

**SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY THE  
HONORABLE MINISTER OF HEALTH  
AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

**HONORABLE DR. RICHARD NCHABI  
KAMWI**

**AT THE GOBABIS MUNICIPALITY'S  
HIV/AIDS DAY,**

**11 OCTOBER 2008, AT THE LEGARE  
STADIUM IN GOBABIS OMAHEKE  
REGION.**

Director of Ceremony-.....

Governor of the Omaheke region-Hon McLEOD-Katjirua

His Worship the Mayor of Gobabis Town –Mr. P. Katjaoha

The Chief Executive Officer of the Gobabis Municipality Mr. David's

The Director of Health Mr. P.C. Angala

Hon Regional and local Authority Councilors

Hon traditional Leaders

Distinguished Church Leaders

Representatives of different Partners Organizations in the fight against HIV/AIDS

Ministry of Health and Social Services Staff

Members of the Media

Colleagues and friends

Ladies and gentlemen

I feel honor this morning to be part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Gobabis Municipality HIV/AIDS Day as part of your Annual event and this to me is a clear testimonies that your municipality is demonstrating a caring attitude for your employees and the resident of Gobabis at large by accepting this noble "National Call "of ensuring the implementation of the Namibia National Strategy Medium Term Plan three on HIV/AIDS for the period of 2004 to 2009 and for that I would like to congratulate you again and keep up the good work.

Let me also thank all of you for being here at this occasion, your presence shows your commitment and dedication in the ongoing fight against HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS is a known threat towards Namibia's social and economic development and its impact is felt at all levels of our society. Workplaces suffer

from productivity losses related to HIV/AIDS morbidity and mortality AIDS is the single largest threat to social and economic development in Namibia. The impact of this epidemic is being experienced at every level of our society, affecting all individuals, families, communities and most of all the most economically active groups of our societies.

According to the latest national HIV/AIDS sentinel survey (2006), HIV prevalence, amongst pregnant women attending antenatal clinics, was 4.2% in 1992, increasing to 22% in 2002 and 2006 the rate was 19.9 and this again provides an indication of infection rates in the general adult population, with the highest rates amongst Namibians who are in their economically productive age group. The impact of HIV and AIDS epidemic at the workplace has not yet been document nationally; however the epidemic threatens Namibia and the world at large in many ways by negatively impacting on demand for and supply of quality goods and services and too often, creating a mismatch between human resources and labour requirements versus supply of quality goods and services.

Director of Ceremony

I was also informed that the Municipality of Gobabis on the 13 June 2008 launched a series of Information, Education and Communication by my Deputy Minister Comrade Patrina Haingura, with the aim of educating your employees on the basic facts of HIV/AIDS and to me all this efforts that you have maintained to do so is a good gesture in its self and it is even beyond my expectations.

As my Ministry is tasked with the responsibility to oversee, regulate, public, private and Non Governmental sectors in the provision of quality health and social welfare, My Ministry has spearheaded the formation of the Country National policy on HIV/AIDS which was approved by the National Assembly on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2007, The National policy on HIV/AIDS is geared towards guiding our efforts towards expansions of our national response to the epidemic. It encompasses policy statements related to the creation of an enabling environment; prevention; treatment, care and support; impact mitigation and workplace interventions and stewardship and management of our response.

This policy has been produced through a wide consultative process which included all sectors of society, people living with HIV/AIDS, community members in all thirteen administrative regions of our country as well as many who are engaged in providing services at grassroots.

I am confident that together we will achieve our aims of providing a strong policy framework for an invigorated national response to HIV/AIDS epidemic.

As result, the Government of Namibia responded and significant progress has been made during the past 5 years. For example, the PMTCT services have been rolled out to more than 150 health facilities in the Country. More than 80% of pregnant women can now access this important service routinely during their Ante-natal care visits and their delivery.

Anti-retroviral treatment has likewise been rolled-out to all the District hospital in the country with the number of people on ART now exceeding 40,000 in the whole country in the public sector alone. My Ministry is in currently in the process of rolling out these services to the peripheral facilities (Health Centre's and the Clinics) through Integrated Management of Adolescents/ Adulthood Illnesses (IMAI)

However, the fight against HIV/AIDS needs broad political leadership and commitment at all levels of Government, Traditional leadership, private sector and Religious leadership. I am pleased therefore that the Gobabis Municipality is showing its commitment by having a day of this magnitude to contribute to the fight against HIV/AIDS. I am very impressed, that we are celebrating this day under the theme" Stop Discriminating and Stigmatized Let's love each other"

People living with the virus are frequently subjected to discrimination and human rights abuses; many have thrown out of jobs and homes, rejected by family and friends, and some even have committed suicides. Together, stigma and discrimination constitute one of the greatest barriers to dealing effectively with the epidemic.

Experience teaches us that a strong movement of people living with HIV/AIDS that affords mutual support and a voice at local and national levels is particularly effective in tacking stigma. Moreover, the presence of the treatment makes this task easier too; where there is hope, people are less afraid of AIDS; they are more willing to be tested for HIV, to disclose their status, and to seek care when necessary.

Director of Ceremonies, Ladies and Gentlemen

In conclusion I commend the Omaheke region for the demonstration by ensuring the implementation of the Government of the Republic of Namibia national

strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS Third Medium plan (MTP3). The establishment of the Gobabis Municipality HIV/AIDS Workplace Program, together with the Omaheke Regional Council, is a clear testimony of your Regional Commitment.

Let us give the region and the municipality and all those involved in this programme a big hand for the remarkable efforts. I look forwards to other regions and their municipality to emulate your exemplary work in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

I thank you.