

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA, PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA ON THE
OCCASION OF LAUNCHING THE NAMIBIAN
CHAPTER OF THE DECADE OF ACTION FOR
ROAD SAFETY 2011-2020**

11 MAY 2011

WINDHOEK

**Check Against Delivery*

**Director of Ceremonies,
Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Esteemed Country Representative of the World
Health Organisation, Dr Magda Robalo,
Esteemed Board Members of the National Road
Safety Council,
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic
Corps,
Senior Government Officials,
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**I am pleased to be here today to officially launch the
Namibian Chapter of the Decade of Action for Road
Safety. According to statistics, more than a million
people die in road-related accidents around the
globe each year. An additional 20 to 50 million
sustain non-fatal traffic-related injuries. Many are
also left with life-long disabilities.**

**Here in Namibia, newspapers report with frequent
regularity about the fatal road accidents that occur
almost on a daily basis. These accidents cause
personal pain, emotional and physical injury to
many people. Moreover, they pose a major public
health problem.**

The idea of dedicating a decade to the promotion of road safety originated from a *Commission for Global Road Safety* that was created by the *Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile* to investigate the framework for and the level of international co-operation on global road safety, with the view to make appropriate policy recommendations.

The Commission recommended, among other things, that a Conference of Ministers responsible for Transport and Health be held under the auspices of the UN. The Conference took place in November 2009 in Moscow and issued the *Moscow Declaration on Road Safety*, which called upon the UN General Assembly to declare 2011 to 2020 as a Decade for Road Safety globally.

In March 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted the Moscow Declaration and under Resolution 64/255 declared 2011 to 2020 as a *Decade of Action for Road Safety*. The aim is to promote road safety around the world. Towards this end, the UN Secretary General has called upon all member states of the UN to develop and implement strategies aimed at stabilising and eventually reduce the number of road accidents, deaths and injuries that continue to claim many lives across the globe.

Director of Ceremonies,

The activities to be carried out as part of the Decade of Action are based on five pillars, namely:

- **Creation of adequate Road safety management capacity,**
- **Safer road infrastructure and mobility,**
- **Safer vehicles,**
- **Improved Road user behaviour and**
- **Effective Post-crash care.**

The objectives that will be met through these actions are:

- **To develop and implement sustainable road safety strategies and programmes**
- **To strengthen management capacities and structures,**
- **To improve Road safety data quality at national, regional and international level.**
- **To monitor the performance and progress at national, regional and international levels.**
- **To improve road safety funding, including provision of road safety component within road infrastructure projects.**

Today, we are launching Namibia's response to the call of the UN Secretary General.

In March 2010, the Namibian Cabinet endorsed the Moscow Declaration and authorised the Ministry of Works and Transport to work out modalities of implementation, hence our presence here today.

Since Road safety is multi-disciplinary in nature, Government has decided to involve as many stakeholders as possible, both from the private sector, public institutions and NGOs. We believe that this will ensure a focused approach and efficient utilisation of the available resources. I am pleased that several role players have already joined this effort and many are represented here this morning.

As an illustration, I wish to point out the partnership between the National Road Safety Council and NAMPOST, which resulted in the creation of a commemorative postage stamp for the Decade of Action. With the stamp we are informing the world that Namibia is committed to do her part in promoting road safety.

While it is our obligation to participate in the Decade of Action as a member state of the UN, we also view the Decade of Action as an opportunity to consolidate road safety initiatives in Namibia, which are currently fragmented.

Thus, I urge the Ministers of Works and Transport; Safety and Security; Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development; Education; Health and Social Services, as well as the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology to do all that is needed to consolidate Namibia's road safety promotional efforts under one umbrella. This is needed to ensure that road safety initiatives that are being carried out by different institutions complement each other.

In this regard, education campaigns on road safety would not be effective if they are not in tune with the law enforcement aspects of road safety. Similarly, there should be proper co-ordination between public and private health care service providers. It is with this understanding that we need to unify and integrate road safety initiatives under the banner of the Decade of Action.

We must work together to ensure that public and private sector institutions send appropriate and effective messages on road safety to the public through the National Road Safety Council. Our Government is committed to the *Decade of Action* and we will work hard to ensure that our programmes succeed. In order to ensure that we remain on course, a mid-term review of the implementation of the activities will be carried out in 2015. An end-of-term review will also be carried out towards the end of the year 2020.

Director of Ceremonies,

As part of Namibia's response to the Decade of Action, the National Road Safety Council has developed an Action Plan, in collaboration with all principal stakeholders. The Plan involves local authorities, the Namibian Police, the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, the Roads Authority, and the Road Fund Administration.

The Action Plan is based on six strategic themes, which have been identified as Road Safety Management; Education; Law Enforcement; Vehicle Engineering; Road Engineering, and Emergency Response.

The first five themes are specifically aimed at preventing road accidents, while the last theme deals with the post-accident situations. It covers issues such as early notification of accidents; early treatment at accident scenes; hospital treatment and the rehabilitation of accident victims. The purpose is to save lives and to assist the injured to resume and rebuild their lives.

I would like to emphasise that road safety is a complex issue that requires the involvement of all stakeholders. As such, we should all join hands in order to tackle this national challenge effectively.

The launching of the commemorative postage stamp drives home the message that the Namibian approach to the Decade for Road Safety is underpinned by a very appropriate symbol that encourages our road users to always keep their eyes on the road. I urge all Namibians to take this positive message to heart and to do all that we can to reduce the number of road accidents in our country.

Yes, there is a challenging task at hand. However, by keeping our “eyes on the road”, we can achieve the noble goals contained in the Moscow Declaration and in Resolution 64/255 of the UN General Assembly. By keeping our eyes on the road, literally and figuratively, we are not only taking care of ourselves as individuals, but taking care of other road users. This is an obligation for all travellers on our roads in all parts of the country.

My message to all road users in Namibia today is this: the carnage and loss of lives on our roads must be stamped out. Namibia should take the lead and serve as an example for other nations in the implementation of the *Decade of Action for Road Safety*.

I now have the pleasure to unveil the Namibian Chapter and declare the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020 in Namibia officially launched.

I thank you.