



Ministry of Mines & Energy
"Securing Namibia's mineral, geological and energy resources"

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
BY
HON. TOM ALWEENDO
MINISTER OF MINES AND ENERGY,
ON THE OCCASION OF
OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE STAKEHOLDER
CONFERENCE ON THE PROPOSED CENTRE FOR
MINING AND METALLURGICAL RESEARCH AND
TRAINING OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA (UNAM)
AT SAFARI HOTEL, WINDHOEK
31st MAY 2017

- **Director of Ceremonies, Mr. Edwin Tjiramba**
- **Mr. Hilifa Mbako, First Vice President of the Namibian Chamber of Mines,**
- **Prof. Frednard Gideon, Acting Vice Chancellor, University of Namibia**
- **Dr. Paul Jourdan, Invited Guest Speaker and Conference Facilitator**
- **Mr. Veston Malango, CEO of the Namibian Chamber of Mines**
- **Mr. Timo Ipangelwa, Chairperson of the Conference Organising Committee**
- **Prof. Osmund D. Mwandemele, Chairperson of the Project Steering Committee and all Steering Committee members of the Project**
- **Council Members of the Namibian Chamber of Mines here present**

- **Distinguished Invited Guests and All Stakeholders here present**
- **Members of the Media**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**
- **All Protocols Observed!**

Good Morning,

Let me first join the Director of ceremonies and all the previous speakers this morning to extend my warm greetings to all of you. I also wish to express my gratitude to the University of Namibia (UNAM) for having invited me to come and officially open this very important conference which may shape the future of our mining sector in general.

As you all know, mining is the biggest contributor to Namibia's economy in terms of revenue, accounting for about 25% of the country's income. Mining's contribution to

the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2017 was 13%, the highest contribution than any other economic sector in Namibia. Furthermore, the mining sector plays an important role in employment creation in Namibia, employing about 9,376 employees during financial year 2016/2017.

The above notwithstanding, a report on Mining Industry Prospects in Africa prepared by the African Development Bank Group in 2012 states that despite the significant amount of mineral resources found in many countries on the African continent, and here I would like to believe that Namibia not being an exception, which are more than 30% of the world's global mineral resources, Africa's mineral production represents only about eight per cent (8%) of the world mineral production, broken as follows (bauxite, 7%; chromite, 38%; cobalt, 60%; copper 9%; gold, 20%; iron ore, 2%; lead, 2%; manganese, 38%; diamonds, 56%; coal and petroleum, 12%; uranium, 18%), and most of this is exported

in raw form or as concentrates or metals without significant value-addition. This is because of the many challenges facing the mining industry, which need to be urgently addressed in order to unlock the continent's mining economic potential.

The challenges include the low industrialisation of the mining industry, lack of policies for local beneficiation, lack of re-investment in education for mining and processing industries, governance, environmental degradation (air and water pollution, soil and land degradation, deforestation, disruption of the ecosystem, waste management, etc.) and social issues among many others. The Africa Mining Vision (AMV) which was adopted by the African Union (AU) in 2009 aims at maximizing Africa's mining potential to accelerate the continent's development and growth by achieving rapid and inclusive socio-economic development.

The Africa Mining Vision states that in many African countries grand plans and strategies aimed at exploiting Africa's mineral wealth collapsed because they were inefficient and unsustainable given the low level of infrastructure development, market imperatives and a weak knowledge base. Facilitating and nurturing human resources development and skills formation in tandem with the development of appropriate technologies and enhancement of research and development (R&D) involving academia, industry, the government and other key players is seen as being critical to Africa's success. The promotion of local beneficiation and value addition of minerals could of course provide a stimulus for the manufacturing industry. Thus the AMV's action plan covers the following: building human and institutional capacities; mining sector governance; promoting research and development; dealing with environmental and social issues; linkages and diversification; etc.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You would agree with me that where there is underdeveloped knowledge and skills, underdeveloped physical and institutional capital, as well as insufficient innovation systems, low technological preparedness, governance deficiencies, etc. it would be impossible for any country to benefit from the continent's mineral wealth. This has been well articulated by the conference's guest speaker Dr. Paul Jourdan in his very much appreciated presentation. That is, for African countries and Namibia in particular, to fully benefit from the mineral wealth endowment and thus be able to transform our economies and bring about economic development and growth of our people, urgent measures need to be put in place which would allow the implementation not only of the Africa Mining Vision, but also the SADC mining vision and our own Vision 2030 as well as NDPV and future national development plans and Harambee Prosperity Plan relating to the mining sector. This

would require concerted efforts involving academic, the mining industries, our government and other key role players, all working together.

I am thus very pleased to see that the University of Namibia has taken this very important step of undertaking a needs analysis study to determine if there are any knowledge and skills gaps which need to be urgently addressed which would, in the long run, enable our country to fully exploit its mineral wealth for the benefit of its people. The University of Namibia, acknowledging that science and technology education and research are the engine that would drive economic development and growth through sustainable and responsible utilization of the country's mineral resources wealth, will establish the Centre for Mining and Metallurgical Research and Training at Arandis town in the Erongo region.

There are strong merits in promoting a research and training centre that would provide skills upgrade to mining personnel and become a centre of excellence in research towards mining engineering and technology with a particular focus on mineral beneficiation, materials handling and transport systems in mines; mine geology, mining health and safety, recycling and waste disposal in mines; mineral processing and value-addition; land ecosystems and rehabilitation of degraded lands; impact of mining operations on the environment; impact of mining operations on climate change, etc. Thus the Centre will provide transdisciplinary research and training (science, engineering and technology, economics, social sciences, etc.) that is needed for Namibia's sustainable development and growth, while at the same time playing an important role in human resource skills development through in-service training and tailor-made courses, thus effectively addressing

challenges alluded to earlier and contained in the Africa Mining Vision and also being concerns of my Ministry.

Director of Ceremonies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am aware of the fact that currently, the training of Mining Engineers and associated Metallurgical Engineers is done by UNAM and Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) at Bachelor Honours degree level. In addition, UNAM has a Master of Science degree programmes in both Mining Engineering and Metallurgical Engineering that are offered at the Jose Eduardo dos Santos Campus in Ongwediva. The training of Technologists at B. Tech level for the mining industry is also done by NUST. On the other hand, the training of artisans for the mining industry is mainly done by Namibia Institute of Mining and Technology (NIMT) at Arandis, Tsumeb and Keetmanshoop. Thus it is my sincere hope that the proposed UNAM Centre at Arandis will not be a mere duplication of what already exists but rather something new

which will complement and not compete with existing initiatives and above all, that the Centre would truly help Namibia to positively transform its mining industry in a manner never seen before and as alluded in Dr. Jourdan's presentation.

The fact that key stakeholders from the mining sector including the Chamber of Mines, are all gathered here indicates the importance we all attach to this initiative. Thus I expect positive discussions of the needs analysis report with implementable recommendations coming out of this conference which will result into the realisation of this important initiative of establishing such an important centre in our country. I know there may be a few of us in this room who may be wondering whether Namibia needs such a Centre! Given what we have heard so far from the previous speakers especially Dr. Jourdan's presentation, and from the Ministry's point of view, I am convinced that the Centre is

needed and necessary and we all need to give our full support towards its realisation. Thus if we all eventually agree that such a centre is important and very much needed for our country, it means that the government, mining industries through the Chamber of Mines and our international development partners would have to collectively also agree on the modalities of how the Centre will be established and adequately resourced or funded in the most sustainable manner. This would not be the responsibility of the government or UNAM alone but of all of us as a sector. It is my sincere hope that UNAM would continue to work very closely with the Chamber of Mines and my Ministry to ensure that this national institution becomes a reality in the near future. As I look forward to receiving the conference recommendations, may I wish you a very productive and successful conference.

I THANK YOU