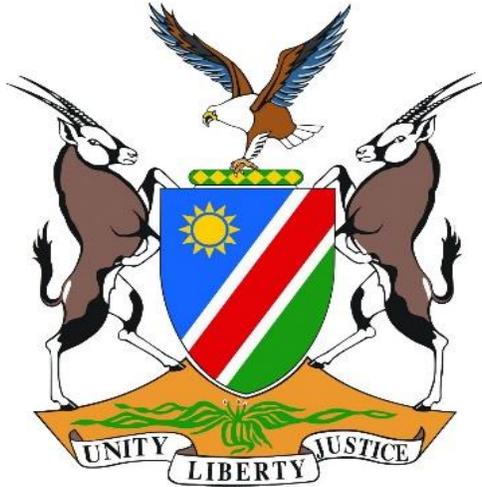


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

STATEMENT BY DR KALUMBI SHANGULA, MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, ON THE OCCASION OF THE HANDOVER OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT BY DEBMARINE NAMIBIA

20 SEPTEMBER 2021

WINDHOEK
**Check Against Delivery*

Director of Ceremonies, Mr Ben Nangombe, Executive Director, MOHSS
Hon. Dr. Esther Muinjangu, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services
Mr Otto Shikongo, Chief Executive Officer, Debmarine Namibia
Dr Dawid Uirab, Chief Medical Superintendent, Windhoek Central Hospital
Staff of the Ministry of Health and Social Services

Invited guests

Media representatives

Ladies and gentleman,

1. It is with great pleasure that we welcome Mr Otto Shikongo, CEO of Debmarine Namibia and his delegation to the Ministry of Health and Social Services. Mr. Shikongo and other representatives of DebMarine have become regular visitors to the Ministry and its facilities in recent months, providing support, especially to the COVID-19 response and preparedness in different ways.
2. This morning, he is here to handover a donation of six (6) ventilators, humidifiers and consumables valued at more than N\$2 million. We welcome this support with gratitude and trust that it will not be the last. We encourage the company to continue strengthening its corporate social responsibility programme to support those in need.
3. The partnership between the Ministry and Debmarine did not start with the COVID-19 pandemic. It spans a period of over 15 years, starting back in 2006 when DebMarine sponsored the renovation and upgrades to the Katutura Hospital Centre for Disease Control Clinic.
4. In 2014, Debmarine Namibia made a five (5) year commitment towards the Ministry of Health and Social Services, in support of the National Suicide Prevention programme. The initiative aims to bring about a decrease in incidence of suicide which are increasing at a worrying rate. That commitment was recently renewed for another term.
5. In 2018, Debmarine sponsored cleaning equipment towards the clean-up campaign at the Oshakati Intermediate Hospital and made a pledge to renovate the haemodialysis centre there. Preparations to kick off this project are underway.
6. A site visit conducted in 2020 to the Windhoek Central Hospital Mental Health Unit (Women's Ward) resulted in the renovations of that ward. The renovations which consisted of general maintenance and repair work such as plumbing, electrical works, water installations and ceilings were completed earlier this year. In May this year, Debmarine donated a high-tech Endoscopy Medical Equipment to the Onandjokwe State Hospital in Oshikoto Region to the value of N\$1.3 million.

7. The company has availed facilities at the Oranjemund Hospital to support the provision of public health care services at the town. The Ministry of Health and Social Services is making use of this facility to provide health services to the inhabitants of the town.
8. In a similar vein, the Namdeb was one of the first private sector laboratories to start conducting COVID-19 PCR tests and have donated testing equipment, including PCR testing machines. It has partnered with the University of Namibia School of Medicine, to manage and conduct the tests, following formal licencing process conducted by the Ministry of Health and the Namibian Institute of Pathology. These services are continuing. UNAM will retain the ownership of the testing equipment post the Covid-19 pandemic to test for other viruses, as applicable. The Unam Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory recently carried out genomic sequencing which confirmed the presence of the Delta variant in Namibia.
9. In 2020, through the joint Debmarine-Namdeb Foundation, medical equipment worth N\$9.9 million, consisting of 25 ventilation machines, 25 vital signs monitors and Personal Protective Equipment for frontline personnel were pledged to the Office of the Prime Minister. The equipment was procured and delivered to the Ministry of Health towards the end of 2020.
10. Together with its joint venture partners, De Beers Group (which comprises De Beers, Debmarine Namibia, Namdeb and the Namibia Diamond Trading Company) pledged N\$26 million in May 2021, towards Government's national Covid-19 vaccine sourcing and distribution programme.
11. The company has also contributed to the construction of COVID-19 isolation facilities, together with other private sector companies.
12. Last month, Debmarine Namibia partnered with the Ministry of Health and Social Services for the development and roll-out of national information campaign, through the production of posters, billboards, social media messages and other platforms titled 'Namibian Health Heroes'. These will be distributed to all hospitals, health centres and other sites around the country. The Namibian Health Heroes campaign is meant to encourage more people to get vaccinated and comply with health regulations to kick COVID-19 out of Namibia. This is also important to protect the front-line workers.
13. These are some of the few initiatives by DebMarine to support the public health sector in the country. We are highly grateful for their support and generosity. The support has indeed gone a long way in improving the provision of health services to our people.

14. As I stated earlier, today, we are receiving a donation of six (6) ventilators, humidifiers and consumables valued over N\$2 million. I express once again our sincere gratitude on behalf of the Namibian people who are the ultimate beneficiaries of this generous hand of support. Although some COVID-19 public health measures and restrictions have currently been relaxed, we must remain vigilant and always do what we know to be right. The message of how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is well-known. It has been spread across the country through different platforms. We continue to encourage the public to get vaccinated and continue to observe COVID-19 public health measures so that we can all help kick COVID-19 out of our country.

15. I conclude by asserting that investment in the public health sector is a wise investment. It yields the highest return on investment. Just imagine how many lives have been saved and how many deaths have been averted! In doing good things, let us not tire!

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