



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

STATEMENT

BY

HON. DR. RICHARD NCHABI KAMWI, MP

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

DURING THE

ASSESSMENT VISIT TO OSIRE REFUGEE CAMP

30 JANUARY 2008

Director of Ceremonies

UNHCR Representative, Ms. Joyce Mends-Cole

The Director Health and Social Services and your Management Team

Officials from the Head Office

The Community of Osire

Members of the Media, Ladies and gentlemen

I am grateful to be here this morning in the company of the UNHCR Representative together with my senior officials. The Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) is well aware of the need to provide health services to all the inhabitants in Namibia. In 1998 the Ministry adopted a Policy framework which is a strategy for the achievement of greater health care service coverage and equity in the country. Furthermore this framework provides for partnership in the provision of health and social services. In line with this policy framework, Osire clinic was established to provide health services to refugees and the population in the surrounding areas.

With the increasing number of refugees and the long distance (110 km) to travel to Otjiwarongo, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and its implementing partner Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA) constructed a hospital in 2002 at Osire Camp. Health care services at Osire Refugee camp have therefore been provided under the direction of UNHCR with its partner AHA, while the Ministry provided medical services, medicine and staffing.

I am informed that with peace now in place in Angola among others, UNHCR is busy with the rationalisation process, which will result in a reduction of activity in their area of support. It should be noted that the rationalisation process is not only affecting Namibia or Southern Africa, but also the rest of the world.

In light of the foregoing, it has become imperative for Government to take responsibility of the various functions which are provided for by UNHCR. In this regard, the rationalisation process has implications for the Ministry of Health and Social Service such as, among others, the provision of health services from the hospital in the Osire refugee camp.

Given that the Ministry will once again resume the provision of health care delivery services, there is a consideration for the current hospital to be re-classified as Health Centre according to the Norms and Standard of the Ministry. I am therefore making it public that, what was known in the past as Osire hospital will now be called Osire health centre. The re-classification of the hospital to a health centre will result not only in the reduction of costs, but also the optimal utilisation of both financial and human resources. Our notion of availability and accessibility as one of the seven (7) Guiding Principles in our National Policy implies optimal distribution and redistribution of resources.

For this reason I would like to thank, most sincerely, and applaud UNHCR for allowing some of the equipment and personnel to be transferred to Otjiwarongo Hospital which serves as the referral centre for the district. Furthermore, I commend the UNHCR for living up to the letter and spirit of the aims and objectives that we remain indebted for your confirmed support looking after the plight of refugees in Namibia and the rest of the world.

Director of ceremonies, Ladies and gentlemen

The Namibian population is increasing and as a country we are developing. This calls construction of more health facilities which results in demand for more health workers. The Ministry is therefore experiencing a shortage of nurses and medical doctors in most health facilities.

I am informed that there are nurses and doctors who have been providing services in the health centre. Some of these cadres will soon be authorized by the Ministry of Health and Social Services to practice their respective professions in our health facilities. Their skills are a valuable resource that could be used in provision of health care delivery services to the Namibian population. The Ministry, in consultation with various councils, will therefore explore the possibility of having these cadres, especially nurses, employed in the service of the MHSS.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, in a nutshell, addressing health challenges and delivering of health services in the country including here in Osire remain our priority.

I THANK YOU