



KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT THE DEBERS SHINING LIGHTS AWARDS 2015

By

Hon. Obeth Kandjoze, MP
Minister of Mines and Energy

8th July 2015

Johannesburg, South Africa

- **Deputy Minister of Mines and Energy to Namibia;
Honourable Kornelia Shilunga**
- **Deputy Minister of Trade, Industrialisation and SME
Development to Namibia; Honourable Pieter Van der
Walt & Spouse**
- **Botswana High Commissioner; His Excellency Zenene
Sinombe**
- **Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the
Republic of Botswana, and Special Representative to
SADC; Her Excellency Anne de la Blache**
- **Director General South African Department of Mineral
Resources; Mr Thibeli Ramontja**
- **Heads of Government organisations and institutions from
South Africa, Botswana and Namibia**
- **Chairman De Beers Consolidated Mines; Mr. Barend
Petersen**
- **CEO De Beers Group; Mr Philippe Mellier**
- **Anglo American and De Beers Group Board members
and Executive teams**
- **DTC Botswana and NDTC Board members and Executive
teams**
- **Industry leaders**
- **Shining Light Awards participants**

Good evening to you all. It is my distinct pleasure to be here with you this evening, at this exquisite event where we recognize diamond design talent in Southern Africa.

While diamonds have been one of the central symbols of luxury, commitment, love and romance over the last century, they have of course also been important to the fortunes and futures of many African countries. Namibia is no exception, and this most precious of gemstones is of strategic importance to our developmental agenda.

Through our successful partnership with De Beers, we have realised substantial progress in the prospects of our countries over the years. Diamond must play a key role in our Governments bold efforts to eradicate poverty and improve our citizens' lives.

With a bright future forecasted for the diamond industry, we look forward to continuing this wonderful partnership into the future; so that the lives of our people continue to benefit from the power of the diamond dream. Partnerships of course rely on the hard work, dedication and foresight of all parties involved. A business such as De Beers obviously plays a major part with its industry knowledge, expertise and experience.

As a representative of The Government of the Republic of Namibia, I am proud of the significant role that we as the driving force for development in producing countries play in providing

talented young Africans with various opportunities in the jewellery design industry.

The success of the Shining Lights competition is testament to the successful collaboration between a wider range of industry stakeholders, including governments, diamantaires and tertiary education institutions.

This cooperative approach fits in very well with the beneficiation objectives of the Namibian Government, as it is through initiatives like these that, Africa can grow skills, create opportunities and more importantly produce entrepreneurs that will go on to form the backbone of our local economies.

Sharing knowledge and skills from such a range of backgrounds and areas of expertise can only be good, as we can all learn from each other's unique perspectives.

Of course, beneficiating our rough diamonds is not the only part that is important. We should create entrepreneurs who will participate and contribute meaningfully to the country's economy. Collaborating with other entities that can help provide the right platform for entrepreneurs is therefore crucial. We must continue to nurture and support our entrepreneurs and continue to monitor their progress long after the curtains have closed and the flash lights have dimmed at this auspicious event. We must strive to eliminate barriers to this lucrative business by creating an

enabling environment for our talented young people to pursue a career in jewelry design, manufacturing and branding. This event forms an important platform to promote this agenda and I encourage all of us stakeholders to keep improving and expanding the scope of the Shining Lights Awards so that their impact is truly meaningful and empowering.

In my opinion, mutual beneficial partnership focused on national development is an ideal that would benefit many countries and this Shining Light initiative aids all of us in realising that important goal.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are privileged to see these excellent designs here tonight. We are also looking forward to seeing the continued spinoffs of the Shining Lights programme in our tertiary institutions, where the Namibian Diamond Trading Company is partnering, to uplift the quality of jewellery design for our students, enabling them to continue contesting for the grand prize.

With the current Shining Lights programme coming closer to having run its course, it gives me great pride to announce to you officially that, Namibia will be the host of the next edition of the Shining Light Awards competition.

The next edition of the competition will commence in 2016 and culminate in the final event in 2017. I can promise you that we will share and showcase our world-renowned Namibian warmth and

hospitality to all our guests that will be visiting our beautiful country. I look forward to seeing you there!

In closing, all that remains for me to say is thank you all for attending tonight and a huge thank you to our friends in South Africa for hosting such a wonderful event and creating a truly amazing experience. I hope you enjoy the evening further.