

Speech by Veston Malango, General Manager

Chamber of Mines of Namibia

At the

Handing over Ceremony of the National Population
Registration System (NPRS) Server, LCD Monitor and
corresponding Software to the Ministry of Home Affairs and
Immigration

By

The Chamber of Mines of Namibia.

Windhoek, 20th April 2006.

The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs and Immigration, Hon.
Theopolina Mushelenga,
The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration,
Mr. Samuel /Goagoseb,
Directors and Deputy Directors,
Members of Staff
Members of the media,
May I simply say, all protocol observed.

It gives me great pleasure for me and the Chamber of Mines to be
associated with this event.

When Mr. Nehemia Nghishekwa, Deputy Director of General
Services, Ministry of Home Affairs approached my office with a
request from the Permanent Secretary's office for the Chamber to
sponsor this IT equipment and software, I was not sure we would end
up on a happy note as we are witnessing today. I initially thought the
request was not directly related to the business of mining for which

the Chamber of Mines is the industry representative body. I will later tell you why.

As you are aware, the Mining industry is the backbone of the Namibian economy and will continue to do so for generations to come provided we do the right things now. We as the industry are committed to sustainable mining through increased exploration to sustain our current mining operations and through increased exploration to discover new world class ore bodies. We are committed to the Vision 2030 and support Government's development objectives as stipulated in the NDP 2. We have been challenged to contribute towards a 6% GDP growth rate as set out by The Cabinet retreat of November 2005. Our response is that the mining industry shall contribute to this challenge in the following ways:

- a. Open a new mine every year (Langer Heinrich Uranium Mine, 2006)
- b. We must expand existing operations
- c. We must increase exploration by the existing operations
- d. We must increase exploration by the Junior Exploration companies

In order for us to successfully do the above tasks and contribute towards Vision 2030, we need the support of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration for obvious reasons:--Work permits and work visas.

The Chamber finds it ironical that while the rest of Government is calling for increased Foreign Direct Investments in the mining industry, with the associated benefits of GDP growth, skills transfer with new technologies, job creation and general knock on effects in the economy, the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration seems to be doing the opposite, judging by the snail's pace in processing work permits and work visas. The mining industry's frustrations with Home Affairs hinges on service delivery which is generally perceived from the range of bad to worse.

We at the Chamber of Mines, have realized that we can work together to contribute towards improved service delivery at the Ministry of Home Affairs. In this respect, the Chamber fully understands the problems that are experienced at Home Affairs which range from:

- Lack of Human capacity to cope with the ever increasing work load
- Lack of the necessary skills to deal with the public
- Lack of appropriate equipment, particularly IT equipment to efficiently assist with the processing of various applications
- Perhaps lack of morale on the existing personnel.
- The inability of the Immigration Selection Board to form a quorum on a regular basis, thereby rendering all other preceding processes ineffective.

Because we believe that we are partners in development, the mining industry has previously responded to challenges faced at Home

Affairs with direct support from Namdeb and De Beers Marine Namibia in several forms such as:

- Basic training on the use of e-mail and internet
- Provision of a Training and Development Official to conduct a Training of Trainer course in Customer Care for the Ministry's officials, and
- Enhancement of the IT systems for the Alien Control System.

The Council of the Chamber of Mines has now made a deliberate decision for the mining industry to channel all future support through the Chamber of Mines in order to collectively help where we could, to improve the service delivery. I wish to state here that the industry is not, and I repeat, the industry is not expecting the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration to do anything outside the boundaries of the Namibian laws. The industry, through the Chamber of Mines is simply saying that the Ministry can do much better to improve on service delivery that have left several skilled personnel distraught when there is dead silence on the renewal applications of work permits or new applications, thereby undermining any successful exploration program and negatively affecting production processes.

We have on several occasions lost skilled personnel to other countries that are more welcoming at the expense of development in Namibia. On the other hand, in other SADC countries, skilled mining professionals are welcomed with open arms that extend to long-term work permits. We need geologists to undertake exploration as the future of our mining industry but we lose them to other countries when applications pend at the Ministry of Home Affairs for 6 months

or up to a year! The same goes for engineers, metallurgists and other professionals that are critical to the smooth operations of our modern, often state-of-the art technologies that we employ.

The skills transfer to Namibians will be a pipe dream if bureaucracy keeps these people away from Namibia. Technology alone is useless without skilled people to operate machines and equipment. It is these very people who will facilitate the skills transfer to empower Namibians with the vital skills necessary to develop Namibia into an industrialized country in accordance to Vision 2030.

Honourable Minister, The Permanent Secretary, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Mining industry is very much concerned at the critical shortage of skills in Namibia. We are not sitting idle about this problem. We have committed ourselves to develop the necessary skills, to train young Namibians to run the industry from artisan level to managerial positions. Indeed, skills development is one of the seven pillars of the Chamber's Black Economic Empowerment strategy which we are working with the Ministry of Mines and Energy to develop into a BEE Mining Charter. The Chamber of Mines and its members have stepped up funding for bursaries at all levels of tertiary education, be it locally or beyond the borders of Namibia. For this reason, Council of the Chamber of Mines resolved during 2005 to incorporate the Executive Director of NIMT as a Council Member of the Chamber. The Namibia Institute of Mining Technology itself is a product of the mining industry through Rössing Uranium Mine.

The ongoing poaching of skills within the industry goes to illustrate the extent of the skills deficiency problem. I also wish to reassure you that we are also committed to in-house training through the various programs of understudy. We believe there are several ways of verifying our commitment of training and imparting of skills to young Namibians. These include the existing structures under the Affirmative Action Act and the training programs that can be made available to Home Affairs.

So much for our frustrations in work permits and our commitments to skills development in Namibia. I now wish to turn to what we are witnessing today.

As mentioned earlier, when Mr. Nghishekwa approached the Chamber for this assistance, the industry was initially apprehensive because of the kind of service that Chamber members experience as elaborated above. Consequently, the meeting between myself and the Permanent Secretary resulted in a resolution under which the Ministry of Home Affairs has committed itself to improve service delivery to the mining industry. This undertaking which I have in writing from the PS, is the basis on which I have been mandated by Chamber to proceed and finance the acquisition of the required server for the National Population Registration System (NPRS). The old server was hampering the production of Identity Documents (IDs). It is the understanding of the Chamber that although IDs are a national problem, the mining communities are not spared with hardships of not possessing an ID. In fact an ID is the starting point in

the process of skills transfer to Namibians. Therefore, the Chamber of Mines is proud to be associated with this gesture.

My understanding is that the Ministry of Home affairs had made a commitment to the Namibian people that come April 1, 2006. it will take you only 24 working days to get an ID processed. In the mean time, this could not be realized with the low capacity server in the National Population Registration System. The short period prior to the end of the financial year meant that there was no sufficient time for tender procedures to be complied with. The alternative was therefore to approach the Chamber of Mines.

As you can see, I am proud to announce that The Chamber of Mines of Namibia positively responded to this request and I personally ensured that the dead line of April 1st was met. The Computer server we see here today was flown in from South Africa during the last week of March and was installed in this room on March 30th 2006.

The LCD monitor we see here and the corresponding software was delivered later when the machine was already functional. All in all, this contribution is to the total value of N\$ 67,000. I am also pleased to note that there has been a tremendous improvement in the production of IDs from about 600 per day to over 1,300 per day, a productivity improvement of over 100 %.

Lastly but not the least, I wish to end here with a passionate plea to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration to equally step up the productivity in the processing of work permits and work visas by over 100% to enable the mining industry contribute positively to Vision 2030.

I thank you.