



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**VOTE OF THANKS BY DR KALUMBI SHANGULA MP, MINISTER OF HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES AT THE HANDING-OVER CEREMONY OF COVID-19
EMERGENCY RESPONSE DONATION FROM THE GERMAN MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE THROUGH THE EU CIVIC PROTECTION MECHANISM**

8 July 2021

WINDHOEK

**Check against delivery*

Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of MIRCO, Comrade Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah
Your Excellency Sirkka Anttila, Ambassador of the European Union to Namibia
Your Excellency Herbert Beck Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Namibia
Distinguished Guests
Senior Officials of the MOHSS and MIRCO
Members of the Media

1. Standing on the tarmac of the Hosea Kutako International Airport and witnessing the arrival of the majestic Antonov AN-225, the world's largest aircraft ever built, carrying onboard lifesaving commodities donated by the German Ministry of Defense to the people of Namibia, is an emotional moment for me. Emotional because that load in that giant bird will protect our health workforce and other essential workers who are our first and last line of defense against a disabling, life-taking virus. At the same time, I cannot help but remember with deep sadness the lives lost, not only of health care providers, but of so many of our loved ones.
2. We have confirmed that the Delta variants of COVID-19, which was originally detected in India is circulating in Namibia. This confirmation follows genome sequencing activities carried out by the University of Namibia in collaboration with the Research Centre Borstel and the Robert Koch Institute in Germany. The arrival of this consignment today is another dimension of our collaboration with Germany.
3. The current Covid-19 wave is the most devastating we have ever experienced since the beginning of the pandemic in our country in March last year. It has placed enormous strain on our health system. Health facilities in both the public and private sectors around the country have recorded the highest number of patients admission in our country history. At no other time in our country's history have we witnessed such high number of hospitalizations and deaths. We are recording and reporting unprecedented numbers of deaths in our health facilities on a daily basis. Home deaths are also being reported with frequent regularity around the country.
4. The pandemic has also exerted a heavy physical and psychological toll on our health workers and other frontline line workers. These dedicated professionals are working longer hours taking care of the patients. I salute and commend all of them for their commitment to duty and selfless patriotic service to our country. Many of them have contracted COVID-19 and have fallen ill. Some have unfortunately lost their lives.
5. These tumultuous times call for kindness and solidarity across borders. The European Union Civil Protection Mechanism through which the German Ministry of Defense is

channeling its donation to Namibia, is a torchbearer of international solidarity. I thank them most sincerely for a swift response to our appeal for assistance to fight the deadly third wave of COVID-19.

6. I am under no illusion that we are over the worst. In fact, we are still facing an uphill battle. This donation of valuable medical commodities and equipment will thrust us forward in fighting the pandemic, knowing that we can protect those in the forefront of the battle.
7. I am conscious of the fact that no country in the world was spared the devastating impact of COVID-19. Nevertheless, Namibia, while in the deepest throes of the pandemic, has experienced great solidarity from nations far and wide. Helping those in need is often seen as a choice people, nations or organizations make and some, within their rights, choose not to. The German Ministry of Defense, and by extension, the people of Germany, made a choice that will save the lives of our brave front liners. Every act of generosity from our friends around the world, makes us strong and brings us closer to our goal to save lives threatened by the pandemic.
8. Importantly, comprehensive health care delivery must not be compromised because of the focus on, and the fear of, the corona virus. Therefore, it is of utmost necessity to protect all our health care workers and responders, be it a community Health Worker doing house visits, a nurse delivering a baby, an emergency care practitioner or paramedic at the scene of an accident, social workers providing bereavement counselling, or a cleaner mopping floors. They all deserve and need to be protected.
9. I received with thanks and much appreciation this donation consisting of:
 - 300.000 gowns;
 - 60 care beds;
 - 40.000 Antigen rapid test;
 - 20.000 safety goggles.
 - 500.000 FFP2 masks
10. I thank the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation for her support in this endeavor. My sincerest appreciation to the Captain and crew for bringing this precious cargo safely to our doorsteps. I want to assure everybody and in particular Your Excellency Ambassador Herbert Beck that the donated items will not be left in storerooms nor will it go to waste. The Ministry has already drafted a distribution and transportation plans to ensure it reaches the intended beneficiaries without delay.

Herzlichen Dank im namen ganz Namibias!