



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HON. ERASTUS UTONI, MP**

**MINISTER OF URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**AT THE OCCASION INAUGURATION OF THE ORANJEMUND FIRE  
STATION, UNVEILING OF THE AMBULANCE AND  
COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS DAY**

**ORANJEMUND**

**TUESDAY, 07 MAY 2024**

**Thank you Director of Ceremonies:**

- **Honourable Aletha Frederick, Governor of //Kharas Region**
- **Honourable Lazarus Nangolo, Oranjemund Constituency Councilor;**
- **Your Worship Hon. Elias Kasemba, the Mayor of Oranjemund Town Council;**
- **Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councilors present;**
- **Mr. Charles Kakuru, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Oranjemund Town Council;**
- **Senior Government officials Present;**
- **Official from the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development;**
- **Men and Women in Uniforms;**
- **Distinguished Guests;**
- **Members of the community;**
- **Members of the media;**
- **Ladies & Gentlemen;**

**A very Good morning to you all.**

I am honoured once again to stand before you this morning and to have been accorded yet another opportunity to officially inaugurate the Oranjemund Fire Station an event that will coincide with the unveiling the new ambulance and the Commemoration of the International Firefighters Day. It is indeed a day of immense pride for the community of Oranjemund and a time to acknowledge the critical role firefighters play in our safety and well-being.

I am very excited to the fact that since yesterday, we had activities lined up, from the launching of the 5 year Strategic Plan to the handing over houses build under the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia and the ground breaking for further housing development at extensions 6,7 and 11. Today, we are again gathered to witness yet another milestone of achievements by the Oranjemund Town Council. I congratulate the Leadership of this beautiful town of Oranjemund for the achievements and dedication despite the many challenges and limited resource at your disposal.

### **Director of our proceeding;**

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.

Thus, 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 when it comes to the prevention and fighting fires with the ultimate aim of protecting, rescuing lives and property from any such fires.

The Ministry therefore, commends the Council for the successful completion of this state-of-the-art facility which significantly will improve your emergency response capabilities, through centralizing your resources and providing modern equipment, and to ensure that your firefighters will be better equipped to respond quickly and effectively to any emergency, whether it's a fire, or other urgent situation.

Government thus, remains committed to support all local authorities in terms of safety and emergency response.

I am informed that the Ministry funded the construction of the fire station totaling to N\$ 3 Million and I need to applaud the Oranjemund Town Council for backing the project with approximately a total amount of N\$ 9.5 Million.

Furthermore, the inclusion of fire engine garages and storage spaces shows that your equipment will be well-maintained and readily accessible, reducing response times. Additionally, to mention the dining and recreation areas demonstrate your commitment to the well-being of your firefighters, providing them with a place to rest, recharge, and build solidarity during their shifts.

This fire station is a significant investment in the safety and security of Oranjemund community, because it is important to re-assure the community, that Oranjemund is a place where residents can feel safe, knowing that they have a well-equipped team of emergency responders ready to serve them in times of need.

**In the same light, the International Firefighters' Day** is a time where the world's community recognises and honour the sacrifices that firefighters make to ensure that their communities and environment are as safe. Hence, the day raises awareness of the importance and safe use of fire among the community.

This important day is officially observed internationally on the **4<sup>th</sup> of May** each year, however and due to the fact that the 4<sup>th</sup> of May is a public holiday in Namibia, we have decided to commemorate it today, the **7<sup>th</sup> of May 2024** to show our appreciation and respect to the first responders for their major duties of saving lives, properties and the environment.

**Distinguished Invited Guests, ladies and Gentlemen;**

Fire is a powerful force and has a reputation for destroying the lives, but if we have are well equipped and ready to combat fire fighters we can conquer these dangerous and destructive flames. This day therefore, clearly marks an important day to pay tribute to firefighters around the world who risk their lives to protect others. It is also a time to remember the men and women who have and continue make the ultimate sacrifice in their line of duty.

As we are proudly wearing and displaying the blue (for water) and red (for fire) ribbons which symbolising the main elements of the duties of firefighters and emergency services, we are here today, not only to inaugurate the Oranjemund Town Council fire station, but also to remember our brave sons and daughters who have lost their lives or got injured while having “boots on the ground”. **Therefore, to show our gratitude, we are hereby observing the firefighter’s International day for the very first time in the history of Namibia’s local authorities.**

Allow at this juncture to address you the fire firefighters our sons and daughters of Namibia, that we highly appreciate your efforts and that the government of the Republic of Namibia through the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development will continue to fulfill its mandatory obligations to ensure that there are necessary mechanisms in place that will ensure your wellness and that you are operating in a supportive environments.

**In conclusion,** I want to express my gratitude to everyone involved in this project Oranjemund Town Council leadership and the contractors (Urban Engineering CC). Your hard work and dedication have made this fire station a reality. With this new facility, I wish the emergency response team all the best and to look after the facility.

I'm confident that Council is better prepared to face emergencies now and that you will continue to build a safer future for all.

Alongside the fire station, I am also delighted to unveil a new ambulance as an addition to represents a significant upgrade in our capacity to provide emergency medical response care. I was informed that the Council is still in the process to register the ambulance with Ministry of Health and Social Services, and that you're planning to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding, in which Council are planning to support as emergencies arise, to improve response time and to save lives and reducing injuries.

Allow therefore, to thank the Oranjemund Town Council for their vision and leadership in establishing this fire station and for inviting me to be part of this celebration. I also want to acknowledge the firefighters and emergency responders for their tireless work, as well as the community for their support. I also would like to appreciate and recognize the Ministerial team that is responsible for the 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. Ms. Shigwedha and team, your dedication is hereby acknowledged.

Again, I take this opportunity to urge you as a community to continue working together in order to build a safer and more resilient Oranjemund.

**Finally**, it is with great honor that I now officially inaugurate the Oranjemund Fire Station, unveil the new ambulance, and join you in commemorating International Firefighters Day.

May this station serve as a beacon of safety and readiness for our community, and may our firefighters always return safely from their duty. *“I WISH YOU ALL A HAPPY FIRE FIGHTERS DAY”*

I Thank You.