

OFFICIAL STATEMENT BY HIS WORSHIP CLLR MUESEE KAZAPUA, THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF WINDHOEK, AT THE MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MAY 07, 2015, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WINDHOEK, 17H30

**Rev Petrus van Zyl of the Evangelical Lutheran Church,
Cllr Mwadhina Handapo Veico, Deputy Mayor of the City of
Windhoek,**

Alderspersons and Honourable Councilors,

**Mr. Fillemon Hambuda, Acting CEO of the City of Windhoek,
Strategic Executives and Senior Officials of the City of Windhoek,
Esteemed Windhoek Residents,**

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening.

I am honoured and privileged to welcome you all to our Council Chambers this evening, for our 4Th Ordinary Council meeting. I would like to focus my statement of today to the current affairs and issues of public interest that prevailed since our previous meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The City's budget preparation for the financial year 2015/2016 is in progress. As a tradition, we are busy with consultative meetings with the public and external stakeholders for inputs and proposals for

capital expenditures as part of our commitment to participatory budgeting.

Inputs from these consultations will be evaluated and accordingly prioritized per the most urgent developmental issues. The participatory budgeting for the next financial year is to kick off with public meetings scheduled to commence on 16 May 2015, in various suburbs. The schedule of these meetings has already been advertised in local newspapers and notice boards around the City. This year, we have planned that these meetings will be officially launched by the Mayor on that day, 16 May, at the Hainyeko Community Hall, Hakahana. I therefore invite our residents to the launch and all other meetings as scheduled.

It is important to understand that as in any budgetary process, it is unfortunate that not all proposed projects from our communities and stakeholders would be accommodated at the same time. However, Council will apply its mind to ensure that priority is given to the most urgent developmental issues within the constraints of the available resources. The draft Budget will be presented for approval at the next ordinary Council meeting scheduled for the end of June 2015.

Windhoek Residents, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we prepare the 2015/2016 Budget, I would like to alert the public of the recent approved electricity tariffs increase of 9.53% by the Electricity Control Board (ECB). We are informed that in its

application NamPower requested for an effective bulk tariff increase of 13.20%, an increase from N\$1.17 to N\$1.32 per kWh (inclusive of generation and transmission), to meet its service delivery costs and for the tariff to remain cost reflective. The ECB granted approval of N\$1.28 per kWh, to allow the electricity producer NAMPOWER to meet its operational costs and fulfil its financial obligations.

Further, the ECB is reported to have advised that respective distributors will individually have to apply to the ECB for tariff increases that will be applicable to the end consumers. Similarly, we are informed that the regulator (ECB) had taken into consideration the expectations of key stakeholders including government and the impact of the new tariffs on consumers and the economy before assenting to the new rates.

Therefore while budgetary consultations are ongoing, it is important to inform the public that the City as an institution that runs its operations on a cost recovery basis, it will have no choice, but to adjust its tariffs in order to equally meet its operational costs and financial obligations. More importantly, our clients are informed that the City's monthly electricity to the national utility is close to N\$100million and can be much higher in the winter season. In this spirit, it is important to mention that municipal electricity tariffs are annually adjusted in line with the increases approved by the ECB.

We are mindful of the impact of these tariff increases on individual households, especially for the destitute and pensioners. It was for this reason that in 2009, Council approved an Indigent Policy aimed at providing subsidized water and electricity to pensioners and destitute. This policy needed contribution from the national utilities NAMPOWER and NAMWATER in order to be implemented sustainably. We have made consultation with the two bodies but failed to get their support.

On a different note **Ladies and Gentlemen**, following the Workshop of Mayors held in Windhoek in July 2013, Local Authorities across Namibia have recognized the role that they have to play in ensuring urban food security.

At this workshop, we unanimously declared and pledged political commitment to promote food bank and urban agriculture initiatives in our cities, towns and villages. We are encouraged by continued Government's efforts on the same subject matters at national level and are committed to compliment these efforts at local level.

As a City, we have already identified a site for the construction of a food bank facility and are happy to have received overwhelming support and commitment from local businesses, in terms of construction materials and food stuff. I am equally encouraged, by public interest since our pronouncement to promote urban agriculture through community gardens around the City.

As part of the 8-Point Mayoral Priority Agenda 2015, I have assigned two Councillors to the Food Security Agenda Point. Last week, the two Councillors and officials held several consultative meetings with internal and external stakeholders on this subject matter and we were surprised by the enthusiasm of the many scattered community garden activities taking part around the City.

At the same time, we are cognizant of the water supply constraints of Windhoek. We are in consultation with relevant Government Agencies and international partners such as the Food Agricultural Organization (FAO), UNDP, World Future Council (WFC) and Research For Urban Agriculture Foundation (RUAF) for technical advice. We are seeking advice on solutions that worked elsewhere in arid and water starved countries like ours. This will involve collaboration on assessment of the feasibility of urban agriculture in Windhoek, given our water situation.

Equally, in recognizing our water shortages, we are committed to finding ways of balancing the provision of water to soccer fields, golf courses, swimming pools versus community gardens for food production. This process will require a careful gradual planning; and I have already requested the Acting Chief Executive in March this year to investigate the water needs.

Honourable Councillors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On international relations, I am pleased to inform you that I led a delegation to the City San Antonio Texas, and Richmond Virginia, in the USA, on an official mission that was facilitated the Namibian Embassy, in Washington. In San Antonio, we signed a sister city agreement between of two cities, embracing cooperation in the areas of; trade and investment, tourism, culture, training and development, renewable energy, on 21 April 2015. This is a historic agreement as it marks the first ever relationship that San Antonio signed with an African city.

In Richmond we engaged in discussions related to renewing a project based cooperation signed between the two cities in 1998 that expired in 2002. As part of this agreement Richmond donated fire engines to the City of Windhoek in 2001. Our recent discussions centered on revamping this relationship and new areas of cooperation. A report in this regard will be submitted to this August House at our next meeting.

On 16 April 2015, we signed a Letter of Intent with the Peoples Municipal Government of Nanjing, China- seeking to cooperate in number of areas; including training and development; whereas; Nanjing undertook to offer scholarship to Windhoek students in critical areas.

Nanjing also donated 110 sets of solar energy lighting equipment worth N\$180,000.00. The City through the Community Services Division is busy identifying qualifying households for onward donation of these equipment.

We are convinced international cooperation has potential of opening up new ways of thinking and innovations. Therefore we will keep our international linkages as a strategy to improve municipal service delivery.

With these few announcements, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me once again to welcome all of you to tonight's Council meeting.

I thank you.