



**OPENING REMARKS BY HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR, ALDERMAN IMMANUEL WILFRIED,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE RE-TABLING OF THE 2020-2021 OPERATING BUDGET & TARIFFS**

Friday, 19th June 2020, @ 18:00

Council Chambers, Civic Centre

Honourable Knowledge Ipinge, Walvis Bay Urban Constituency Councillor;
Fellow Councillors;
The Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Muronga Haingura;
Management and all staff members present;
Distinguished invited guests;
Members of the Media.

We find ourselves navigating the toughest period in living memory, all due to the devastation caused by COVID-19. Walvis Bay has been the worst affected area in the whole of Namibia. Apart from experiencing a 3-week respite in the form of Stage 2 of the lockdown in May, we have effectively been in the clutches of Stage 1 since 28 March this year.

The short-term effects of the lockdown have not been pleasant to observe – such as salary cuts and job losses which will inevitably result in the growth of hunger, poverty and homelessness. The medium to long term effects are pure speculation at this stage as the bodies of expertise across the health and socio-economic spectrum are predicting all kinds of scenarios.

Meanwhile, the cries of desperation by people are growing louder by the day as they find it more and more difficult to cope with the effects of the lockdown financially, physically and mentally. For the proud people of Walvis Bay who have always made a substantial contribution to our nation's economy, this is even more difficult to accept.

On the other hand, our country's leadership has the most unpleasant task of determining the way forward as lives are at stake. We must admit that many of our residents have not been model citizens when it comes to adhering to the lockdown regulations. It has been disappointing to say the least. We must therefore work much harder in this respect.

Despite all the challenges though, we are fully confident that the team advising Cabinet on the way forward will take all factors into consideration, including the compounding effects of a possible extension of a stage one lockdown, when making the next crucial call. On behalf of Walvis Bay, I would like to reassure the authorities that we will pull out all stops to cooperate as far as possible.

I therefore appeal to all members of the public to do their best to stay informed of the Covid-19 issues, remain calm, and follow the preventative measures such as social distancing, and regular hand-washing and sanitizing, to avoid the spreading or contracting of Covid-19. Everyone should avoid leaving the safety of their home, and particularly avoid overcrowded places which increase the risk of being exposed to infection measures. Where the authorized officials give legitimate instructions in line with the published regulations and guidelines, it is the responsibility of every person to obey. A violation of the emergency regulations can be punished by a fine or imprisonment, or both.

Ladies and Gentlemen, at the Extra-ordinary Council Meeting held on 28 May 2020, we announced some tariff adjustments in anticipation of expected increases by our bulk suppliers. We have since taken note that no such increases will be effected by the bulk suppliers, which has prompted us to revise the 2020-2021 Operating Budget and Tariffs. We have also taken into consideration the plight of our residents as I have alluded to earlier and we are pleased to announce that there will be no adverse effect on the pockets of our ratepayers during the new financial year. Not only that, we will also introduce some new and welcoming relief measures in some instances. We have always been a caring local authority and will certainly go the extra mile to make life easier for our residents.

It is now my singular pleasure to invite the Chairperson of the Management Committee to enlighten you on the new measures to be adopted by this August House this evening. I would like to thank Councillor Lilo Niilenge and the team for their hard work behind the scenes to make the numbers work for all of us.

Thank you.