



VOTE 18

2020/2021 FINANCIAL YEAR

BUDGET STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, 2020

11 June 2020

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,

Hon Members

I profoundly thank you for this opportunity to present the budget of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism for the 2020 / 21 financial year to this august house for approval.

Honorable Members,

Allow me to begin by stating that the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism is an important contributor to economic growth, poverty reduction and employment creation. Our mandate is very broad and the Ministry has a major role to play in ensuring the sustainable utilization of all of our natural resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits that arises therefrom. In terms of Article 95 (L) of the Namibian Constitution, we are duty bound to protect our environment and all that encompasses but also to ensure that our local communities who are the custodians of these unique and rich endowment of natural resources continue to benefit from them.

This is the overarching objective guiding the execution of our budget allocation during the 2020/21 financial year.

Honorable Members, the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism has been allocated an amount of five hundred and eighty-four million, five hundred and thirteen Namibian dollars **(N\$584,513,000)** for the 2020/21 financial year.

This amount represents:

- Four hundred and seventy-nine million, five hundred and thirteen thousand Namibian dollars **(N\$479,513,000)** for the Operational Budget and
- One hundred and five million Namibian dollars **(N\$105,000,000)** for the Development Budget.

Honorable Members,

Allow me now to highlight briefly how the budget is split between the six programmes of the Ministry as well as some of the key priorities under each programme of the Ministry for the 2020/21 financial year.

The first programme of the Ministry is **Wildlife and Protected Area Management**, which is allocated an amount of two hundred and eight million, four hundred and forty-nine thousand, three hundred and forty-nine Namibian dollars **(N\$208,449,349)**. This programme accounts for approximately 36% of the overall budget.

Poaching and instances of human wildlife conflict continue to be major challenges facing the Ministry when it comes to wildlife conservation. However, we are pleased to report progress in addressing these twin challenges. Poaching instances of high valued and iconic species such as rhino and elephant were reduced significantly and more than 1,790 suspects were arrested at the end of 2018 up to May 2020. The arrested suspects doubled than ever before since the launch of the Anti Poaching Unit in 2016. At this juncture, our appreciation goes to the joint operation between our security forces (NDF - special forces, NAMPOL - Protection Resources Unit,

the Namibia Central Intelligent Service) and Anti Poaching Unit of the Ministry. The Blue Rhino Task Team is after all Wildlife criminal syndicates in Namibia. Most of these syndicates if not all are known and members of those syndicates not yet arrested is a matter appropriate time and appropriate place, they will be arrested soon or later. Bravo to all our dedicated men and women in these units.

Our wildlife and national parks are the key engine for socio-economic development in Namibia's rural areas. Considerable efforts were made in 2019/2020 financial year to maintain and upgrade the standards of infrastructure in our national parks - particularly roads network, fencing, water infrastructure as well as staff housing and park information stations. Some examples of progress achieved include the electrification of a 20km stretch of Waterberg Plateau Park, which is significant for preventing the escape of buffaloes into the surrounding farmlands.

A three year action plan to construct and upgrade 712km of the 824km fence of the Etosha national park boundary by our own staff members was launched and commenced in February 2020. Due to COVID-19 interruption only less than 10km has been completed so far but we expect the full work to commence again as soon as the situation normalized. Park infrastructure involving staff houses, offices and tourism receptions were constructed in Bwabwata National Park and Tsau //khaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park, with the support of the German Development Bank (KFW).

The Ministry has strengthened its support to Communal Conservancies for ensuring good governance by providing training and standard operating

procedures.

We have now 86 Communal conservancies and employ more than 5,350 people and in 2019, Communal Conservancies generated over N\$145 million in return for local communities.

Hon. Chairperson,

There are three main strategic interventions that will be carried out under this programme:

(i) wildlife crime prevention and law enforcement: The Ministry will work with stakeholders to ensure that there is appropriate human capacity and manpower to fight wildlife crime; provide suitable and sufficient equipment, techniques and supplies; strengthen surveillance, patrolling and detection; and conduct proper investigations and intelligence.

(ii) support to communal conservancies and community forests:

The main targets and outputs will be to grow income generated for communities from wildlife and forest products, strengthen governance at the conservancy and community forest level, create more jobs for rural communities, and provide game meat for household consumption to rural communities.

(iii) Prevention and mitigation of human wildlife conflict: in line with the Revised National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management, the Ministry will continue to tackle loss of life and damage to infrastructure, crops and livestock caused by wildlife.

Priority interventions will include, amongst others, put down problem causing animals, assisting communities financially through the Human Wildlife

Conflict Self Reliance Scheme and supporting communities with promising mitigation measures in hotspot areas such as predator proof kraals, protection walls around water infrastructure, alternative grain storage infrastructure, and the installation of elephant drinking troughs.

It is noteworthy to report to this august house that the management plan for the wildhorses in the Namib Naukluft Park and the Tsau //Khaeb (Spergebiet) National Park was developed and approved during the 2019/20 financial year. This strategy is guiding the management of the horse population for their survival, and for improved tourism development and cultural heritage. The Ministry conducted a full count of the horses population and there are now an estimated seventy five (75) horses at Garub with a herd structure consisting of 37 stallions, 27 mares and 11 foals. The Ministry is encouraged by a larger than expected number of new-born foals, which is encouraging for the future stabilization and growth of the population. The Management Plan for the wild horses in the Namib Naukluft and the Tsau //Khaeb National Parks contributed to the significant population recovery.

Honorable Chairperson of the Whole House

Honorable Members,

The second programme of the Ministry is the **protection and management of key species and natural habitats**, which is allocated a total of twenty-five million, six hundred and twenty-nine thousand and nine hundred Namibian dollars (N\$25,629,900). This represents just 4.4% of the overall budget but remains an important programme.

It focuses mainly on scientific research and monitoring, which guides our strategies and plans to protect and manage key species and natural resources. The Ministry will also continue to pursue new markets for wildlife-related products and services, including sales of wildlife to other countries and the marketing of trophy hunting opportunities. In addition, the Ministry will identify and execute new wildlife and tourism concessions for the benefit of our local communities.

Honorable Members,

The third programme of the Ministry is **tourism growth development and gaming regulations**, which is allocated eighteen million, one hundred and fifty-six thousand, five hundred and eighty-eight Namibian dollars (N\$18,156,588). This programme represents just 3.1% of the overall budget. This programme focuses on putting in place a favourable enabling and regulatory environment for the sustained growth of the tourism and gaming industry so that it contributes to the socio-economic development of the country.

Although the tourism industry has been one of the most successful and fast-growing sectors over recent years, it has been one of the hardest hit by the current Covid-19 pandemic and its contribution to the economy has come to almost a complete standstill. The recovery of the tourism sector in the context of Covid-19 is therefore a critical challenge confronting this Ministry and the broader industry and we are working together on the implementation of a tourism recovery plan.

As the world is gradually opening up, it is of critical importance to ensure that

Namibia do not lose any opportunity to be competitive as currently all factors remain in our favour to stand out as one of the best destinations post Covid-19. Hence it is our positive desire to look at the best possible safety measures such as “air bridges” were we can negotiate and open up travel on a bilateral basis with our specific source countries where similar protocols and safety measures allow, because the only factor that will enable the tourism sector to survive and recover is attracting tourists.

The establishment of a national lottery and improved regulation of the gaming sector are further priorities under this programme.

Honorable Chairperson of the Whole House

Honorable Members,

The fourth programme of the Ministry is **environment and natural resources protection**, which is allocated a total amount of one hundred and fifty million, seven hundred and fifty-six thousand, six hundred and sixty Namibian dollars (N\$150,756,660). This represents almost 26% of the overall budget.

This programme is prioritized for functions relating to the implementation of the Environmental Management Act No.7 of 2007 and the implementation of various multilateral environmental agreements. It also now covers the activities of the Directorate of Forestry.

Under this programme, the Ministry is busy finalizing proposed amendments to the Environmental Management Act, which we hope to table shortly to this august house. We are also revising the regulations to streamline processes

linked to the application for environmental clearance and also introducing new regulations to improve the standards of waste management in the country. We will at the same time continue to strengthen measures to tackle activities leading to the degradation of the environment such as sand mining, timber harvesting and waste disposal practices.

The Ministry will further continue to mobilize investment and new project proposals in the areas of climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation and combating land degradation. It is expected that five proposals, worth an estimated N\$1.3 billion at the current exchange rate, will be submitted to the Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility for consideration during the 2020/21 financial year.

Lastly under this programme, the Ministry has already started to and will continue interventions to ensure the sustainable utilization of forest resources and the prevention of forest fires, which we consider a major threat this year after the good rains that have been received.

In line with its role as the focal Ministry on issues of climate change, biodiversity and land degradation, the Ministry also continued to coordinate the mobilization of resources and projects through various bilateral and multilateral financing windows. During the period under review, funding was mobilized for six new projects worth a total of approximately N\$775 million (at the current exchange rates) in the areas of integrated rangeland management, human wildlife conflict, wildlife protection, integrated ecosystem management and solid waste management in protected areas. These projects are funded through the Global Environment Facility, Green

Climate Fund and the German Government through the German Development Bank (KfW) respectively.

Honorable Chairperson of the Whole House

Honorable Members,

The fifth programme of the Ministry is **Infrastructure and Development, Maintenance Monitoring and Evaluation**, which is allocated an amount of ninety-three million, five hundred and thirty-eight thousand and fifty-eight Namibian Dollars (N\$93,538,058). This represents 16% of the overall budget. The programme will focus mainly on the maintenance, upgrade and development of new infrastructure, including fencing, roads and water points, for our protected area network. This is especially critical and a major challenge to our Ministry but we are committed to ensuring that good quality services are enjoyed by visitors to our protected areas and that adjacent communities are shielded from human wildlife conflict. This programme will also focus on better sewerage systems and improved waste management infrastructure in protected areas.

Under this programme, translocations of wildlife will also be undertaken to benefit conservancies as well as farmers through the Wildlife Breeding Stock Scheme.

Honorable Members,

The sixth and final programme of the Ministry is **Policy, Supervision and Support Services**, which is allocated an amount of eighty-seven million, nine hundred and eighty-two thousand, four hundred and forty-five Namibian Dollars (N\$87,982,445). This represents 15.1% of the overall budget

allocation and is linked mainly to policy coordination and improved organizational performance, governance and service delivery. Priority activities under this program for 2020/2021 will be to implement efficiency and cost cutting measures, particularly with regard to transport and fuel usage and utilities such as telephone and postal services. The online application system for environmental clearance has been fully operationalized and it is planned to introduce similar systems for our wildlife and forestry related permits. It is envisaged that this will make the application processes more rigorous, efficient, transparent and client-friendly. Lastly the programme will focus on recruiting and filling priority positions as well as employee wellness in the context of Covid-19, in particular the provision and improvement of health and safety measures and materials at our workplaces.

Honorable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,

Honourable Members,

Before I conclude, allow me to thank the Executive Director, the management and the entire staff of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism for their commitment and hard work. We are acutely aware of the need to do more with less, especially given the unprecedented economic challenges we are facing into. In this context, I would also like to thank all the stakeholders and partners for the roles they have played in supporting the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism in executing the Ministry's mandate. We greatly appreciate your support and collaboration.

Honorable Chairperson,

Honorable Members,

Finally, once again, I thank the Honourable Minister of Finance for allocating Four hundred and seventy-nine million, five hundred and thirteen thousand Namibian dollars **(N\$479,513,000)** for the Operational Budget. I also thank the Director General of the National Planning Commission for allocating One hundred and five million Namibian dollars **(N\$105,000,000)** for the Development Budget.

I now respectfully submit and kindly, request this Honourable House to approve an amount of five hundred and eighty-four million, five hundred and thirteen Namibian dollars **(N\$584,513,000)** for the execution of the mandate for the Ministry of Environment Forestry and Tourism for the 2020/2021 Financial Year.

I thank you.