REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF FISHERIES & MARINE RESOURCES

ANNUAL FISHING INDUSTRY ADDRESS

BY

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MINISTER OF FISHERIES AND MARINE RESOURCE

AT

WALVIS BAY ~ NAMIBIA

29 FEBRUARY 2012
OPENING & WELCOM REMARKS

It is my greatest honour and privilege to stand before you this morning. First of all, I would like to greet you all and wish you a prosperous and productive 2012. This year, is a year of hard work and renewed commitment as we strive to better the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, and the entire Namibian economy. I say this
because this year, as we are preparing for the “Olupale Leeshi” Conference which will be held in June 2012 on the date still to be announced later today.

Invited guest, I am also aware that the industry was faced with numerous challenges during 2011; however, it is my hope that 2012 will be a better year full of prosperity and economic growth.

As a tradition, we are here to honour our annual gathering, a platform where we share and assess the performance of previous fishing season as well as, chart the road ahead. Ladies and gentleman in this respect I am indebted to draw your attention to specific policy related issues for now.

LEGISLATIONS

As you may be all aware, the Marine Resource Act of 2000, accompanied by its regulations came into force in 2001. During the course of the implementation the Ministry realised that there is a need to revise our legislation. It is in this context that I am appealing to all stakeholders to cooperate with the Ministry staff members during the consultative process on the relevant amendments which will be communicated to you in due course.

SEAL HARVESTING
Esteemed Captains of the industry, ladies and gentleman, I have to inform you that as an industry we are faced with critical challenges with regard to the Seal harvesting and I am sure that you might have heard or read through the media the intention of Seal Namibia and its partners to make an appeal at the forthcoming International Tourismus Boerse (ITB) Convention in Berlin, to prevent Namibia from participating in it, based on the country’s policy on seal harvesting.

With regard to seal harvesting, the Ministry view the seal resources as an important natural resources that need to be harvested within the legal framework of our laws and therefore it should be respected as such.

Distinguished invited guests, despite our open door policy for constructive engagement we have witnessed an increase in the numbers of complain from Seal Namibia and its partners that our harvesting method for the pups is not appropriate. This perception from Seal Namibia and its partners is regrettable and needs to be resolved through consultations. In this regard, my Ministry has always been open to discuss the seal issue with all stakeholders with regards to an alternative method other than what we are currently using to harvest the resource.
I am equally glad to inform you that last year the office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Namibia arranged a stakeholder meeting with various groups including seal alert, regarding the same issue. One of the recommendations that emanated from the discussion was to conduct an aerial seal survey. This has been carried out and the result of the survey is being analysed. In addition, the Office of the Ombudsman was accorded an opportunity to visit and observe the harvesting process at one of our seal colonies. It is against this background that as an industry and stakeholders, we need to consult and find a common approach on how best to deal with some of these issues in order to protect and retain the good name of our country.

Having said this we will continue to harvest our marine resources in compliance to our laws and relevant international practice.

**PHOSPHATE MINING**

Ladies and gentleman, my Ministry is well aware of some of the environmental issues that might have serious impact on our sector. In this regard I am referring to the mushrooming mining activities taking place within our territorial waters. In addition, I am aware that some of the EPL holders have been issued with licenses to exploit phosphate resources.
In addition, my Ministry was engaged in all public consultations and have raised concerns to be addressed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Furthermore, my Ministry has perused the draft of the EIA and highlighted the issues of concern.

Equally, I am also aware of the consultation process between the Ministry and the industry regarding this matter. I recognised that the fishing sector needs to take a concerted approach to address this issue. Be rest assured that the matter is enjoying full attention of the relevant Ministries.

**PRO-RATA FORMULA IN RESPECT OF QUOTA ALLOCATION**

Ladies and gentleman, last year during my address to the industry, the issue of quota allocation was raised.

I am fully aware that this issue is a concern to the industry. In this regard the Ministry is preparing a review process regarding the pro rata formula currently in use.

Therefore, I would like to inform you that an expert will be contracted to review the process and consult with the industry during this and coming fishing season. Therefore, I am humbly requesting for your patience during the exercise.

**QUOTA FEES AND RELATED LEVIES**
With regard to quota fees and related levies I wish to inform you that the study that was carried out by the consultant has been finalised and for consideration by my office. As you are aware the study was a Cabinet directive to assess the impact of quota fees and related levies on the fishing industry. The study concluded that the quota fees and related levies have minimal impact on the operational cost of the fishing industry. The study was done in consultation with all stakeholders. I therefore, would like to inform you that the recommendation from the study will be implemented soon, however, a consultation with the industry and other concern institutions will be arranged to work out the modalities.

GRANTING OF NEW FISHING RIGHTS

A total of 178 new fishing rights in various commercial fisheries excluding pilchard and orange roughy were granted during 2011.

Furthermore, I granted fishing quotas to new right holders in the following subsector hake, horse mackerel, crab and lobster for the purpose of utilising their fishing rights especially for those that are grouped in a form Joint Ventures. This is to ensure that added Namibian right holders derive optimum benefit from a limited resource. I held consultative meetings with new right holders at onset of 2012, with whom I shared my expectations, that there are
no short cuts in this business and therefore, right holders must meet their obligation, including payment on time of the necessary levies and quota fees.

I am informed that some individuals are spreading information or instigating new right holders that payment of quotas fees and levies as well as registration to obtain fitness certificate for tax purposes should not be taken seriously, meaning that right holders should disregard the laws of the land. Let me assure you that this is not the way to do things and those that think they can get away with it are going to have a rude awakening.

I also want to remind all of us that corporate social responsibility must be honoured by each and every company who has been given a right and a quota without exception. Furthermore, I emphasised that in the business of commercial fishing, right holders must know that in order to achieve success, they should assume a culture of winning.

I should emphasise that be eager to learn, participate constructively and plan ahead so as to have mitigation strategies in place in the event, when interest and exchange rates are not favourable and when there is a decline in demand to your product and services.
EXTENSION OF FISHING RIGHTS 2011/2012

An evaluation of the fishing rights due to expire by the end of 2012 has been undertaken by my staff members. I was informed that the process will continue during this financial year due to some outstanding information from some right holders not interviewed last year. My staff members are busy finalising the report for submission to my office for final decision. The affected right holders will be informed before the end of the year.

Master Plan on Aquaculture

The development of an Aquaculture Master Plan is at an advanced stage, and we are expecting that such a Plan will drive the development of aquaculture initiative in Namibia, inclusive of both freshwater and marine culture. A validation workshop has just recently taken place here at the coast (23 – 24th February), where stakeholders were invited to share and validate the proposed ‘HOW’, of running an aquaculture operation. Once the Master Plan document is complete, a Blue Print will be shared nationally and I would like to urge the private sector and investors to make use of this opportunity offered by the Government to create an enabling environment in which we could develop aquaculture.
Ladies and Gentleman, I have highlighted some of the policy issues let me now reflect on into our sector performance during 2011.

1. ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE FISHING INDUSTRY

Despite the impact of the global financial crisis on some fisheries, the overall business environment within the fishing industry has improved. Furthermore, 2011 experienced the appreciation of the Namibian dollar (N$) against major trading currencies (i.e. Euro, Pound and US$) ceteris paribus. This appreciation has resulted in reduction in earnings for the Namibian fish exporters. However, towards the end of 2011, the Namibian dollar depreciated against the US$ and Euro respectively, this was coupled with considerable improvements in fish sizes, which has led to favourable market prices for some fish and fish products.

In addition, another commodity that has a great impact on the industry is fuel/diesel, due to the fact that fuel makes up a large percentage of operational cost in most of the commercial fisheries. Therefore, fluctuations in diesel prices affect its operations.

During 2011, diesel prices increased five times averaging at N$9.12/l coastal pump price. This translates into an increase of
N$2.39 for the coastal pump in 2011 which is a huge increase, compared to N$0.33 in 2010.

In addition, companies operating from Lüderitz have to endure 6% rail tariff increase, due to the fact that they are serviced by inland depots that are replenished by rail deliveries. The impact is 1 – 3c/L more. This constant increase in fuel prices had some negative impact on the growth of the fishing industry during 2011. We have also observed, with great concern, the recent increase in fuel price early this year.

Ladies and gentleman, during 2010, the fishing industry contributed 4% to GDP compared to 4.6% in 2009, which translates into a 1% decrease. This was due to the decrease of 0.6% and 0.3% in the fishing and fish processing on board and onshore respectively. This might be due to, but equally not limited, to the increase in the costs of inputs and services that might have been consumed during the production process. The 2011 final figures are not yet available I will share them with you at our next meeting.

Despite the challenges faced by the fishing industry some of the fishing right holders or companies have invested and lived up to their corporate social responsibilities. For instance, I aware of a company that trained their sea going personnel to a tune of N$84
000 and also indicated that it has reserved funds to send ten of its crew members to Russia for a 3 year training programme, which will enable them to qualify up to Class IV at operational level.

I am not excluding anyone here, because a remarkable socio-economic contribution was made during 2011 to the tune of N$ 16 134 772; this is indeed a good indication that fishing companies feature strongly when it comes to supporting Namibia through in imperative areas such as education, health, project development complimenting the Targeted Intervention Program for Employment and Economic Growth (TIPEEG).

A contribution close to N$315 965 783, 00 was invested in the local economy during 2011 in respect of the following subsector:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fisheries</th>
<th>Amount (N$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hake</td>
<td>287 272 959.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Lobster</td>
<td>5 000 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse Mackerel</td>
<td>786 790.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Pelagic</td>
<td>5 000 000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>15 738 033.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Fish</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seals</td>
<td>1 819 000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. STATE OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Ladies and gentleman, allow me to share with you the state of the Marine Environment.

Data on the marine environment indicate that present sea surface temperature off the coast of Namibia was significantly above the long term average for most part of 2011.

However, I am informed that upwelling favourable winds off the coast of Lüderitz continue to be below the long term average of 50 years during 2011. Chlorophyll-a levels, which are often used as an indicator of food availability for the fish, were also found to be very low, compared to the long term average.

Esteemed guest, MOST of our commercially important fish stocks are showing some positive signs of recovery, although there is still a need to rebuild our stocks to maximum sustainable yield (MSY) levels, in order to ensure continues optimal contribution of such fishery resources to our economy.
The aerial survey for the seals was conducted in December 2011 for the entire BCC region. The survey was co-sponsored by BCC and the governments of Namibia, Angola and South Africa with the main purpose to obtain the recent estimates of the seal population in the region. The results of this survey are still being analysed and the final outcome is expected in May this year.

The previous seal survey was conducted in December 2009 (surveys are done every 3rd year, in line with our 3 year rolling TAC) and the results from that survey indicated that the Namibian seal population was in a healthy state. Namibia shall implement the scientific recommendations arising from the latest seal aerial survey in setting the TAC for the next seal harvesting.

Total Investment in seal during 2011 was N$1, 8 19,000, chunk of this investment went into marketing to build and penetrate new markets as well as and to sustain the current markets. Some of the locally sold products are seal skins, oil and carcass. These products are very rich in omega 3 fatty acids.

Ladies and gentleman, the two factories pre-process the seal oil for local consumption. The oil is available at the Seal shop situated in Henties Bay. I am informed that some companies are venturing into processing the carcass for human consumption. On
the international market seal skins and seal organs are sold to in the Far Eastern blocks (Hong Kong) and Turkey.

**Hake**

The hake annual biomass survey was just recently completed and our scientists are hard at work to analyse these latest results and advise us on the current state of the hake specie. Indications are that the hake CPUE has remained relatively high for most of 2011. However, the CPUE increase could not always be directly interpreted to be a result of an increase in the stock size, as improvements in fishing technology and fish aggregations could also result in high CPUEs.

The global economic crisis and its effect on Spain, led to a decrease with at least 1% in export of hake in 2010/11.

Italy, as the third largest receiver of hake exports from Namibia also slumped from 9 to 7%. SADC increased by 17% hake export mainly to South Africa, which normally average 3% in previous season. Furthermore, Australia also strengthened its imports from Namibia with at least 3%.

**Horse Mackerel**
The scientific survey and stock assessment models indicates that the overall horse mackerel stock biomass is stable at a relatively high level for the past three years and the stock is estimated to be above its 1990 level. The catch per unit effort (CPUE) also remained high for the past three years, despite the fact that CPUE is not a good indicator of stock abundance, more especially for an aggregating species, such as horse mackerel.

I am informed that the sector continues with outstanding fishing activities, vessels have achieved 95% of their catching capacity on average during 2011 season. In addition the size distribution of horse mackerel has improved to bigger size. The sizes normally play an important role with respect to prices. During 2011 price difference was under pinned by supply and demand. Average price of transhipped horse mackerel in to African market fetched U$1 050 per mt while for overland it fetched N$7 940 per mt. The prices are in the range of between N$7.50p/kg to N$10.20 p/kg depending on the size. The increase in price is attributed to bigger sizes of fish caught and stability in exchange rate.

**Pilchard**

The Pilchard stock has slightly improved during 2011. However, recruitment was found to be very poor during the same season.
The Ministry shall continue to take a precautionary approach in managing the Pilchard stock and ensuring that the stock has significantly recovered. I applaud this sector; the quota allocated during 2011 was fully landed with the industrial fish.

This sector operates under difficult circumstances. Despite all challenges it has maintained employment and continues with its corporate social responsibility. The challenge of bad weather which frequently hinders the activities has not been that intense in 2011. However, there were a lot of other challenges experienced in this sector such as the increasing inputs and labour costs.

I learned that for the last three years there has been no positive change in the selling price of canned pilchards. The competitors to Namibia in the canneries, especially from the Far East, offer their product at lower prices than the local production costs. As a result, the average price for canned pilchard was N$78 in 2011 which represent a 36% decrease from N$121 recorded in 2010.

Monk

The most recent annual biomass survey was conducted in December 2011 and our scientists are still busy analysing the
results. Indications from the stock assessment carried out at the beginning of 2011 are that the stock structure for the Monkfish shows a healthy stock and that the stock appears to be close to its maximum sustainable yield level. Indications are therefore that the Monkfish remains stable, as was observed during the past few years.

As mentioned earlier monk resource recovered significantly and this supports improved catch rates. Monk products are exported to Spain and Italy. I am also informed that a small volume of monk is exported to Korean market in the form of large whole Monk. This can be attributed to the larger sizes of monk caught. During 2011, the average price increased to N$60/kg.

**Crab**

The assessment carried out on red crab and the annual CPUE in 2011 shows an increase in the stock biomass. The sector is stable and substantial profits have been realised due to high demand from international market. The market price for crab during 2011 stood at N$34 000 per/mt. The price for live crab also increased in 2011 compared to 2010.

**Rock Lobster**

This is one of the sub-sectors that I pay close attention to because of the seclusion of that region. The stock biomass and the CPUE have increased during 2011.
Furthermore, the average sizes of lobsters landed also increased. I am informed that during 2011, 82% of the TAC was landed and this was the highest recorded ever in the Lobster fishery.

I recently visited Lüderitz, and was informed that the lobster fishing fleet performed exceptionally well during the 2011 fishing season, when compared to previous seasons. However, during the same visit fisherman also echoed some sentiment of poor catch rate experienced in the month of February.

Prices have been steady and the expected shortage of supply resulting from the weather conditions, has pushed the price beyond the level of the previous season, and the lobster is selling at N$250.00/kg, which is substantially above the N$208 fetched in the previous season.

The majority of lobster is still exported to Japan; the products are expected to diversify to different markets.

3. EMPLOYMENT

I must applaud the Fishing Industry with respect to the employment rate that has been maintained. The Ministry figure stand at 13,380 employments in 2010/11 verification report. During 2011, most companies managed to keep their employees and continued to maintain relatively good employment practices. The Ministry remains optimistic with the 2011 employment figure due to the investments made resulting in additional employment e.g. 158 people at a factory in Lüderitz.
I am confident that employment in 2012 is expected to increase due to the new rights granted.

Let me also emphasize that employment creation is very important especially through value addition

Despite this good news I recently received a report from a company that wish to lay off its workers. I am still investigating the situation and will make my recommendations known especially as to the real reasons that results in the retrenchment of the workers.

4. VALUE ADDITION

During 2011, no production of new value added products was identified, and the export of processed products is on a decline as observed to fishery's contribution to the overall GDP. However, there are companies that are looking into penetrating new markets, such as Korea and China who identified monk and seal meat respectively. I would like to encourage the industry to be innovative and research for new markets and new products that could result in value addition in the sector and employment creation. Furthermore, some local fishing companies are exploring new process of adding value to fish and create jobs for our people. That is encouraging and will enjoy our full support.
5. SPREADING OF CATCHES

Again for the current hake season, pressure has been placed on the Ministry by some right holders, that finished catching their quotas before the fishing season ends, threatening to lay-off workers unless additional quota is granted.

The time has come that we cannot continue on this path, using the workers to threaten Government. I would like to remind the fishing industry that stock assessments and setting of total allowable catches are set within the framework of our laws and taking cognisance of the scientific advice on the maximum amount of fish that could be harvested in one fishing season on a sustainable basis.

It is therefore defeating the very purpose of carrying out expensive survey and research in setting the most sustainable TACs just for the industry to come back for more due to their failure to plan their catches so that the vessels and processing plant remain occupied throughout the entire fishing season. I need your full cooperation here to avoid constant mudslinging in the media.

6. TAC FOR HORSE MACKEREL, PILCHARD AND CRAB
As you are aware horse mackerel, pilchard and crab fisheries for the current fishing season have already started. I would like to highlight that the TACs set for the new fishing season in respect of

- Horse Mackerel’s TAC was set 320 000mt
- Pilchard TAC is set at 31 000mt
- Crab TAC was for 3 100mt

7. NEW RESEARCH VESSEL

The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources is currently busy constructing a new Research Vessel in Finland. This new vessel shall be delivered to Namibia in June 2012. Scientists and crew are expected to travel to Finland within the next few months to participate in sea trials before the delivery of the vessel. It is expected that the new vessel shall significantly improve the Ministry’s capacity to conduct marine surveys for the resources and the environment.

8. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLANS
The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources had finalised the Management Plan for the hake stock during 2011. During 2012, the Ministry shall embark on the completion of the Pilchard and Horse Mackerel Management Plans. The Hake Management Plan shall serve as a template for the remainder of the Management Plans yet to be completed.

The implementation of Management Plans is required for EAF (Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management) that has been agreed upon by fishing nations and the FAO to commence in 2010 already. EAF implementation shall see fishing nations moving away from target oriented fisheries management towards considering a broader spectrum of the entire ecosystem, including socio-economic issues, in managing fisheries resources.

We will keep you posted on those developments so that we are all well informed about the demands this will put on the industry ahead of time.

9. CLOSED SEASON

As it has become the norm now, the month of October was again closed for hake fishing during 2011. The closure is implemented in
order to allow the hake stocks to recover from excessive fishing pressure and also for spawning to take place undistributed. Since the implementation of this measure, several members of the hake fishing industry reported that there has been a steady improvement in the size of fish (hake) landed.

The Hake Association has requested that the close fishing season for hake be changed from the current season of 1st May to 30th April to 1st November to 30th September. The proposal was discussed by the Advisory Council and their advice has been submitted to my office for decision. However, there are still few modalities that need to be addressed, especially how to handle the transition period between May to September. This proposal is still receiving my attention.

10. **VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM (VMS)**

Last year I informed you that the Ministry intended to upgrade the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) to keep abreast with the latest VMS technology in the world and conform to the requirements of the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations.

I am pleased to inform you that the Ministry has initiated the process and most of the potential suppliers have been consulted already. Several presentations were made and visits to countries
with functional VMS were identified and visited by the experts from the Ministry to familiarize themselves with those systems. Some potential suppliers’ premises were also visited in order to ensure that whatever software and other services to be recommended by the Ministry suit the requirements of the Ministry and the fishing industry. Right now, the Ministry is busy sourcing funds to make sure that the VMS has been upgraded to an acceptable standard.

11. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU REGULATIONS ON IUU

I wish to note that the industry and the EU Team met plans met Namibia on 7-18 March 2011 to evaluate the implementation process of the EU regulation on IUU. The country report was submitted to all stakeholders who were involved.

Several observations and recommendations were made by the EU Team for possible implementation.

In February this year, the Ministry organized a meeting with the number of stakeholders, including the Directorate of Maritime Affairs, NAMPORT, and FOA; unfortunately some institutions could not attend the meeting due to the circumstances beyond their control. The final recommendations and inputs are now with my office for information and probably for further intervention. It is my
believe that with the cooperation of all stakeholders in the implementation of the applicable recommendations we will all be in a better position to implement EC Regulations before the next assessment by the EU Team.

12. **AQUACULTURE**

Ladies and gentlemen, I would now like to direct my attention to aqua and mari-culture part of our fisheries sector.

**Aquaculture Production**

Freshwater fish farming has grown steadily over the past eight (8) years; however, community based fish farms are still challenged by environmental factors, such as water availability and flood, and the technical know-how on fish farming. Approximately N$ 300 000 in revenue was generated through the harvest of aquaculture farms country wide during the year 2011.

The two common species currently farmed in Namibia, tilapia and catfish production has been increasing, however the internal demand still surpass the supply with more than 70%. This is an indication that, the sector needs a financial boost – i.e. initial seed money, from both the government and the private sector to
engage in freshwater aquaculture so as to increase its production, and thus able to provide food of high protein value to the nation.

**Fish Farms**

The pilot communities Fish Farms in both the Caprivi and Kavango Region have been revamped in order to boost fish production; however, further work is still needed to be done on these farms. One farm in the Kavango Region, Shipapo Wa Mbambangandu has been decommissioned due to continuous floods in that area. This farm was then handed over to the Regional Council to either continue with fish farming on a seasonal basis or to utilize the site for crop production, and a decision was then taken to seek another site on higher grounds. The Traditional Authority promised to inform the Ministry as soon as a site has been identified so that the Ministry can commence with a feasibility study to determine the sustainability of said site.

**13. SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION**

I am pleased to announce that the implementation of the South-South Cooperation Programme in support of aquaculture development between the Republic of Namibia and the Socialist
Republic of Vietnam is now in full swing and we will witness increased activity under this programme during this calendar year.

The cooperation is within the context of our National programme on food security, aimed at mitigating the main challenges on freshwater aquaculture, such as the application of all-male tilapia at all fish farm production units, improved techniques in hatchery management by 2015.

14. **CAPITAL PROJECTS**

The year 2011/12 have seen three major Aquaculture capital projects being completed, namely: Kamutjonga Inland Fisheries (KIFI), in the Kavango Region, our Regional Office in Katima Mulilo and the Ongwediva Hatchery in the Oshana Region. Other projects which are envisaged to take off next financial year are: Noordoewer Fish Farm in the Karas Region, Upgrading of the Fonteintjie Fish Farm in the Karas Region, Regional Office in Rundu, Fish and Vegetable market in Katima Mulilo, as well as Leonardville Fish Farm in the Omaheke Region. The Ministry further commissioned feasibility studies for Onakalunga Fish Farm in the
Oha\ngwena Region and Rehoboth Fish Farm in the Khomas Region.

Aquaculture remains one of the key focus areas in the Ministry until such time that we see substantive results that contribute to food security.

15. MARICULTURE

With regards to marine culture, the sector remains dominated by the oysters and abalone production in Walvis Bay, Lüderitz and Oranjemund. In the same vein, production of the marine culture products remains on an increase even with a small numbers of players. I am glad to see the commitment, particularly from the Namibia Mariculture Association, where a strong relationship with the Ministry exists striving to achieve the best for the country at large.

The sector has opened up new markets for their products in Asia and we are all eagerly waiting for the finalization of the Shellfish Sanitation Programme, which will hopefully open the European market.

Shellfish production
Shellfish production of oysters, abalone and mussels increased to 5.5 million oysters, most of which were destined for the export market. Production was coupled to good natural environmental conditions of 2011 which had minimal hydrogen sulphide and harmful algal bloom problems. It is also gratifying that the oyster farmers have mitigation measures in place to protect their oysters from such events in the future. A promising new regional venture in Oranjemund was started with pilot studies on oyster and abalone culture.

The two Hatcheries in Swakopmund and Lüderitz are well established and producing oyster and abalone spat for Namibian farmers, which has reached 17 million oyster spat in 2011 in Swakopmund alone.

Coastal land for onshore mariculture activities was availed by the Walvis Bay Municipality and it will be used as an aquaculture development zone, and it is presently being surveyed and should be available for occupancy in the first half of 2012.

The Ministry continues to conduct investigation for new species for mariculture and the environmental conditions affecting the success of mariculture.
16. **SPANISH COOPERATION**

The Ministry has signed a cooperation agreement in December 2011 with the Spanish Government, as represented by the Centro Technologico Del Mar Fundacion CETMAR, on technical assistance to strengthen aquaculture development in Namibia for economic growth of our country. This agreement includes, amongst others, the establishment of a hatchery in the Katima region, which will be able to distribute fingerlings in the whole region. In addition the agreement will see the intervention of the Ministry, the University and the Polytechnic of Namibia in addressing the inclusion of aquaculture as a subject in their curriculum. An amount of 1.2 million Euros will be invested under this project over the next three years.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, I wish to invite you to a press conference regarding the “**Olupale Leeshi Conference**” to which I indicated earlier in my speech. The press conference is today at 14h 00, at Atlantic Hotel, Walvis Bay. Please join us.

Lastly I would like to call upon the fishing industry to cooperate and assist the Ministry in its quest to make our fish products the
most sought after fish on international market, in the same class as our beef, where quality speaks for itself.

I thank you,