



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**REMARKS BY NEVILLE GERTZE, AMBASSADOR AND
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF
NAMIBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**SEMINAR ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE
OCEANS**

25 AUGUST 2019, OSLO, NORWAY

Jens Frølich Holte, Deputy Foreign Minister of Norway

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives

Distinguished delegates from the member countries of the High-Level panel on Building a Sustainable Oceans Economy;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I wish to express my appreciation to the hosts for outstanding hospitality and incredible opportunity to see and learn first-hand the remarkable work Norway is doing on this important global issue.

Namibia is proud to serve as member of the Prime Minister's Ocean Economy Panel and we look forward to continue supporting and advocating for more international commitment and action oriented support to the important focus on the Blue Ocean economy.

At the heart of it all lies the inescapable reality that our planet is in trouble. And we as Member States at the United Nations and the international community as a whole must act to avoid further escalation of what is already a choke-hold on the health of our planet and the preservation of it for our children's children and generations to come in the future.

Climate Change is real, not only because all the scientists tell us so, but because we see it, feel it, live with it and suffer from it ,increasingly so, at a pace that is frightening, not anymore from century to century, but now even from year to year, if not even quicker.

We see calamities, disasters like frequent droughts, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, you name them, more frequently in our modern day times than our forefathers and mothers could ever have imagined.

Namibia is currently into its 4th consecutive year of the worst drought it has ever experienced. And it is affecting both human, animal and wildlife in the most serious way imaginable.

Yesterday, we were reminded of the inextricable link between the green and blue economies. How what we do agriculturally, may affect

our soil and freshwater systems, and eventually through acidification impact on the Ocean globally. It is against this reality that at independence, now close to 30 years ago, our Founding Fathers and Mother's decided in a unanimous way to insert Article 95 in the Namibia Constitution.

Thus, Namibia became amongst the first countries in the world to include sustainable utilization of natural resources and environmental protection in the Constitution in 1990.

Today, we have absolutely no doubt in our minds, whatsoever, that for us to save ourselves from self-destruction, we need to safeguard our planet. For if we want to prevent conflicts, wars, maintain peace and deliver prosperity to the citizens of the global village, we will need to remove the sources of these conflicts.

That is why we have adopted Agenda2030; and that is why if we do not improve in the delivery of each of the development goals, in particular the first 5 dealing with poverty, hunger, education, health and gender amongst all the others, for us in the Global South - conflict prevention and maintenance of peace and security will become close to impossible to achieve.

We have all heard the sayinga hungry man/ woman is an angry man/woman. Without food security, without economic security, without sustainable utilization of our food resources, peace and security will allude usand about that, I have no doubt about in my mind.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 20th of June 2019 marked an important day for us in Namibia - the day when we commenced public consultations on the development of Namibia's Sustainable Blue Economy Policy. Blue economy is a concept that seeks to ensure sustainable, and integrated development of our ocean economy. Even though blue economy is principally about the ocean, it also includes inland waters such as lakes and rivers, because all water on earth is ecologically interconnected and related, with the ocean as the main driver of this water ecosystem. The principles of ocean ecosystem are therefore directly applicable to smaller water bodies such as rivers and lakes.

In Namibia, blue economy includes fisheries, marine-mining, marine and coastal tourism, maritime transport and coastal infrastructure such as ports, towns and coastal industries. Blue economy differs from ocean economy in that it must include the three pillars of blue economy in order to be considered blue which includes: environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and social inclusion. A marine business therefore cannot be considered supportive of the blue economy if it does not minimise its negative impacts on the environment, does not have an inclusive ownership structure, and does not maximise creation of jobs.

The blue economy is, however, increasingly impacted by the ocean stressors like pollution, overfishing, Illegal Unreported and Unrecorded (IUU) fishing, development, acidification and climate change. These ocean stressors are leading to deoxygenation, rising water temperature, rising sea levels, loss and reduction of marine species, as well as threaten physical, economic and food security of local communities. In many countries, the impacts of these factors are already observable. There is therefore a need for the world to urgently work together to address them if the oceans are to continue sustaining life on earth.

These are some of the challenges which, among others, influenced Namibia to host the South Atlantic Fisheries Organization (SEAFO), which brings together Angola, the European Union, Iceland, Namibia, Norway, Republic of Korea, South Africa, United Kingdom (on behalf of St. Helena) and United States of America. Namibia also hosts the Benguela Current Commission (BCC), which brings together Angola, Namibia and South Africa to sustainably co-manage the Benguela Large Marine Ecosystem.

Namibia's economy both now and in future, and its endeavours to fulfil the SDGs is highly dependent on the ocean economy. I suppose that this is also true for many, if not all the countries represented in this Seminar. Let us therefore work together to deal with climate change effects to ensure the sustainability of oceans and the resources therein.

I thank You.