, for this generation and those that shall follow.**

- 4. The significance of the ocean to our planet is akin to the significance of the lungs to the human body. Just as our lungs provide us with the vital oxygen we need to survive, the ocean is responsible for producing more than 50 percent of the oxygen on Earth. Put plainly, the**

health of our oceans directly impacts the health of our planet, and in turn, our own well-being.

- 5. Our proximity to the ocean has enabled us to benefit from fishing in our ocean and other water bodies which contribute five (5%) percent to our Gross Domestic Product with revenues of 10 billion Namibia Dollars annually, creating thousands of jobs and contributing to food security.**

- 6. Sadly, the ocean, upon which billions of people depend is under threat from climate change and the harmful activities of humans. Rising sea levels, ocean acidification, plastic pollution, illegal unreported and unregulated fishing practices are just a few of the challenges we face. It is therefore imperative that we take urgent action to address these issues before it is too late.**

- 7. By reducing carbon emissions, eradicating plastic pollution, and actively combating all forms of environmental degradation, we as Namibians, can give our ocean a breath of fresh air.**

- 8. Our youth, as catalysts of change, are central to creating a nexus between climate, nature and development and as such they should play an integral role in the management of the ocean.**

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished invited guests,

- 9. Namibia is proud to be an active member of the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (Ocean Panel) and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). These international organizations are crucial for creating a peer review mechanism to assess**

progress made in achieving the sustainable Developmental Goals and the 30 by 30 conservation initiative.

10. Many of you may recall that on the 3rd December 2020, the Ocean Panel's Transformation Document, titled "a vision for protection, production and prosperity" was launched. This commitment document emphasizes a 100% approach, which commits all Ocean Panel Members to sustainably manage 100% of the ocean area under national jurisdiction by 2025. These bold steps demonstrate our recognition that the health of the ocean is critical to the environmental, economic and social well-being of people and the planet at large. Furthermore, robust ocean health plays a vital role in supporting biodiversity and supporting global ecosystems through the regulation of climate.

11. To date, Namibia is close to finalizing its Blue Economy Policy, which also encompasses a Marine Spatial Plan, and will be amplified further through the development of a Sustainable Ocean Plan, by 2025. These important documents seek to ensure sustainable, and integrated development of our ocean economy. The blue economy stands on three pillars, namely, environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and social inclusion. It is therefore crucial that we safeguard our ocean from adverse impacts, and that we apply a precautionary approach, at all times, towards activities that have a potential to cause harm to biodiversity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. The important role the ocean plays in all our lives is extremely indisputable. Therefore, the

onus is on all of us to protect the ocean through hard work, vigilance and dedication. Let us stand together today and the days ahead to safeguard our oceans, for they are the lifeblood of our planet. Let the observance of World Ocean Day become a sacred day on which we all rededicate ourselves to partake in action aimed at preserving our ocean and ensuring that it remains healthy for sustenance of life on earth.

13. In closing, let us remember that the ocean is not just a vast expanse of water; it is a foundation of life, a source of hope and a gateway towards prosperity for our economy and those of many other countries. Together, let us safeguard our ocean and climate, thereby ensuring a sustainable future for all humanity.

Thank you.