



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**STATEMENT BY**

**DR PEYA MUSHELENGA, MP**

**MINISTER OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**ON OCCASION OF THE HANDING OVER OF RAPID FIRE  
FIGHTING INTERVENTION VEHICLES**

**TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

**WINDHOEK**

**20 FEBRUARY 2020**

Director of Ceremonies

The Hon. Chairpersons of Bukalo, Divundu, Okongo and Tsandi Village Councils

Representatives of Performance Development Centre cc

Officials from the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development and the Village Councils

Distinguished Invited Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here to officiate at the handing over of the Rapid Intervention or firefighting Vehicles to the four (4) Local Authorities, namely Bukalo, Divundu, Okongo and Tsandi Village Councils.

In keeping with Article 95 of the Namibian Constitution, the State and Government at all levels, have a legal obligation to put in place policy, legislative and institutional frameworks and systems to promote and safeguard the welfare of the citizens. The responsibility of promoting the welfare of the citizens in the area of urban and rural development has been entrusted to the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development as well as Regional and Local Governments.

In terms of the Local Authorities Act, 1992 as amended and the Local Authorities Fire Brigade Services Act, 2006, Local Authorities, with oversight and financial support from the Central Government, have a legal duty to provide municipal services including fire brigade services to enhance and safeguard the welfare of residents and to protect or rescue lives and property of residents from fires of other emergencies.

Director of proceedings

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen

In terms of section 2(2) and (3) Local Authorities Fire Brigade Services Act, 2006, the Government through the Minister responsible for local government matters has a duty to provide subsidies to enable local authorities to establish and operate fire brigade services that have the technical and personnel capacity to effectively prevent and deal with emerging fire incidents and other emergencies. In keeping with this legal obligation, the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development has developed a Local Authorities Emergency Services Capacity Development Programme through which the Ministry provides various forms of support to local authorities in the area of fire and emergency response.

We are here this morning to bear witness yet to another tangible demonstration of the Government's commitment to its legal obligation of ensuring that local authorities have the necessary capacity to effectively perform their duties and responsibilities towards the citizens that reside in their localities when it comes to the prevention and fighting fires with the ultimate aim of protecting and rescuing lives and property from any such fires.

The specific assistance that is provided is in the form procurement of fire-fighting trucks and rapid intervention vehicles such as the four (4) whose handing over we will be witnessing here today, construction of fire stations, training of fire-fighting personnel and volunteers, provision of protective gears for fire-fighting personnel and volunteers and paying the salaries of fire-fighters especially at smaller local

authorities who are quite often in a financial position to finance the costs related to this service.

To date, a total of fifty six (56) Local Authorities have benefited from the Support and Capacity Development Programme, and the Government through the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development has spent about 250 million Namibian Dollar in this regard, a large part of which has been spent on the procurement of fire engines and construction of fire stations for various Local Authorities.

On their part, local authorities have a legal obligation to establish and maintain effective fire and emergency services and to ensure that the fire stations and fire-fighting engines are properly maintained and fire-fighting personnel are appointed and have the right skills to effectively operate the vehicles and equipment and to respond to emergencies when they occur. At the same time, Local Authorities should invest in the training of their personnel in order to ensure that there is sufficient and efficient capacity to respond to the fire emergencies. As such, I am urging Local Authorities to take care of their fire-fighting vehicles and equipment. They should desist from using such vehicles for other purposes such as routine transporting of people, or allowing the emergency vehicles to be operated by untrained officials.

To the four (4) local authorities of Bukalo, Divindu, Okongo and Tsandi, you now have these rapid emergency intervention vehicles and your selected personnel whom you availed and have also been trained on how to operate the vehicles and to respond to fire and other emergencies in your localities. Ensure that these vehicles are put to good use, namely to protect lives and property of your residents of the local authority areas that you have been entrusted to administer. It is particularly

important you ensure that incidents of fire and other emergencies including car accidents are promptly attended in order to save lives and loss of property.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the Swakopmund Municipality for its partnership and assistance to the Ministry in conducting training for fire-fighting personnel and volunteers from other local authorities over the past years as well as to the Windhoek Municipality for assisting with the inspection of the just procured rapid intervention emergency vehicles and the training of fire-fighters from the local authorities that will be receiving the fire-fighting vehicles today.

Finally, I would like to urge Performance Development Centre Cc, who won the tender to manufacture and supply the four (4) rapid intervention vehicles to deliver the outstanding accessories to these fire fighting vehicles within a period of two (2) weeks. It is one thing to win a tender and it's another to deliver to the satisfaction of your clients. Efficiency is not only required from the public sector but the private sector as well.

I thank you for your kind attention