



STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING
PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE SEAWATER
DESALINATION PILOT PLANT BY THE UNAM SAM NUJOMA CAMP
AT HENTIES BAY

FRIDAY, 10TH MAY 2019

UNAM SAM NUJOMA CAMPUS

HENTIES BAY

ERONGO REGION

*Check against Delivery

Director of Ceremonies;

Your Excellency Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President of the Republic of Namibia and third Chancellor of the University of Namibia;

Honourable Alpheus !Naruseb, Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry;

Honourable Dr. Itah Kandjii-Murangi, Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation;

Honourable Cleophas Mutjavikua, Governor of Erongo Region;

Professor Kenneth Matengu, Vice Chancellor of the University of Namibia;

Professor Kalervo Väänänen, Vice Chancellor of the University of Turku Finland, together with your entire team from Finland;

Mr Sam Shivute, Chairperson of the University of Namibia Council;

Prof Frednard Gideon, Pro Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs;

Professor Frank Kavishe, Acting Pro Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Development;

Your Excellency Pirkko-Liisa Kyöstilä, Ambassador of the Republic of Finland to Namibia;

Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps present;

Your Worship the Mayor of Henties Bay and other Mayors present;

Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councillors; Esteemed Captains of Industry;

Distinguished Staff Members and Students of the University of Namibia;

Distinguished Invited Guests;

Members of the Media:

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am delighted to have been invited to the Sam Nujoma Campus this morning to officially launch the Seawater Desalination Research Pilot Plant.

I understand this is a joint initiative of the University of Namibia and the University of Turku, Finland. Through an agreement between the two universities, who are strategic partners, the Desalination Research Pilot Plant was designed and built in Finland and shipped to Namibia to take advantage of our abundant solar energy.

I am further informed that as part of this Pilot Project, the Sam Nujoma Campus has already identified a section of its own land for immediate agriculture using drip irrigation supplied from the Desalination Plant.

I therefore take this opportunity to thank Professor Kalervo Väänänen, Vice Chancellor of the University of Turku, for this wonderful donation and to acknowledge his team from Finland, who have collectively made it possible for us to be here today and witness the launch of this project.

In the same vein, I wish to thank Prof Kenneth Matengu, Vice Chancellor of the University of Namibia, and indeed Prof Lazarus Hangula, Former Vice Chancellor of the University of Namibia for their joint efforts in both nurturing the partnership and facilitating what promises to be a long-term solution to portable water needs in the country.

I am glad to note that this project has already received Environmental Clearance Certificate from the Office of the Environmental Commissioner in Namibia and that the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry has already issued the University of Namibia with a permit for abstraction of water from the Atlantic Ocean for research purposes.

Director of Ceremonies;

Indeed, the question of seawater desalination has been at the forefront of my thoughts for many years. Today I want to reiterate the need to implement large scale seawater desalination in Namibia based on two main reasons:

Firstly, our water supply is diminishing year after year due to the adverse effects of Climate Change already felt in Southern Africa and many parts of Africa. Namibia stands out as one of the countries that will be most hit by the effects of Climate Change.

As you know, about 80% of Namibia relies on groundwater as a major water source. But due to Climate Change, our country could experience prolonged years of drought in the future that could deplete all our groundwater and surface water resources.

Yet Namibia is blessed with about 1500 km of coastline along the Atlantic Ocean that provides us with unlimited water resource. The time is now to abstract seawater and desalinate it for human consumption.

I have already seen the report on the pre-feasibility study from the University of Namibia produced under the supervision of Prof Frank Kavishe, which proposes the implementation of large-scale seawater desalination using renewable energy.

I therefore hereby take this opportunity to appeal to the Government of Namibia, through the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, and in the presence of H. E. the Vice President of the Republic of Namibia and Chancellor of the University of Namibia, to consider implementation of large-scale Seawater Desalination as a priority national project.

Today, we are witnessing the launch of a Solar Powered Desalination Pilot Plant that proves to all of us that what I am requesting is possible from a technological point of view.

Director of Ceremonies;

My second point refers to food security. Seawater desalination should also be a source of water for irrigation and animal consumption.

I therefore urge the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry to embrace the concept of Desert Agriculture and use desalinated water to convert our desert into large-scale green schemes for crop production or animal husbandry.

Moreover, a solar based Desalination Plant like the one I am launching today can be used to desalinate borehole water for crop irrigation or animal consumption in rural communities as there are many isolated rural communities in Namibia who have boreholes that only produce saline or brackish water.

At this juncture, allow me to congratulate the Vice Chancellor of the University of Namibia, Prof Kenneth Matengu and his team for setting a good example for the rest of Namibia to imitate as far as water supply and water security are concerned. In this regard, I wish to appeal to the government of the Republic of Namibia to increase its financial support for research and development.

In conclusion, I would like to kindly request the Government of the Republic of Namibia to adopt Seawater Desalination using Renewable Energy as the principal source of bulk water supply in Namibia in the medium to long term time frames.

Finally, it is my hope that the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry and Namibia Water Corporation will study the pre-feasibility report and come up with a plan of action for government's approval.

With these few remarks, I hereby declare the Seawater Desalination Pilot Plant of the University of Namibia officially launched.

I thank you.