



Ministry of Environment and Tourism
Republic of Namibia

Welcoming Remarks

Hon. Pohamba Shifeta

Minister of Environment and Tourism, MP, Namibia

At the occasion of the

High Level Briefing Session on Biodiversity Finance

18.00, Monday 6th August 2018

Avani Hotel, Windhoek

**Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Dr.
Cristiana Pasca Palmer**
Members of the Sustainable Development Advisory Council
Permanent Secretaries and Senior Government Officials present
Development Partners present
Representatives from Civil Society Organizations
Representatives from the Private Sector
Members of the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome you all this evening to this high level briefing session on biodiversity finance. I would like to extend a particularly warm welcome to the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Dr. Cristiana Pasca Palmer.

The 2008 Resource Mobilization Strategy of the Convention on Biological Diversity and Aichi Target 20 both call for the increased mobilization of financial resources for the effective implementation of this important Convention. We have also incorporated this call in our own Second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and I am pleased that we have been able to conduct considerable work to identify our funding needs, gaps and priorities in the area of biodiversity management.

The three presentations you will hear here tonight will provide a summary of the ongoing work the Ministry is busy with as part of this process. The presentations will focus on:

(i) Demonstrating the value of nature – knowing the true value of nature is essential to help us understand the dependence of economic

development on natural resources and the need for us to invest in nature and environmental protection.

(ii) Showing the baseline expenditure on biodiversity in Namibia and future needs – of course a baseline is essential to know where we are starting from. If we are to increase our spending on biodiversity, we first need to get an accurate picture of what we are currently spending and the trends in this expenditure.

(iii) Potential biodiversity financing solutions – across the world, Governments are reigning in overall expenditure while Namibia is also experiencing declining investment from many donors partners given its classification as an upper middle income country. What can we do in this context to generate alternative and innovative sources of finance to stimulate investment into the protection of the environment and nature?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This evening's event is important to inform the broader debate taking place around the costs and benefits of nature conservation and environmental protection in Namibia. Just as a private sector investor will not invest in something without knowing its likely returns, the Government must also know the value of nature, who is benefiting from it as well as the type of returns it is generating. This is vital to inform our planning and budgeting processes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Without giving away too much regarding the results of the studies we have undertaken, allow me to summarize a few key take home messages that we would like you to keep hold of after this evening's event:

- The value of ecosystem services in Namibia exceeds N\$13 billion per year;

- Total biodiversity expenditure from all sources is slightly more than N\$1 billion per year in Namibia;
- To fully achieve the targets of our Second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, it is estimated that we need to double the level of investment in biodiversity.

These are significant findings and important pieces of research to guide our decision making on matters such as upgrading our infrastructure in protected areas, deciding on whether we increase park entrance fees, how we can best re-invest environmental levies into environmental protection, how we upgrade our waste management infrastructure and how we ensure the financial sustainability of our community-based natural resource management programme.

Doubling the level of investment in biodiversity will be no easy task given the current economic climate but I am sure that we will be able to come up with innovative solutions to make this a reality. I look forward to hearing your ideas and discussions on this important subject here this evening.

Once again, please be welcomed to this event and let us all feel at home and free to give our contributions.

I thank you for your kind attention.