



Welcoming Remarks

By

Hon. Kornelia Shilunga, MP

Deputy Minister of Mines and Energy,

Delivered at the

Ministry of Mines and Energy- Auditorium

Windhoek, Namibia

9 May 2022

- **Hon. Heather Sibungo, Deputy Minister of Environment, Tourism and Forestry**
- **Hon. Kletus Karondo, Member of the National Assembly's Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources**
- **Hon. Paula Kooper, Member of the National Assembly's Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources**
- **Hon. Maria Elago, Member of the National Assembly's Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources**
- **Fr. Rod April, Secretary-General Namibia National Commission for UNESCO**
- **Mr. Djaffar Moussa Elkadhun, UNESCO Representative to Namibia**
- **Members of the interim Geopark Task Force**
- **All Senior Government officials from the different respective Ministries**
- **All participants,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning!

Let me take this opportunity to first and foremost welcome all of you to the Ministry of Mines and Energy and in the same vein thank the Geological survey Department, GIZ Namibia and UNESC for

organizing this high-level excursion to the Gondwanaland Geopark at a time when Namibia is opening up to the outside world after having suffered tremendously due to the Covid-19 lockdowns which restricted travel. We are going to be part of this excursion for the next five days where various activities in line with understanding the Geopark features, stakeholder consultations, and other related players of the Geopark will be undertaken.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The objective of this high-level excursion which we are about to embark on is to impart each and every one of us here with adequate knowledge about the value of the Geopark including its cultural, environmental, geological significance.

Geoparks by their very typical nature, are a harbour of diverse as well as interesting cultural, historical, and ecological heritage. They are, thus, landmarks that are saturated with stories that are ready to be told. The fundamental question before us as we commit to this prestigious undertaking is how best we are going to tell these stories to a world that is now ready to open up again, visit and be normal again.

Equally significant to this question is also how we shall assist in the collective goal of advancing the conservation of our heritage for the future. At the same time, we must take lessons, through this high-level interaction, to use this Geopark sustainably with the overarching objective to promote the economic well-being of our people.

This excursion is further meant to enable the participants to engage with and better understand the needs of the stakeholders which are: Conservancies, Traditional Authorities, Tourism Operators, Small-Scale Miners, other players, on the landscape management and conservation.

Landscape management and conservation are key to preserving our heritage, and indeed they are a holistic approach with the

noble goal to reconcile the competing objectives of nature conservation and economic activities across a given landscape.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This excursion is meant to further enable the participants to become ambassadors of the Geopark initiative. The ambassadorial task which we will be made to carry out after the successful completion of this initiative will entail being champions of this unique Namibian landscape. This is possible via our diverse roles within our communities along with our unbridled passion for Namibia.

Being an ambassador to such a beautiful Geopark means that we must be proactive and wholly committed to engage visitors from outside and inside our country. We thus are about to become an integral part to the holistic endeavor at nature and heritage preservation.

It is our collective responsibility as law makers to ensure and hasten the process of putting the relevant legislatures in place needed for the Gondwanaland Geopark to become a national Geopark and equally then qualify to be featured on the list of UNESCO Global Geoparks.

I would like to extend a word of gratitude to GIZ Namibia for sponsoring this excursion, we are grateful for your continuous support.

In conclusion, it is my hope that this excursion is going to be a fun-filled event that will reignite our passion for our country and its beautiful landscape. With that said, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you a wonderful, fruitful, informative and eye-opening excursion.

I thank you.

