

**MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE HANDOVER OF THE 2019 BRIDGING THE GAP AWARDS
TO THE WINNING REGIONS AND THE SPONSORSHIP CONTINUATION**

By Mr Otto Shikongo - Chief Executive Officer of Debmarine Namibia

30 January 2020

Minister of Sport, Youth & National Service	- Honourable Erastus Uutoni
Namibia Sport Commission Chief Administrator	- Mr Freddy Mwiya
Director of Sports	- Mr Edelberth Katamba
Namibia School Sports Union, National Coordinator	- Mr Solomon Duiker
Executives of Debmarine Namibia	
Football and Netball Enthusiasts	
Members of the Media	
Ladies and Gentlemen,	

Good morning

It brings me great joy to stand before you to talk about our pilot youth sports initiative **Bridging The Gap**.

As you know, mid-last year, Debmarine Namibia took a collective decision to contribute to school sports development through football and netball, which is without a doubt the most accessible and popular sport-codes for most Namibian children.

Honourable Minister, ladies and gentlemen, for those that were able to join us in witnessing the **Bridging the Gap** finals in Oshana Region last year, you will without a doubt share our excitement about the positive outcome of this initiative. Not only did the participation of schools surpass our expectations, but also this initiative served as a vehicle to further engage scholars in the awareness of diverse career choices available to them in Namibia, such as the unique career options available in the marine diamond industry as part our school outreach programme.

As a values based Company, founded on integrity **a promise is a promise** and today, we are here to deliver on that promise to the Regional Winners.

Winning Regions:

- U17 Netball: Oshana and Erongo Regions
- U15 Football: Oshana and //Kharas Regions

Winning Schools:

- **26 schools** from the Oshana, Erongo and //Kharas Regions represented the regional winners of the 2019 Bridging the Gap games.
- Each school won sports gear and equipment to the value of N\$10 000 by virtue of it being the school of the winning players, irrespective of the number of players from that particular school.

Winners Individual Players:

- **46 scholars** (20 girls and 26 boys) won individual prizes.
- Each player in the winning teams (for both netball and football) will receive sports gear valued at N\$1 000.

Congratulations to the winning players, schools and the coaches, trainers and mentors – they all deserve a hearty round of applause!

Ladies and gentlemen. This investment did not only benefit young girls and boys from all 14 Regions of Namibia, but it had far-reaching economic benefits for communities as well. Ongwediva in the Oshana Region was the host town of the **Bridging the Gap** finals. As such, our procurement strategy specifically procured sports equipment and services were sourced locally thereby allowing local SME's to benefit from providing services to over 500 school children who partook in the **Bridging the Gap**.

With that said, Honourable Minister, ladies and gentlemen, due to the resounding success of the pilot initiative and indeed the many positive feedback received from various stakeholders, notwithstanding the blessing from above when the skies broke out in the first rains of the season. Seeing the positive impact that this N\$2 million sponsorship has had on young people and communities alike, I am delighted to announce that Debmarine Namibia has decided to continue with the **Bridging The Gap** initiative for the next two years (2020 – 2023).

To cool off from the hotly contested 2019 Bridging the Gap games in the Oshana Region, the 2020 **Bridging The Gap** regional championship will be held in Swakopmund, Erongo Region.

We believe sport development is a very important component of personal upliftment, the sheer discipline, dedication, and commitment required to excel in sports is a crucial catalyst for developing astute young professionals much needed in the industry. Moreover, one cannot ignore the health benefits that sports contributes. After all, a fit nation is a healthy nation. A regional approach to sports also allows for cross-cultural exposure, experience and interactions that create life-long friendships bonded by the love of the game. As a marine diamond mining Company, diamond recover is our core business but apart from paying taxes and dividends, as a young Namibian organisation our hearts and minds are moved at every opportunity to **make life brilliant** in our communities.

We value our partnership with the Namibia School Sports Union (NSSU) and its affiliates for the smooth execution of the 2019 **Bridging The Gap** and we are looking forward to another successful 2020 **Bridging the Gap** games.

I thank you.