



**Republic of Namibia**

**Statement**

**By**

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

**On the Occasion of the Launch of the Wellness Programme of the  
FNB Group of Companies**

**13<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

**Windhoek, Namibia**

Programme Director  
Group CEO of FNB Namibia Holdings – Adv. Vekuii Rukoro  
Senior Management Team of the FNB Namibia Holdings  
Wellness Committee and Co-ordinators  
Members of the Media  
Ladies and Gentlemen

The global burden of non-communicable diseases continues to grow and addressing it constitutes one of the major developmental challenges. According to a WHO, 2008 Action Plan for the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, “cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancers and chronic respiratory diseases are amongst the leading causes of death in low and middle income countries” including Namibia.

Hitherto, emphasis in both the public and private health sector has been on addressing communicable diseases. As a result, we are making in roads in meeting the Millennium Development Goal 6 on combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB.

However, if our collective national aspiration as articulated in Vision 2030 for Namibia to become an industrialised nation is to be realised, we will have to adopt a comprehensive national strategy to tackle both communicable and non-communicable diseases, the silent killers. Undoubtedly, a healthy workforce at all levels of society is of paramount importance to the achievement of the above aspiration.

In this respect, for maximum production at FNB Namibia Holdings and other commercial institutions to be realised, calls for amongst others, the health of the workforce, the employees to be in good health. Clearly, preventing chronic diseases is in itself a vital investment.

Non-communicable diseases, the silent killers, have insidious onset, provide debilitating complications and result in painful deaths.

The government through the Ministry of Health and Social Services is primarily responsible for providing quality health and social services for all Namibians. However, given the competing priorities and limited resources, this is not always possible. It is therefore, pleasing to note that the private sector is complementing government efforts through the creation of Wellness Programmes to cater for the needs of their employees.

Non-communicable diseases mentioned above as well as gout and overweight/obesity are generally caused by over eating or unhealthy diet, lack of physical exercises and through ageing. The good news is that most of these diseases are preventable by eliminating the risk factors such as tobacco use, bad eating habits and the excessive consumption of alcohol. It is therefore important that we educate and keep our people informed about the causes of these diseases so that they can prevent them by living healthy lifestyles. The treatment of these diseases adds unnecessary strain on our limited resources which could be best employed elsewhere.

According to the MoHSS reports, a great number of Namibians suffer or die from Africa's new silent killers such as hypertension, sugar diabetic mellitus, gout, obesity and cardiac related illnesses. Clearly, all these are preventable through regular medical examination, exercises and eating food of nutritional value.

Given all these, the launch of the FNB Wellness Week could not have come at an opportune moment. I therefore commend the efforts of Adv. Vekuii Rukoro and

management of FNB for their pro-activeness aimed at educating and raising awareness about these diseases through the Wellness Week.

I understand the programme of the week will cover a variety of topics which addresses wellness at the workplace. By bringing these services to your staff you will be cutting down the time taken to go for medical examination during office hours thereby increasing productivity and efficient service delivery.

I acknowledge with thanks the continuous support made by the FNB Group to various support programmes of the MoHSS inclusive of the recent adoption of the maternity ward for Windhoek Central Hospital. This includes amongst others, the provision of essential logistical materials to the value of N\$540 000 to ensure the comfort of our clients. Similarly, FNB has joined forces with other stakeholders to sponsor the printing of the H1N1 leaflets which are being distributed at all points of entry to Namibia.

#### Programme Director

I feel greatly honoured and most humbled by the request to become the Patron of the FNB Group Wellness Programme. I take on this challenge and will endeavour to spread the core objectives of the FNB Wellness Programme and encourage other players to emulate your exemplary approach to the wellbeing of their employees.

Programme Directors, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I now have the honour to declare the FNB Group Wellness Week officially launched.

Thank you.