



Republic of Namibia

Keynote Address

By

**Dr Richard Nchabi Kamwi, MP
Minister of Health and Social Services**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL INAUGURATION OF
OSHAANGO PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CLINIC, OHANGWENA REGION**

29 October 2009

Programme Director – Mr. D.V. Kashikola

Hon. Governor for Ohangwena Region – Cde Nghaamwa

Hon. Regional Councilor, Omulonga Constituency – Cde. A Kufu

Hon. Regional and Local Councilors

The Director, Health and Social Services – Ms. Pohamba

The Ohangwena RMT and Eenhana DCC

The Principal Medical Officer – Dr T.O. Nkongolo

The staff members, Oshaango PHC Clinic

The Church and Traditional Leaders

The community of Oshaango

Members of the Media

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

We are here to witness the inauguration of Oshaango Primary Health Care (PHC) Clinic, Ohangwena Region. This occasion provides us with a great cause of celebration as it will provide more accessible and readily available health services to the community of Oshaango.

Oshaango PHC and the staff accommodation was built at a cost of N\$5, 058,821,50. This bears testimony that the SWAPO Party Government can indeed keep her promise, that the health of the Namibian people remains a priority. The staff component will include a registered nurse, two enrolled nurses, one cleaner and one security guard.

Namibia adopted the Policy of Primary Health Care Approach for health care service delivery. In a nutshell, PHC entails involvement of the stakeholders including community participation, hence the presence of both the Regional and Local Councilors, traditional, church and the community.

Government entrusted the Ministry of Health and Social Services to promote the health of all Namibians. However, this cannot be done in isolation. There is need for the Ministry and the stakeholders to work together in order to realize maximum results.

Government has put in place programmes including National Development Plan 3 (NDP 3), Vision 2030 and the SWAPO Party Government, through the SWAPO Party Election Manifesto 2004, directed Government to see to it that the intended objectives of these programmes are met with. In this case, the directive is to bring essential health services closer to the communities we serve.

Similarly, I wish to draw the attention of the Oshana Management and Staff of the Ministry of Health and Social Services, that for us to meet the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals in particular, goals 4, 5 and 6 i.e. the reduction of child mortality, improvement of maternal health and the combating of HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases, respectively, we have to deliver the health care services through PHC Approach.

Therefore, the essential services at Oshaango PHC Clinic will include the promotion of proper nutrition, maternal and child health care i.e. antenatal, deliveries, postnatal, family planning, immunization, Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT), Rapid HIV Testing, Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PTMCT), basic curative services and health education and training on the most common health problems. As a result, I want to see the improvement of data related to what I had stated above.

Programme Director,

Clearly, I want to say the staff members of Oshaango PHC Clinic will not make a difference in improving the data unless they receive maximum support from the stakeholders in particular the community to be served. Therefore, I wish to invite all those women, the young ladies who fall pregnant as soon as you detect that you are pregnant, please report yourself at this Clinic. Similarly, for all the respective health challenges that you are faced with, be it family planning, nutrition for the new born babies; HIV infection etc. report yourself at this Centre for health education. There is need to reduce infant and child mortality, as well as maternal mortality in this country.

Programme Director,

We are indeed grateful, we now have this state-of-the-art- PHC Clinic. However, for it to be sustained, calls for amongst others consistent maintenance, guarding against vandalism and by keeping

the environment in a state of cleanliness. The physical condition of our health facilities must always be an area of great concern for all of us. By and large, basic preventative maintenance is always ignored, the community would rather choose criticizing those entrusted with the well-being of the institution than giving a helping hand, including basic elements such as cleanliness of the environment. Primary Health Care Approach as I said earlier calls for amongst others, community participation. This is where an issue of ownership by the community has to be realized.

The challenge in this regard is directed to the community of Oshaango. In this connection, I wish to encourage that together with Ohangwena Regional Health Management Team and Regional Council within the jurisdiction of Oshaango that together you establish Community Health Committee in order to support the efforts of the health workers. The Director for Health and Social Services should spear-head this exercise.

One of the primary objectives of the Committee will be to advise on the wellbeing of this health facility and chart the way forward.

Programme Director,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me seize this opportunity to address those of you who will be privileged to serve the community of Oshaango in this Clinic and other staff members out there.

I have a concern, while acknowledging the brilliant work done by the majority of the health workers, there remains some who continue on tarnishing the good image of the Ministry of Health and Social Services. People are talking, reporting negative attitude of some workers, including those of you at Engela District Hospital.

The majority of us present here do read what has now become famous SMS corner of the Namibian newspaper, Open Line and Chat Show. You will agree with me that the issue of negative attitude and behaviors of some health workers dominates these programmes.

For this reason, allow me to use this opportunity to make an appeal to all those who are entrusted with essential basic health services to the community to please respond to call of duty in a professional manner. I urge you to display professionalism at work, show courtesy, human dignity, be patient, and remain calm at all times. We should provide our clients and their families with the relevant and accurate information related to their health needs.

We should always be mindful of the fact that the promotion of health in Namibia is a Constitutional mandate to the Namibian people.

I also wish to call upon the Director, the Regional Management Team to please support the efforts of your colleagues who will be serving in this Clinic. Refrain yourselves from being remote controllers but do spot checks and surprise visits. By so doing, you would silence your adversaries. Remember the Ministry's Strategic

Plan, makes it clear that each one of you will be held accountable to your area of jurisdiction.

Programme Director,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To the general public, please, I ask you too; take ownership of this Clinic. Ownership entails making a contribution in one way or another, assist in guarding against vandalism, maintain cleanliness at all times at this institution. Above all, the nursing staff at this Clinic indeed the whole of Oshana region are your children. They too have limitations, they are simply human beings. In their shortcomings, I urge genuine criticism and advise where you can through their supervisors. Every institution has a departmental head, the health sector is no exception. Thus, I call upon you to report the alleged incidences to the nurse in-charge of the ward, the matron or the superintendent during the course of the incident.

Finally, I wish to inform the community of Oshana that the services in this Clinic will be administered from 08h00 to 17h00. I therefore, call upon your cooperation with the nursing staff.

Thank you for your kind attention.