It gives me great pleasure to announce that the Ministry of Mines & Energy has finally embarked on the process to develop the mineral policy of Namibia. This is an important step in the development of our mining industry. Ideally the Mineral Policy should have been put in place first before the enactment of mining legislation but due to the unique circumstances immediately after independence, the Ministry had to quickly put in place new mining legislation so as to repeal old legislation from the colonial regime. This has been followed by the promulgation of the new Diamond Act in 1999 which is now under implementation since April 1, 2000.

The drafting of the Mineral policy has come at an opportune time when the Ministry is currently reviewing the Minerals Act of 1992 in conjunction with the Chamber of Mines of Namibia. We have an excellent opportunity to examine the draft amended mining legislation and ensure that it is consistent with the aspirations of the Namibian people as defined in the policy document.

Namibia is endowed with abundant mineral resources and indeed, the mining industry is and will continue to form the backbone of the national economy. The potential is largely still untapped in a landmass that requires more intensive mineral exploration. The country needs the mineral policy in order to further enhance the development of the Namibian mining industry. It is therefore my sincere hope that all stakeholders will participate in this process and provide the required valuable inputs.
The Namibian Ministry of Mines and Energy has, with its main stakeholders, commenced the process of producing a national mineral policy.

The White Paper on Mining and Minerals will contain comprehensive policy proposals for the mining and minerals sector aimed at generating wealth and employment opportunities for Namibia. It is hoped that this will be achieved by creating an enabling environment to attract both foreign and local investment in mining and for the local beneficiation of the Namibian mineral resources.

The beneficiation of mineral resources can maximise the rent Namibia derives from the exploitation of its natural resource base and can serve as a foundation for further industrial development.

Overview of the Mining and Minerals White Paper policy formulation process

The policy process began with the commission of research papers on detailed studies of all the factors that have an impact on the mining and minerals industry of Namibia. These are the following:

An Overview of the Namibian National Economy where the government’s development goals and priorities are examined in terms of their implications for mineral sector development. This section also included an assessment of the government’s macro-economic objectives as well as the relations between the mining industry and government.

An Overview of the International Minerals Industry was also done to examine global trends and developments in the industry. Since mining is an international industry, it is important to understand the way it works so as to be able to develop a proper framework for Namibia that it can be used to best exploit the opportunities available.

The Review of the Mineral Sector of Namibia was undertaken to get an overview of the current status and trends in the sector. This included an overview of the mineral resource potential, the structure of the industry, a review of the relevant mineral legislation, human resource issues, the environment and social considerations.

Multi-Stakeholder Workshops

All the reports produced in this initial phase have been given to a number of people representing the mining industry and relevant institutions, who were identified to participate in the first multi-stakeholder workshop.

There are two multi-stakeholder workshops planned for this process. The first will be attended by the industry’s leaders and knowledgeable people including labour leaders, business leaders, people from all government departments affected by mining, NGOs and CBOs, small-scale miners’ associations and academics.

The goal of the first workshop, which is scheduled from the 3rd to the 5th July 2001, is to identify as many issues as possible which have to be addressed by the policy. The output of this workshop will be a document containing all these issues and will be given to all the affected and interested constituencies to comment and make their inputs to the document.

A special effort will be made to go out to communities and run workshops with them to make sure that they also have their input and comments on the proposals in the document. The public will also be encouraged at this stage to write to the Mineral Policy Committee with their comments if they wish to comment as individuals rather than as part of a particular constituency.
A second workshop will be called in early February 2002 with a much wider participation from the public. This workshop will be used as a tool to make sure that the policy formulation process involves input from the entire range of stakeholders involved in the industry. At this workshop, all the comments from the working document will be considered and debated and adjusted accordingly, if the Mineral Policy Committee is convinced that these comments are relevant to be part of a national mineral policy.

The outcome of this workshop will be a document that will be taken through a peer review process with identified experts in the field from Namibia. The final document will then be presented to the Minister of Mines and Energy, Honourable Jesaya Nyamu, as a draft White Paper on Mining and Minerals in Namibia, who will then take it further through the process to have it accepted in Parliament.

Management of the process

The mineral policy process is managed by the Mineral Policy Committee (MPC) of the Ministry of Mines and Energy. This committee comprises senior members of the Ministry from the Directorates of Mines, Energy and the Geological Survey. The secretariat of the committee is the Minerals and Energy Policy Centre (MEPC) of South Africa, which is the consultant organisation that won the tender for managing this process. The primary role of the MPC is to control, harmonise and direct the development of the White Paper as required by the Ministry of Mines & Energy management team.

This committee is chaired by the Deputy Director of Mines and meets once every month to make sure that the process is on track, to allow the consultants to report on progress achieved and to offer advice and direction to the whole process.

This arrangement is also used to make sure that the whole process of policy development remains a Namibian process and is owned by Namibians themselves representing the mining sector.

Mineral Policy Committee (MPC)

The MPC is composed as follows:

1. Mr Veston Malango, Deputy Director of Mines and Chairman of MPC
2. Mr Kennedy Hamutenya, Director of Mines.
3. Mr Asser Mudhika, Deputy Director of Mines
4. Mr Romanus Samuyenga, Mining Commissioner
5. Dr Gabi Schneider, Director: Geological Survey
6. Mr Volker Petzel, Deputy Director: Geological Survey
7. Mr Markus von Jeney, Deputy Director: Directorate of Energy
8. Mr Hudson Mtegha, Project Manager, MEPC
9. Mr Cecil Macheke, Secretary, MEPC.

Mr. V. Malango is also the MME contact person on the mineral policy process and can be contacted for any queries as follows:

Tel: 061-284 8251/ Cell: 081 127 6381
E-mail: vmalango@mme.gov.na
The Minerals and Energy Policy Centre (MEPC) is an autonomous Section 21 company (a company incorporated not for gain). It was established in 1994 specifically to address the transformation of the minerals and energy sectors in post-apartheid South Africa. Since then it has become a respected source of creative and innovative minerals and energy policy options.

The Centre is under the operational control of a Director, who in turn reports to a Board of Directors. The Members of the Board occupy distinguished positions in government, industry, labour and community organisations with interest in the minerals and energy sectors.

Current and Previous Work

The strength of the MEPC lies in policy oriented research and strategy building, policy facilitation processes, capacity building and information networking. It specialises in consultative research and the involvement of key stakeholders across the entire minerals and energy spectrum. The organisation operates with two interactive, but separate programmes. These are the Energy Programme and the Mining and Minerals Programme. The Mining Programme has built up expertise and research capacity in the areas of mineral policy research and strategy development; multi-stakeholder negotiations and consensus building; small-scale mining development; and facilitation of mining companies/community negotiations.

The MEPC originally relied almost entirely on donor funding to support its work. These donors included a number of foreign governments, major multi-national corporations, and international agencies such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the African Development Bank. It has, through these and other associations, established an impressive network of contacts throughout the world. The organisation is now a self-funded and not for profit institution.

The MEPC is working closely with two specialist consultant firms in Namibia.

MSW Namibia (Pty) Ltd was founded in July 2000 after a management buyout of Parkman Namibia (Pty) Ltd. MSW is a fully multi-disciplinary firm offering a complete range of consulting services. The company is a Member Firm of the Association of Consulting Engineers of Namibia and a Member Firm of the Hydrogeological Association of Namibia.

The Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU) is an autonomous, Windhoek-based institution governed by an independent Trust, The Namibian Policy Research Trust. NEPRU was established in 1990 and its main objectives are to assist the Government of Namibia through airborne surveying/search for policy formulation and decision making in strategic macro and socio-economic areas, to build an information resource base on Namibian affairs and to train Namibians in relevant skills.

NEPRU has published over one hundred research reports, working papers and occasional reports, as well as a viewpoint on the economy and a quarterly Fiscal and Economic Review.