



**REMARKS BY HONOURABLE JOHN MUTORWA,
MINISTER OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT AT THE
STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ON VEHICLE LOADS AND
ROAD SAFETY ON 25 MARCH 2019 AT 10H00 AT RUNDU,
KAVANGO EAST REGION**

- Director of Ceremonies;
- Honourable Samuel Mbambo, Governor of Kavango East Region
- Honorable Sirkka Hausiku, Governor of Kavango West Region.
- Honorable Regional and Local Authority Councilors from the Kavango East and Kavango West Regions respectively;
- Mr Conrad Lutombi, Chief Executive Officer of Roads Authority;
- All the Traditional and Community Leaders present;
- Officials of the Roads Authority and the Ministry of Works and Transport;
- Business and Transporters Representatives;
- Members of the Media;
- Distinguished invited guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning, and welcome to this stakeholder engagement session. It is my pleasure to deliver remarks at this very important gathering.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia believes that for any rural area to develop, roads should be constructed first, which will later stimulate other sectors to advance in a systematic manner. It is a known fact that roads are an integral part of the transport system. A country's road network should be efficient in order to maximize economic and social benefits.

Thus, I am proud to share with you that our Government, at present, has a total road network of 48,899.89 kilometers of which 8,400 kilometers are

bitumen road (tarred roads) and 25,889.31 kilometres are gravel roads. The existing bitumen road network indicates a replacement value of N\$111 billion. The Roads Authority was assigned with the responsibility of managing our national road network. Its mandate is to manage Namibia's national road network with a view to achieve a safe and efficient road sector. The management of the proclaimed road network includes planning, designing, construction and maintenance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is against this background that I stand here before you to talk about the damages caused by overloaded heavy vehicles on our national road network and how it is affecting the national budgets through road maintenance programmes.

The roads are designed to have a lifespan period of 20 years depending on the effective maintenance programmes carried out either through periodic or routine maintenance programmes. Currently, our Government through the Roads Authority is spending N\$316 million annually on maintenance due to the damage caused by heavy vehicles. N\$20 million of this amount is attributed to overloaded vehicles.

We have observed that the most affected route with regards to overloading is the Trans-Zambezi Highway (from Zambia - Wenela Border via Katima Mulilo, Kongola, Rundu, Grootfontein, Otavi, Otjiwarongo, Kalkfeld,

Omaruru, Karibib and Swakopmund-to-the Port of Walvis Bay (including its sub-link roads). The weighing of overloaded vehicles for January 2019 at Katima Mulilo Weighbridge found a truck overloaded by 98,940kg or 98.94 Tonnes, whereas the Gross Combination Mass (GCM), allowable load should be 56,000kg or 56 Tonnes. This is a very concerning and serious matter. Therefore, I wish to appeal to all transporters to ensure that they keep their loads within the permissible load limits to preserve our road network.

As part from the road preservation strategy, the Government has approved the construction of 12 weighbridges along the corridor routes country wide. Thus far we have constructed 10 weighbridges at Onhuno, Walvis Bay, Brakwater, Aris, Katima Mulilo, Oshivelo, Rosh Pinah, Ariamsvlei, Noordoewer and Gobabis. I am pleased to inform you that the next weighbridge to be constructed will be at Rundu to cater for the Trans Zambezi Highway. The construction of this weigh bridge is in the Roads Authority's five-year strategic plan. It is very important to stress here that weigh bridge facilities play a very important role in the preservation of our road infrastructure and in the enhancement of road safety.

I would like to use this platform to inform you here today that as from the 1st of April 2019, the Roads Authority will commence with prosecution of the overloaded vehicles on our national road network. We are also in the process of introducing a law to decriminalize overloading offences to ensure that over loaders pay fees commensurate to the damage caused on the road based on the distance travelled.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have noted, with concern, that there has been an increase in heavy vehicles carrying mining extracts and timber on rural and national roads. I, therefore, wish to appeal and encourage these transporters to ensure that their loads are within the permissible load limits. In addition, we have also observed that there are unscrupulous transporters who do not have permits to transport timber and have resorted to using rural roads. This is a punishable offence and I would like to issue a stern warning to those transporters to refrain from these illegal activities.

Furthermore, all transporters and permit holders are required to arrange with the Roads Authority to contribute to the maintenance of the roads on "a damager pays principle". Arrangements must also be done with the Roads Authority so that the timber industry can be advised on road safety management during timber piling and loading operations. Currently the timber and mining industries are over using the roads with very heavy loads and passing the over-usage liability to the general public road users. This situation cannot be allowed to continue.

Director of Ceremonies,

As the Minister responsible for transport, I am deeply saddened by the increase in motor vehicle accidents on our national roads. We are losing

many lives in these road carnages mainly due to drivers who are not obeying traffic rules and refuse to change their attitudes. This evil has to stop and it starts with you. It is not the vehicles that are killing people but the drivers of these vehicles. In the same breath, I also call upon passenger transporters to refrain from overloading and operating un-roadworthy vehicles.

With those few words, I wish to conclude by thanking you for your presence here at this important session.

I thank you!

NOTES FOR STAKEHOLDER SESSION WITH TRANSPORTERS ON 25 MARCH 2019 AT RUNDU, KAVANGO EAST REGION

On a regional level, the roads mostly affected are; DR3400: from Ndonga Linena, Koro, Ngcogco, Ncavazi and beyond in the inlands; DR 3447 from Ngcogco, Vikota, Baramasoni, Shakambyu, MutweWombahe, Kawe, Makandina-Ncaute. DR 3401: from Ncumushi-Mbambi-Cuma-Ncuncuni; DR 3468: from Shakambyu-Mbambi and DR 3448: from Mbambi-Kaparara-Likwaterera-Shimpanda-Rundu linking on Trans Caprivi Highway.

These gravel roads have disintegrated to a level where additional gravelling is urgently required. The sand sections are deep such that a normal 4x4 vehicle maneuvers quite difficult to come out to the developed gravel portions.



