



Namibia Towards a Green Economy

BY SELMA SHIPANGA, 18 APRIL 2013

'THE green economy is an area where future economic growth and employment creation are possible as far as Namibia is concerned.'

With these words, Labour and Social Welfare Minister Doreen Sioka opened a national workshop which started in Windhoek yesterday, seeking to strengthen the link between the green economy in Namibia and job creation under the theme 'Unlocking The Employment Creation Potential Of The Emerging Green Economy In Namibia'. The green economy concept combines environmental considerations such as the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions and pollution as well as the adaptation to climate change with people-centred solutions to the challenges of economic development.

"Without doubt, there is a potential for significant job creation in Namibia's green economy. It is now the time to consider how to maximise this potential. This workshop offers an opportunity to consider opportunities for green economic growth in Namibia from the perspective of job creation through enterprise development," Sioka said.

She further outlined that an emerging green economy is already a reality in Namibia and that green businesses entrepreneurs are providing green services and products using green technologies in renewable energy, recycling, community-based tourism, bio-trade, green construction and many others.

The workshop aims to explore good practices in southern Africa and beyond as to how to unleash the inherent job potential of the green economy and to also contribute to inclusion and poverty reduction. The workshop will also share experiences from projects in green or potentially green sectors such as renewable energy, waste management, tourism and construction.

Sioka outlined that after the workshops, participants who include key actors from government, trade unions, employers and civil society with a stake in the green economy will have gained a deeper understanding of the broader, global context and will be equipped with tools and approaches to steer the process of green job creation at various levels.

"We must fashion means to raise the awareness of potential partners in a green economy to encourage them to support employment-rich green ventures. I am confident that this event and follow-up activities will encourage those with the potential to create employment through green business ideas to take up the opportunities and to contribute their part to achieve our common goal of poverty reduction and social inclusion without challenging future generations' environmental and economic well-being," Sioka said.

Many developing countries all over the world have grasped the potential of the green economy for job creation in combination with the reduction of environmental degradation and poverty.

Sioka said that social dialogue, entrepreneurial thinking, skills upgrading for workers and technical support to enterprises are major elements to identify and exploit job opportunities in a green economy.

The head of mission at the embassy of Finland to Namibia, Anne Saloranta, said that a new approach which focuses on the opportunities that the greening of the economy brings in terms of creating new businesses and jobs was essential.

"We need to actively embrace the opportunities that a transition from a brown economy into the green economy brings with it. The green economy entails respect for human rights and democratic principles, gender and social equality, good education and health of the people," Saloranta said.

In June 2010, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare together with the National Union of Namibian Workers and the Namibian Employers Federation (NEF) signed a cooperation agreement with the International Labour Organisation for the implementation of Namibia's Decent Work Country Programme.

In this programme, the government and its social partners committed themselves to work together to expand employment in Namibia based on principles of extension of social protection, respect for rights of workers, and strong social dialogue as a means of minimalising and resolving disputes between employers and workers or their trade unions.

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Namibia

Namibian Foreign Minister E

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Luanda on Saturday to her country, after