



Republic of Namibia

STATEMENT

BY

DR. RICHARD NCHABI KAMWI, MP
Minister of Health and Social Services

At the

**International Day against Drug Abuse
and Illicit Trafficking**

Windhoek
22 June 2009

Programme Director, Ms. Batseba Katjiuongua
The Acting UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Joyce Mends-Cole
The Acting General Secretary of CCN, Dr. Kapolo
The Representative of the NGO's Mr. Kaundje
Representatives from the Ministry of Safety of Security
Directors, Deputy Directors and staff of MoHSS
Members of the Print and Electronic Media
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, Namibia joins the rest of the world to commemorate the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking scheduled for 26 June since the declaration in December 1987. However, due to other pressing commitments, we agreed to do it today.

Accordingly, UN Member States were urged to raise awareness on the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse. I am glad to report in April 2009, the Namibian Government ratified the 1988 UN- Convention on Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which will amongst others empower Namibians with tools to effectively monitor the movement of

precursor chemicals which is frequently used in the illegal manufacturing of Narcotic drugs.

Similarly, Government has since engaged the Stakeholders to join efforts in curbing this evil practice. In this regard I commend Namibia Breweries for their efforts to curb the selling of alcohol to children under the age of 18, the NGO's including the Drug Action Group and Blue Cross Namibia, who took the campaign to secondary schools. Once again, I wish to appeal to the alcohol industry to follow this example.

Clearly, this is in line with the theme for this year, i.e. *“Do drugs/alcohol control your life? Your community? No place for drugs”*.

Programme Director

The theme for this year is meant to encourage us as the communities, the private sector and to whom it may concern to have *“no place for drugs”*. The challenge is to reflect on our collective attitudes on the drug issue, whether we in fact

tolerate, condone or facilitate the abuse of drugs, whether we support the drug trade direct or indirectly.

I have a concern that, although Namibia is still regarded as a transit route for drugs such as cocaine, heroin and mandrax tablets, in fact we have also become a consumer country. This is indeed worrisome!

Programme Director, what then can we do? Drug trafficking is outlawed in Namibia. The Ministry of Safety and Security, through the Namibian Police are doing a commendable job in curbing the drug trafficking into or through Namibia. For the first part of this year the Drug Law Enforcement Unit has seized cocaine to the value of about 3 million Namibian dollars whereby 7 foreign nationals who travelled from Brazil into Namibia, were arrested. Drugs syndicates is now on the spotlight in Namibia.

However, these uninformed men and women cannot do it alone. For them to succeed calls on all of us as Namibians to be whistle blowers. Namibia should not and never should the soil

of the land of the brave be used as a route or dumping place for their illegal activities. Can you imagine!

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to warn our female counterparts to remain vigilant. Statistics suggest that more and more females are involved in illicit trafficking. For example the Angolan husband who lost his Namibian wife due to the swallowing of cocaine.

Drug abuse, drug trafficking, alcohol abuse contribute to evils of drink and driving, women and child abuse, corruption money laundering, poverty unemployment and disability. It is for this reason that the National Drug Control Commission Secretariat in the Ministry of Health and Social Services was established with a mandate to coordinate and monitor the multi-sectoral interventions in combating drug trafficking and alcohol/drug abuse.

Programme Director

The Nationwide KAP Baseline Survey on Alcohol and Drug Use and Abuse in Namibia reported that **2.6%** of the adult population use dagga. The statistics of the intakes of

Etegameno Rehabilitation and Resource Centre show that clients have a combination of addiction of alcohol, dagga, mandrax and crack cocaine. It further revealed ninety percent (90%) of the clients are male, aged between 18-39, did not complete their secondary education, are unemployed, are single and have been involved in criminal activities due to substance abuse. There is also growing evidence to suggest that susceptibility to drug dependence for young people is due to lack of information to make informed choices. We should admit that there is a problem and take responsibility to bring about positive transformation concerning these trends.

I wish to urge all Namibians to join the efforts of His Excellency, the Father of the Namibian Nation and his successor His Excellency, Hifikepunye Pohamba, in speaking out against the mushrooming of cuca-shops around schools. The New Era recently published graphic pictures of cuca shops being located at the pay points when grants are payable to the elderly. What a shame to those business men and women! This is day robbing of the senior citizens. As a nation, I want to appeal to all stakeholders to be watch dogs to this evil and to combat it with all means.

In conclusion, I appeal to you all, let us join hands in curbing drug and alcohol abuse. There is need for a multi-sectoral approach starting with our leaders in government; politicians, police, communities, and parents; both the electronic and print media just as we have done with the spread of HIV/AIDS. The church has a greater role as custodian in speaking out on issues on morality as well as civil society who should aggressively join efforts with government to address substance abuse problems.

Programme Director, Ladies and gentlemen, let us work together with the Police in assisting them, by not harbouring or tolerate illegal activities, which could pose threats to public health and security as a result of drugs. NAMIBIA, should be a NO PLACE FOR DRUGS AND DRUG TRAFFICKERS!!!

Thank you.