

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

STATEMENT BY DR KALUMBI SHANGULA, MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL INAUGURATION OF THE OTJINUNGUA CONTAINERIZED PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CLINIC (MAURENFLUSS CLINIC) AND STAFF ACCOMMODATION

29 APRIL 2022

**OTJINUNGUA CLINIC
KUNENE REGION**

**Check against Delivery.*

Director of Ceremonies,
Your Excellency, Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic
of Namibia,
Madam Monica Geingos, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia,
Hon. Marius Sheya, Governor for Kunene Region,
Headman of Otjinungua Headman Kapiuarukoro Tjambiru),
Esteemed Pastor Hevita,
Representatives of private sector donors,
Senior Government officials,
Representatives of NGOs and Civil Society Organizations,
Members of the Community and surrounding areas,
Members of the media,
Ladies and gentlemen.

Good Morning

I am honored and privileged to have been invited to this important ceremony marking the inauguration of the newly constructed primary health care clinic and staff accommodation here at Maurenfluss, Otjinungua Village, Kunene Region. As a Ministry, we are exceedingly pleased that our President could take time out of his busy schedule and grace this function with his presence. We thank you for that Comrade President. At the very outset, I also wish to applaud the presence of the representatives of many private sector donors who contributed in different ways to the completion of this project. Their names are emblazoned on the walls of the facility. We thank them. These include:

- Wilderness Safaris,
- Children in Wilderness,
- PE Minerals Namibia (Pty) Ltd
- Hochland Roundtable 154,

- Bank Windhoek,
- Marinefluss Conservancy,
- Green Teen Team Foundation,
- Ride for Rhinos,
- NamPort,
- NamPower Foundation, and
- August 26 Construction

Director of the Programme,

I have stated previously and I wish to reiterate it again that the provision of public health care services has become multi-dimensional effort involving different stakeholders. Yes, the Government remains the primary and main funder and investor in public health. However, more and more, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society are playing a visible role in the provision of health care, supporting public health interventions and also investing private sector capacity to expand access. The construction of this clinic is a testimony to those joint efforts.

Our country faces challenges that require our attention as government, ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic, drought, malnutrition, maternal mortality, scabies and other developmental, and socio-economic issues. They all require interventions and action from Government and in these interventions and actions, we welcome the support of the private sector and other stakeholders.

Two weeks ago, I presented the budget of the Ministry of Health and Social Services in the National Assembly. At more than N\$8

billion, the budget is among the biggest allocations to Offices, Ministries and Agencies. This has been the case over the years since independence. It provides resources to cater for the health needs of our people, through programmes, such as **Health System Planning and Management** (under which we manage Disease Surveillance, Outbreak Preparedness and Responses); **Curative and Clinical Health Care Services** (under which we provide and ensure availability of essential low-, medium- and high-tech equipment at different health facilities); **Public Health** (which covers responses to diseases such as HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria); **Developmental Social Welfare** (which offers treatment and psychosocial support to affected individuals and community members); as well as **Policy Co-ordination and Support** (under which the Ministry supports training and development of Human Resources for Health (HRH), for a skilled and competent workforce).

We will ensure that the resources allocated to the Ministry are utilized for the intended purposes. This will be done transparent and accountable management. AS a Ministry, we insist all times that procedures within the Ministry are followed and implemented as required. It is pleasing that after some years of qualified audit opinions, we have recorded, over the past three financial years, unqualified audit opinions.

This is a demonstration that our internal control mechanisms and procedures are continuing to be strengthened in keeping with the principles of good governance.

The Ministry of Health and Social Services will continue to

engage with other Offices, Ministries and Agencies, as part of the One-Health Approach and thereby provide, equitable, accessible and reliable health services for our people in all parts of the country. Despite challenges, our public health care system, upon which 90 percent of the population relies, continues to cater for the health needs of communities, through a network of national referral hospitals, intermediate hospitals, district hospitals (30), health centres (43), clinics (279) and outreach points.

Government is in the process of constructing new clinics in different regions to bring services closer to some of the underserved communities. We are also supporting the training of medical professionals in different disciplines to strengthen the human resources component of our system. In the past two years, the Ministry has recruited more than 1,300 health professionals who have been deployed in different parts of the country. The Ministry has recruited 32 Nurses to be deployed in Kunene Region, soon, once the process of registration with the Health Professions Councils of Namibia is completed. They will be deployed at facilities such as Otjiu, Onjuva, Etanga, here at Otjinunga and others. This is to alleviate the burden at clinics which are staffed by a single nurse currently.

Government will continue to work with communities with the aim of health promotion, disease prevention, and health awareness. Some of the health challenges at Otjinungua and the Kunene Region in general include respiratory infections, skin diseases, and common cold, particularly among children under 5 years old. This facility is equipped to provide health for those who need it

and we encourage our people to adopt health seeking behaviour and visit health facilities when they are unwell.

Your Excellency,

I wish to say something regarding compliance to treatment for people with chronic conditions. Persons on regular treatment and follow up for conditions such as for hypertension, Anti-Retroviral-, and Tuberculosis treatment, should ensure that they adhere to the treatment regimens in order to realise the desired outcomes. I, therefore, call upon families, guardians, partners and care givers to encourage patients to take their medications as required. This is vital to improve health outcomes and the enjoyment of a healthier life. It is also important in preventing drug resistance and avoiding preventable deaths. At the same time, I encourage healthcare workers to continue to advise and encourage patients to adhere to treatment regimens.

With establishment of this new health facility, I am optimistic that maternal and neonatal deaths, which have been a challenge in the past due to distances to health facilities, will be reduced. However, this is dependent on the commitment and willingness of community members to seek healthcare in a timely manner. I would particularly like to encourage pregnant women to always attend antenatal care services. It is critical that women deliver their babies at health facilities under skilled supervision health care workers, and that they continue with the post-natal care, including immunization and family planning services. These efforts are aimed at ensuring the health of both the mother and the baby. Our mothers must breastfeed their babies as advised by healthcare professionals, because breast milk is the best source of

nutrients and immunity for infants and babies. The Ministry of Health and Social Services provided basic medical equipment, pharmaceutical and clinical supplies to better equip and stock this clinic and thereby enable it to better serve the community. Nursing staff with the required knowledge and skills has also been deployed.

Since there is not telephone connection (mobile or fixed), the Clinic is provided with satellite-enabled internet. This makes it possible for clinic staff to provide timely health statistics through regular reporting. I must add that Government has approved this piece of land for the construction of clinic and for many years it has served as an outreach point under the Kunene Region Health Directorate. It cater to the surrounding communities as well as patients from across the border.

Director of the Programme,

Health is the most valuable asset anyone can have. As such, we must all rally together to fight diseases such as HIV/AIDS, TB, cholera, measles, polio, meningitis and other preventable diseases. During the National Immunizations Days, let us all participate and take our children for immunization against vaccine-preventable diseases. This is important to safeguard health of future generations and improve the quality of life of all our people. In order to achieve the goals of Vision 2030, the National Development Plans and the Harambee Prosperity Plan 2, we need to work together as a team, for the common good of our people.

Allow me to thank the Governor of this great Region, Honourable Marius Sheya, for his leadership in mobilizing support from our partners. He was instrumental in coordinating partners' efforts for this project. I also express gratitude to representatives of various organizations for their unwavering support which made this project a reality. I urge Otjinungua community members to take care of this clinic and give their cooperation to health workers.

Before I conclude, I wish to emphasize that the COVID-19 pandemic is still amongst us. It continues to be a threat to public health. For this reason, we encourage our people to get vaccinated in order to protect themselves from severe COVID-19 illness, hospitalization and death. Government has procured adequate COVID-19 vaccines that have been distributed to different vaccination points around the country. Getting vaccinated is the right thing. COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve. With the approaching winter, it is not known what turn the pandemic will take. Fore warned is for armed. Let us arm ourselves against COVID-19 by getting vaccinated. Prevention is better than cure. Let us make sure that we prevent severe illness, hospitalization and death due to COVID-19 by getting vaccinated.

I thank you.