



**STATEMENT BY HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR,
ALDERMAN IMMANUEL WILFRIED, AT THE LAST
ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING FOR 2020,
17 NOVEMBER 2020, 18:00
KUISEBMOND COUNCIL CHAMBERS
WALVIS BAY**

Councillor Penelope Martin-Louw, Deputy Mayor of
Walvis Bay,

Honorable Regional Councillors

Fellow Honorable Councillors

Mr. Muronga Haingura, Chief Executive Officer of the
Municipality of Walvis Bay

Members of Management and Staff of the Municipality
of Walvis Bay

Distinguished Invited Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with mixed feelings that I rise and address you all this evening in my capacity as the Mayor of this prosperous town of Walvis Bay at the last Ordinary Council meeting for 2020.

I served as a Councillor on the Walvis Bay Town Council for more than two decades while 5 years, I served as Mayor, a position I was entrusted with by my fellow Councillors and the SWAPO Party, who had faith in me to preside over this town, her affairs and her residents. My hope is that I have carried out my duties and tasks flowing from this noble and privileged position to your satisfaction.

I am deeply indebted to all of you as my colleagues, the administration and staff of the Municipality of Walvis Bay and the regional leadership for the active support, encouragement, and shared vision for our town.

Being Mayor of this beautiful town is a memory that I will infinitely cherish with the hope that those who will come after our tenure will have the same love if not more to seeing our residents live in a safe and happy environment where human dignity and pursuit of happiness will take center stage.

Fellow Councillors, ladies and gentlemen

The global onset of Covid-19 has exposed many fault lines in what we may have believed are robust systems offering protection to the most vulnerable members of our communities. The homeless, the children, the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions seem to have become easy prey, often without specific protection being offered to them.

We have seen how the elderly in many European countries and on our own continent of Africa have been hit the hardest by the pandemic.

That is partially the reasons why senior citizens occupy a special place in my heart and I strived to helping them every opportunity I got. Most importantly, my love for the elderly is in great appreciation for the solid foundation they laid and for them having paid a cost so dear for our freedom. As such, we owe them our lives and we can merely attempt servicing the debt by being caring towards them at all times

Fellow Councillors, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

In my inaugural speech in December of 2015, I promised to continue serving the entire community of Walvis Bay in the same way as my predecessor and undertook to improve on their success.

During my tenure of office, I have been part of many developmental projects that saw Walvis Bay position itself as a true industrial town that was and is able to

attract major investors. During the past 5 years, I was able to see the realization of many ambitious and projects with a great impact to our city, such as the port expansion, the development of Farm 37, the implementation of many projects that are aided by the 5% of our budget that the Walvis Bay Council contributes to regional development projects just to mention a few. In fact, I have just returned this weekend from a trip that saw us handing over several projects in Okombahe, Otjimbingwe and Uis. Erongo region is growing and Walvis Bay is on the frontline. As in my speech at the previous Council meeting, it would be offending to down-play the kind of development Walvis Bay has undergone since its integration.

Fellow Councillors, ladies and gentlemen

The effects of COVID-19 on our town's and country's economy will be felt for years to come. Before I continue, I would like to ask everyone to stand up so

we can observe a moment of silence for all those who have perished due to COVID-19.

I would like to recognize Mr. Chandler Plato and Mr. Quezzi Gariseb's contribution during this time. They paid the ultimate sacrifice with their lives for their unwavering dedication, compassion, and willingness to assist the health professions and the community at large during the pandemic. May their souls continue to rest in peace, and may their families find comfort in the legacy they left behind.

For the past 6 months since the pandemic hit our shores, Walvis Bay has seen many businesses close that may not open again. Our town was the epicenter for the COVID-19 pandemic in Namibia which resulted in the town being isolated from the rest of the country for months due to lockdown regulations brought on by the State of Emergency announced by His Excellency, Dr Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia in March 2020. I am proud to say

that our health professionals went over and above the call of duty to keep the fatality rate low. Their dedication saw a decline in the infection rate in the town. I want to warn the citizen that although the lockdown has been lifted and the regulations have been relaxed, we must still adhere to social distancing as much as possible and continue to practice basic hygiene practices such as wearing masks, regularly washing our hands with soap and sanitizing often.

In the middle of a pandemic, a horrific fire ravaged through the informal settlement of Otweya (formally known as Twaloloka). It saw more than 80% of all shacks destroyed by the fire and the tragic loss of a toddler's life. This tragic event saw Namibians come together as one. It was during this time I was reminded why I am so proud to be called a Namibian. The compassion that Namibians have towards each other is something to be proud of and to be emulated. As a town, feeling isolated due to the lockdown regulation, we were reminded that although we are in

isolation, we are not alone nor forgotten. We would rise again like a phoenix from the ashes.

Fellow Councillors, ladies and gentlemen

One of the biggest steps the town has undertaken was to fight the housing problem being experience all over the country. With the assistance and involvement of the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, the Governor of the Erongo Region, Shack Dwellers Federation and the business community such as Standard Bank, First National Bank and other financial institution, the city is slowly moving towards creating housing for all and eventually be able to be shack-free. Two weeks ago, Council handed over more than 200 land occupation certificates to members of our community to occupy land at Otweya and Farm 37. The first of many such certificates to be handed over as there are still 600 ervens to be handed over for low cost and ultra-low-cost housing. His Excellency, Dr Hage Geingob also handed over

19 houses, build under the Shack Dwellers Federation umbrella on 7 November 2020. These houses were built in 2 weeks, which just shows Council's commitment to providing affordable housing for all.

During my time as Mayor we have built new bridges of cooperation and partnerships and with my departure I trust that the new Mayor and Councilors will continue to maintain and build on them as well as open new opportunities for others in order to ensure employment creation, improved education and training.

At this juncture, I would like to extent my greatest gratitude toward Honourable Neville Andrè Itope, Governor of Erongo Region. The Governor has been in office hardly a year, yet the change is evident. He has been a true son of the soil. He is young, vibrant, full of energy, plans and ideas to make Erongo Region great. His office always goes over and above

the line of duty whenever we call on them for assistance.

I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors for their unwavering support during the past 5 years in office. My sincerest of thanks further goes to Mr. Muronga Haingura, CEO of the Municipality of Walvis Bay and the Executive Management of the Municipality of Walvis Bay for your ongoing support and hard work. Similarly, I wish to acknowledge the hands-on support of all our strategic partners such as captains of industries and commerce, our law enforcement agents, representatives of heads of missions in Namibia, faith-based organisations and other community groupings and the media for their involvement in the building of our Oasis of Opportunity.

To conclude, I want to urge all registered voters to turn up in great numbers in order for them to go and exercise one of the most salient processes of a

democratic state, the right to vote and elect your own political representatives vote on the 25th of November 2020 for the Regional Council and Local Authority Elections

I urge all residence to practice patriotism and afford each other the opportunity to vote for candidates who best represent their interests (without false promises), to respect our democracy, behave responsibly at all times, and not to insult others.

I thank you.