



**STATEMENT BY H.W. THE DEPUTY MAYOR,
CLLR PENELOPE MARTIN-LOUW
AT THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD
ON 30 JULY 2019
KUISEBMOND COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALVIS BAY**

Fellow Councillors

Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Frans Gonteb

Members of Executive Management and Staff of the Municipality of
Walvis Bay

Members of the Community

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is once again an absolute honour and privilege to be welcoming you all to the Kuisebmond Council Chamber this evening, especially after a couple of months since we last met here. I trust that we will have fruitful deliberations and cooperation as usual. I am standing in for His Worship the Mayor, Alderman Immanuel Wilfried, who will be attending the economic summit in Windhoek tomorrow and Wednesday.

The summit will be a link-up between potential investors for specific bankable projects which will be presented, according to Mr. Johannes !Gawaxab, the chairman of the high-level panel on the Namibian economy. Specific projects in housing, water, energy and agriculture will be showcased, which will allow investors to get a grasp on viable projects in Namibia. The summit is mounted on a lot of optimism, with the private sector playing a pivotal role in bringing in investors. We look forward to the successful implementation of all those projects for the benefit of our country.

Erongo Region had the honour recently of receiving His Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob and members of the Cabinet during the ongoing series of town hall meetings. Although the meeting in Swakopmund, as elsewhere, was dominated by discussions on the drought, it also gave citizens the opportunity to air their concerns and to offer possible solutions to the problems they face. The issue of housing and availability of affordable land was a particular concern raised by coastal residents. On that front, we will in due course make some fresh announcements regarding our efforts to help alleviate the poor living conditions of many residents. We do not claim to have the perfect solutions to all our problems, but with the help of others we will be able to contribute to some positive change. We do not take people's suffering lightly, but we also cannot afford to lose hope and inspiration.

Another major event that highlighted the importance of Walvis Bay as the country's premier driver of growth was the visit by His Excellency, President Emmerson Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe, who came to officiate at the opening of his country's dry port facilities. Zimbabwe predominantly uses the ports of Durban and Beira for bulk goods destined for the Zimbabwean market. With the realisation of Zimbabwe's dry port in Namibia, the Port of Walvis Bay has become an efficient and reliable alternative, particularly for goods coming from, or which are destined for the Americas and European markets. According to Namport the inauguration was a positive step in cementing the relationship between the two countries, who already have a rich history of working together on several fronts.

President Mnangagwa also motivated for the development of a railway link in order to further reap the benefits of the dry port thoroughly. He said other countries such as Botswana, Malawi and the DRC will no doubt also experience the benefits of the dry port, which will go a long way in realising the economic development for Zimbabwe and its neighbours and promote the integration of SADC countries.

The president also mentioned that he had witnessed the reintegration of Walvis Bay and that it was exciting for him to inaugurate the dry port 25 years later. The dry port is 18,332 square metres in size.

At the beginning of the month I had the chance of meeting and accompanying Ellen Pakkies during the Walvis Bay leg of her Namibian tour. By now most of us are familiar with the heart-breaking story of this lady from Cape Town, who has committed her life to inspiring people to lead a clean, drug-free life. At the one event I referred to the fact that about a decade ago we had observed a flickering of hope when the overall crime rate in Walvis Bay was said to have decreased by almost 30% over a few short years. There was a concerted effort at the time as various authorities pooled together their resources and drove a successful anti-crime campaign.

However, even during the late 2000's and early teens a disturbing trend was developing and threatening to ruin all the good work. Drug abuse and drug related crimes were actually on the increase. Children as young as 12 were found in possession of hard drugs such as crack cocaine. Half of all those arrested were below the age of 20.

We were warning then that if the situation was allowed to continue, Walvis Bay might as well surrender to the drug lords. Thankfully, they haven't taken over yet thanks to the wary efforts of our police and their partners such as neighbourhood watch groups. We are grateful for the efforts of the organisation CODAC and the activists they employ to spread the anti-drug message. They definitely deserve our support.

We are half way through the year and half way through the winter season. As we are still experiencing some very cold nights, it would serve as a good reminder for us not to forget about the less fortunate who have to endure very unpleasant conditions at times. I'm thinking of those in need of a meal and something to protect them against the elements. Many school-going children may also be in need of shoes or jerseys. While there may be quite a few organisations and individuals who work around the clock to support the vulnerable in society, they do so with very limited financial means. Those who would like to offer some assistance are always welcome to approach the Office of the Mayor, or the Junior Council, and they will be pointed in the right direction.

On that note, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.