

**Speech by Mr Otto N Shikongo – Chief Executive Officer of Debmarine
Namibia**

15 June 2017 – Walvis Bay – Namibia

Moment of silence - in honour of the late Mr Herman Andimba Toivo ya Toivo

**Rt Hon Dr Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila – Prime Minister of the Republic of
Namibia**

**Your Excellency Dr Sam Nujoma – Founding President of the Republic of
Namibia**

Honourable Obeth Kandjoze – Minister of Mines & Energy

Honourable members of Parliament & National Council

Honourable Governor of the Erongo Region

**Honourable Governors (//Kharas Region– Hon. Lucia Basson & Khomas
Region Hon. Mcleod Katjirua)**

Your Excellencies Ambassadors & High Commissioners

Your Worship the Mayor of Walvis Bay

**Your Worships – Mayors of Swakopmund (Hon. P. Nashilundu) Mayor of
Oranjemund (Hon. Henry Coetzee)**

Honourable Councillors

Chief Executive Officer of the De Beers Group - Mr. Bruce Cleaver

Rear Admiral Peter Vilho

Debmarine Namibia & Namdeb Holdings Board members

**Bishop Dr Kleopas Dumeni – Bishop Emeritus of the Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Namibia (ELCIN);**

Col B Shikesho;

Insp. General Sebastian Ndeitunga,

Mr. Frans Ndoroma

Mr Ståle Rasmussen & your Kleven delegation

All Captains of Industry – CEOs & MDs present

Fellow Debmarine Namibia & De Beers Group Employees

Members of the local & international media

Distinguished invited guests

All protocol observed!

[GOOD MORNING]

It is my distinct honour and privilege to welcome you here to the Port of Walvis Bay for this momentous occasion, in the history of Debmarine Namibia.

It is no exaggeration, when I say that we are here to witness a **red-letter day occasion** for Debmarine Namibia.

At an occasion of this nature, it is unavoidable, but to think back seventeen years ago – to the year 2000. The two shareholders, the Government of the Republic of Namibia and De Beers had just concluded a tough-round of negotiations. Many issues were concluded, but in amongst those concluded matters; top of that list was...”**migrate the operations of the marine business from Cape-Town to Windhoek...**”. For many of us Namibians in the business, it was a moment of **mixed emotions**. On the one hand – **celebrations & euphoria** – that Namibia would be the rightful home of a business that operates in its territorial waters. On the other hand – it was extreme anxiety; will we be able to do this? How? Where will we get the people to make this a reality? Those were some of the many questions that occupied our minds at the time.

Well, here we are today – Your Excellencies – ladies and gentlemen.

Today, I am immensely proud and humbled to stand in front of you as Chief Executive Officer of Debmarine Namibia and say: Welcome to the inauguration of the mv SS Nujoma. The first and **only**, vessel in our fleet of six vessels that is exclusively dedicated to exploration & sampling:

Welcome to the world’s leading marine diamond mining company!

Welcome to **one of** Namibia’s most elite Companies [in terms of contributions to the Namibian Treasury!]

Welcome to Namibia's unrivalled company in terms of training and development of Namibian skills!

Right Honourable Prime Minister, Your Excellencies – with humility, **I say welcome to Namibia's Best Company!**

It is most fitting that our employees have decided that our first exploration and sampling vessel – should be named after our Founding President and Father of the Namibian Nation – His Excellency Dr Sam Nujoma.

Tatekulu, you laid a solid foundation. You inspired generations of Namibians to believe the unbelievable. You motivated Namibians to reach heights beyond what they could imagine.

Your Excellency, we are most humbled that you honoured us with your acceptance that this vessel be your namesake. On that note your Excellency, I call upon the following individuals:

Captain Talent Kapapilo

Captain Phillip Koa

Captain Thomas Kosmas

Captain Erastus Nashima

Captain Melkisedek Simon

Captain Dewald Du Toit

Chief Engineering Officer - Abraham Shimhandu

Chief Engineering Officer - Beluid Kandjii

Chief Engineering Officer - Johannes Uupindi

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen – when we were given that mammoth task by the shareholders in 2001 to migrate the Company from Cape Town to Namibia; only 18% of the employees were Namibians. The highest ranking sea-going Namibian was employed as a 2nd Engineering Officer. Today I am extremely proud that our workforce consists of more than 85% Namibians – with **three** Namibians in the fleet as Chief Engineers & **six** Namibians in the fleet as Captains of our vessels – **these are the highest ranks on our vessels.**

*To put it in context: From the moment we take a Namibian school leaver with Maths and Science – the journey for them to finish all their training to be fully competent to be a Captain, takes approximately 12 years. The costs of training a Captain is approximately **N\$11m!***

I think these nine individuals, their families, their communities and all of Namibia should be very proud of them. Well-done and congratulations [please take your seats]

But, developing Engineers, Captains and other maritime skills is not the only area in which we invest in Training and Development of Namibians. We do it across the spectrum. For the 2017 financial year – we have a budget of N\$80m for Training & Development - with 8% of our work force being trainees.

Why do we do this? Why go to such great length to develop Namibian skills? The answer is simple: For any nation, skills development is the catalyst for Development - and to be Globally Competitive, or to be best at what you do, require investment. We can proudly proclaim that **Namibia** is the World's leading off-shore marine mining **Nation** – through Debmarine Namibia.

Your Excellency, It is indeed pleasing & exciting to learn of the new initiative by the University of Namibia (UNAM), to establish a **Mining Research & Training Centre** as well as the **Institute for Marine Engineering & Maritime Studies** both of which will be based in the Erongo Region. We commend UNAM and the Sam Nujoma Foundation on this grand initiative *in Pursuit of Self-Reliance & Capacity Building*. Indeed we welcome the initiative and look forward to working with the relevant people to make it a reality.

Debmarine Namibia is a 50/50 JV Marine Diamond Mining Company between the Government of the Republic of Namibia & De Beers. [***Let me show you a short video that will explain our company better.*** **[SL-8 – Play Debmarine Namibia Corporate Video]**

Let me now move on to the mv SS Nujoma Project – Reason for being here today!
When the two shareholders signed the agreements for the establishment of Debmarine Namibia, one of the key issues that was penned in agreement was that, I quote: “. . . **in time, Debmarine Namibia will acquire its own exploration and *sampling capability***” end of quote. And perhaps a question that may arise is, what is so significant about having **own exploration & sampling capability**?

To best respond to that question – let me state the following for illustrative purposes. It is commonly asked: What keeps you up at night about your job?
Two things:

Number 1 – The safety of all the employees. Nothing – nothing breaks me down so much than the moment an employee is injured. All Debmarine Namibia Executive Committee (Exco) members are here today. Our Safety Pledge is that: “We take the safety of people in our business as our highest priority. All our decisions and actions will seek out risks and address them relentlessly and with urgency”. We are in the business of a very special product. We make beautiful dreams come true. People buy our product to celebrate lives’ best moments. Other than our moral obligation, it is appropriate that no one gets injured in any form in the process of making those dreams come true.

and Number 2 – Resource development. Resource development is a critical success factor in marine mining. If you don’t know your resource area – you will go around like a headless chicken. This is why we spend 20% of our operating cost on Resource Development - therefore ladies and gentlemen, this is why I call this a **red-letter day occasion** – and I am so overwhelmed with joy and satisfaction to see so many of you here to celebrate this milestone for Namibia.

On July 16, 1969, the astronauts aboard the Apollo 11 set off to become the first human beings to walk on the moon. For 76 hours, millions of people from all over the world watched what became a historic giant leap for mankind. What many people didn’t see were the eight years of unwavering commitment that made this momentous feat possible.

The realisation of the mv SS Nujoma is indeed a giant leap for Debmarine Namibia and indeed for Namibia. It took two years to execute. What is not so obvious are the **six** years of unwavering commitment and planning. In this regard - to my colleagues in De Beers Marine South Africa in Cape Town – our sister company – Domingos Valbom, Mike Curtis and the rest of the team – the professional collaboration that your team and our team had on this project, has set a new benchmark for best practice. On behalf of all of us here at Debmarine Namibia – convey our sincere thanks and gratitude to your team.

The execution of this project was led by Michael Curtis as the Project Manager. Michael please stand up for a moment. Michael was schooled in Windhoek - matriculating at St Pauls College in 1990. He studied a BSc Mechanical Engineering at the University of Cape Town on a bursary from Namdeb. He worked up the ranks within the Company. So I can say with confidence, he is a “home-grown” engineer. Michael, dare I say “that was **project execution** at its best”! Thank, and your team, for your Project Management and Leadership to deliver a complex SSN project, **safely**, three months **ahead of schedule** and **within budget** – (Thank you Mike you may sit down)

To the colleagues of Kleven, Mr. Ståle Rasmussen & your colleagues. I am not much of a politician, but I believe that Norway & Namibia enjoy a friendly bond – and our collaboration on this project has unearthed new friendships. Thank you for your great work and execution in building this vessel.

Your Excellency, Ladies and gentlemen, now allow me to show you a short video of the birth and journey of the mv SS Nujoma! **[SL-12 - play video]**

Finally ladies & gentlemen, it will be remiss of me not to mention the excellent support we received from our local banks, Standard Bank Namibia & RMB Namibia. The mv SS Nujoma project constituted a land mark transaction. It was one of the largest transactions in Namibian corporate history. The two banks financed N\$1.8 billion (US\$150m) 50/50. The balance of the N\$2.3 billion (US\$157m) investment (or 25%) was financed by Debmarine Namibia.

Director of Ceremonies, ladies and gentlemen – no Chief Executive Officer can lay claim to the success of their enterprise without acknowledging the men and women who make it possible. I feel uniquely privileged to have the calibre of people who work with me in Debmarine Namibia including my EXCO team. I pay tribute to them by saying: the mv SS Nujoma is a testament of our collective success. We understand the multitude of challenges we have in this country [unemployment, poverty, inequality etc.].

We carry a special honour and privilege to work in Debmarine Namibia – and to be entrusted by our shareholders, the Government of the Republic of Namibia and De Beers with running this great entity.

We must continue to be the guardians of Namibia’s future **safely**. We must continue to deliver value for our shareholders **safely**. We must continue to see our roles as roles that are in the national interest **safely**.

Ladies & gentlemen – I thank you most sincerely for your attendance.

Enjoy the rest of the proceedings with us. . . .

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