



Republic of Namibia

Statement

By

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

**Inauguration of the Atomic Energy
Board**

Windhoek, 18th February 2009

Director of Proceedings, Mr. K. Kahuure;
Atomic Energy Board (AEB) Members;
Nuclear Security Committee Members;
National Cancer Control Committee Members;
Deputy Director – PEHS, Ms E. Awaseb
Staff Members of the Ministry;
Representatives of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

We are gathered here, to witness the inauguration of Namibia's first Atomic Energy Board.

Following protracted consultation with stakeholders, the Ministry of Health and Social Services was entrusted to implement the Atomic Energy and Radiation Protection Act, Act No. 5 of 2005. The Act establishes the Atomic Energy Board, to advise Government on all matters pertaining to nuclear or atomic energy. Accordingly, the Minister responsible for the implementation of this Act, is entrusted to appoint the members of the Atomic Energy Board.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I had the privilege to appoint members of the Atomic Energy Board. I now have the honour, to introduce to you the newly appointed members:

1. Dr. Wotan Swiegers - Chairperson of the Board
 2. Ambassador, Mr. Martin Andjaba nominated by Hon. Minister –Foreign Affairs
 3. Dr. Chocky Shitaleni Herman nominated by Hon. Minister of Health and Social Services
 4. Ms. Helen Itamba nominated by Hon. Minister of Mines and Energy
 5. Mr. Iileni Shikwambi nominated by Hon. Minister of Labour and Social Welfare
 6. Mr. Theo Nghitila nominated by Hon. Minister of Environment and Tourism
- Congratulations! This is a very responsible job.*

In conformity with the provisions of the Act, I gave directives to the Board, to consult broadly with all stakeholders to formulate a national policy on nuclear energy. We expect that the policy will clearly define Namibia's aspiration with respect to nuclear energy, and how it can contribute to the developmental needs of our country. We would expect to be informed and guided on *how* we can utilize nuclear technology in various fields. For example;

The role of nuclear in the public health sector, such as cancer management, HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB and Nutrition programmes; in the agriculture sector: addressing animal health, improving crop varieties and understanding of our water resources;

The role of nuclear in the energy sector, such as nuclear energy for production of electricity, or production of freshwater from seawater using nuclear energy.

Secondly, in line with the Act, the new Board is mandated to formulate a policy and regulatory framework necessary to ensure that the use of nuclear related technology does not cause undue risk to employees, patients, the public, or the environment. Therefore, there must be a perfect balance that the benefit of nuclear technology is fully exploited, whilst ensuring that it is under a controlled and monitored framework.

In addition, it will be expected of the Board to put in place mechanisms for awareness to the general public on the following:

- The extent of nuclear or radiation related applications;
- The risk of nuclear applications and its impact on our health;
- The approaches on the protection of our nation and environment from the harmful effects of radiation;
- Cooperation with other States and International Organizations and how we may fulfill our obligations under specific cooperative agreements.

To the Board, you have resources in place and at your disposal from the Ministry, to carry-out your activities as mandated by the Act. I urge you to do your work without fear or pressure

from any quarter. Finally, remain faithful to duty within the jurisdiction of your mandate.

In support of your mandate, I directed the Permanent Secretary to avail all the necessary resources as per requirement of the Act, to ensure that the Board fulfills its mandate unhindered. Indeed, I encourage the office of the Permanent Secretary to expedite the establishment of the Secretariat of the Board and the Regulatory Authority, which are both critical to the mandate of the Board.

To those who are involved in the use of applications of nuclear technology, or whose activities may give rise to radiation exposure to the workers, patients, public, or the environment, you have a responsibility to ensure that your activities are conducted in a responsible and safe manner. I urge you to work together with the Board and the Authority, to ensure that all stakeholders are fully aware of the risks involved and the means for mitigating or minimizing the harmful consequences of radiation without compromising on the many potential benefits.

To the members of the general public, be informed that we will do our best to ensure that the nation fully benefit from the advanced applications of nuclear technology. The Board is there to allay any fears associated with nuclear technology, and give you the confidence that nuclear technology in Namibia is used in a responsible and safe manner, and that your health is not unduly at risk.

I now have the honour to declare the Atomic Energy Board of Namibia officially commissioned.

I thank you.