



**SPEECH**

**BY**

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**ON**

**THE OCCASION OF THE RENEWABLE ENERGY  
AWARENESS MATERIAL DONATION FROM THE  
EMBASSY OF FINLAND**

**THURSDAY, 04 NOVEMBER 2010**

**WINDHOEK**

Director of Ceremonies  
Charge d' Affairs of the Finnish Embassy, Mr. Asko Luukkainen  
Distinguished invited guests  
Ladies and gentlemen  
Media Practitioners

In order to appreciate the importance of renewable energy in Namibia, there is a need to sketch a bit of a background to the energy sector in Namibia. Namibia has seen a steady increase in power consumption over the last ten years. Currently our electricity supply is based on 240MW from hydro, 120MW from coal and 24MW from diesel power and this must be understood against our electricity demand which is roughly 500MW. Given the vastness of the country and low population density, it is extremely difficult and costly to extend the grid to un-electrified areas, hence the need to strongly consider renewable sources energy.

Today we are signing a contract for the donation of about N\$700 000 by the Finnish Embassy to the Polytechnic of Namibia. The objective of this project is to develop renewable energy and energy efficiency sample awareness materials including display boards for thirteen (13) energy shops in all the thirteen (13) Political Regions of Namibia and, at the same time, to provide training and awareness. The worthy donation from the Embassy of Finland, does not only demonstrate this strong friendship between the Polytechnic of Namibia and the entire community of Finland, but will definitely go a long way in supporting the Government of Namibia's efforts to promote sustainable development to Namibia's rural communities.

The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Institute (REEI), which is the main direct beneficiary of this donation, was launched in October 2006 and since then has become Namibia's first information dissemination platform in its field and now plays a leadership role in the transition of knowledge from traditional energy sources and usage to a more sustainable energy economy. REEEI embodies the Polytechnic of Namibia's commitment to serve as a national information resource base for renewable energy and sustainable energy use and management.

In 2009, the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Institute was appointed by the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) to coordinate the

implementation of the Off-grid Energisation Master (OGEMP) of 2007. This appointment therefore gives REEEI the mandate to promote the wide use of sustainable energy resources in Namibia.

Within the framework of this mandate, REEEI has undertaken a number of projects with different partners. Some of these projects are as follows:

1. REEEI is hosting a 3 year regional training programme on Wind Power Development and Use being run by LIFE Academy of Sweden and funded by SIDA;
2. The Southern African Solar Thermal Training and Demonstration Initiative (SOLTRAIN) which is funded by the Austrian Development Agency to the value of **100 000 Euro**. This is a 3 year regional training programme which was launched in July 2009;
3. REEEI is the Secretariat to the National Technical Committee on Renewable Energy Technologies (NTCRE) which is one of the five technical committees under the Namibian Standards Institute;
4. REEEI administers and sends to subscribers an electronic newsletter covering sustainable energy issues on behalf of Administration of Sustainable Energy Namibia (SENSE);
5. A **N\$1.6 million** National Wind Resource Assessment project which is partially supported by NamPower and the Danish Government;
6. Development of Renewable Energy Procurement Mechanisms with the Electricity Control Board – **100 000 Euro** Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP) funded project;
7. Namibia Energy Efficiency Programme (focusing on the built environment) – a **USD 859 000** Global Environment Facility (GEF)/UNDP funded programme; and
8. Piloting of Concentrating Solar Power Technology Transfer for Electricity Generation in Namibia (NAM CSP TT) – a **USD 1.8 million** GEF/UNDP funded project.

Ladies and gentlemen,

OGEMP recommends the establishment of at least one (1) energy shop in each of the thirteen (13) Political Regions of the country to help break the barrier of accessibility of renewable energy technologies in remote areas. In total, 180 energy shops will be established in 20 years.

An energy shop will stock and sell appropriate, approved energy products and compatible appliances modelled as energy baskets. The shop will also act as an information hub for communities, energy end-users and other stakeholders. It will also play a supportive role in the implementation of MME's Solar Revolving Fund (SRF). The SRF is a solar credit scheme which has been running since 1996 to help finance renewable energy technologies such as solar home systems, solar water pumps and solar water heaters.

As the coordinating agency for OGEMP, REEEI will assess well-managed and existing business entities recommended by the Regional Councils and recruit them to become energy shops. The potential energy shops are not necessarily into the energy business and specifically renewable energy businesses, hence the need for training and awareness campaign targeted at these businesses.

REEEI will develop awareness material which will be used to provide the right training and information to the energy shops and communities in understanding the components and working principles of renewable energy systems. The material will be in the form of posters, catalogues, as well display boards with physical components and samples of each product to be sold. The material developed will remain the property of the project to be used for awareness in the new shops to be established during the 20 year period.

The renewable energy awareness campaign through the energy shops has received wide support from the Renewable Energy Industry Association of Namibia as witnessed by their donation of some useful components such as inverters, charge controllers and batteries. The sourced and donated components will be assembled and tested for functionality by the Polytechnic's engineering students as part of their practical training.

REEEI will also work with the Polytechnic's Centre for Entrepreneurial Development to provide training to the energy shop owners and workers.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The cooperation between Finland and Namibia has come a long way starting with the involvement of Finnish missionaries in Namibia more than 100 years ago. The involvement of Dr. Martti Ahtisaari, former UN Special Representative for Namibia, in the decolonisation process of Namibia also served to cement this special relationship further. In the case of the Polytechnic of Namibia, we have benefitted from Finnish development assistance in different ways e.g. through exchange programmes with partner universities in Finland, the development of the Business Plan for the Namibia Business Innovation Centre (NBIC) and the development of the four-year Southern Africa Innovation Support Programme (SAIS), which will be housed at the Polytechnic from 2011.

Thus finally, let me thank the Government of Finland for always paying attention to, and investing their resources in, critical areas for Namibia's innovation and development.

I thank you for your kind attention.