

Namibia committed to regional integration

By Special Correspondent

Katima Mulilo - Namibia pledged to support regional capital projects that would benefit all SADC citizens and enhance regional integration.

President Hifikepunye Pohamba made the pledge at Katima Mulilo last Friday when he commissioned the 950 km Caprivi Link Inter-Connector Transmission Line hooked to huge AC and DC transformers. The event attended by the presidents of Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Inter-Connector Transmission lines passes through Caprivi, Kavango and connects to the sub-station at Gerus in the Otjozondjupa Region.

Presidents Robert Gabriel Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Rupiah Banda of Zambia, Lieutenant-General Ian Seretse Khama of Botswana and SADC Executive Secretary Dr Augusto Salmao were present.

The N\$3.2 billion Caprivi Link Inter-Connector also comprises of a converter station and it has 300MW transfer capacity upgradeable to 600 MW and uses the latest HVDC light technology.

Namibian contractors were sub-contracted for several works ranging from pegging of the transmission line route, mechanical clearing of centre line, route clearing, installation of servitude gates and actual construction of the transmission line while villagers also got paid a combined N\$8 million to relocate from its route.

Although most of the big tenders were awarded to international companies due to the expertise and technology used that is not available locally, Isak Katali the Mines and Energy Minister said the project enormously benefited Namibian contractors that participated.

During the event one of the numerous questions he asked Paulinus Shilamba who is

NamPowers Managing Director Paulinus Shilamba was whether the project will also benefit places such as Sesheke, Senanga and Mongu in Zambia to which Shilamba responded in the affirmative.

He praised the Zambia for having built the Zambezi Bridge that has immensely boosted nation-to-nation trade between the two states.

The Katima Mulilo bridge although built by Zambia is a SADC bridge. For us in Namibia the construction of the Kazungula bridge will be historical. There is urgent need that the Kazungula bridge is built soon, stated Pohamba.

The past decade will go down in the history of SADC as a time characterised by high demand for electricity, resulting from increased economic and social development efforts in our region, he told fellow Heads of States



Presidents Pohamba, Khama and Banda at the launch of the N\$3.2 billion Caprivi Link Inter-Connector Line.

and Government.

Pohamba said he was encouraged to note that during the last five years, power utilities in the region have been extremely busy with significant power development initiatives aimed at alleviating imminent power shortages.

Some of these generation and transmission power initiatives are in the short, medium and long term, he elaborated.

Given the immensity of the task, our Governments should continue supporting the commendable work done by our power utilities in addressing the power situation in the region, said Pohamba who is passionate about regional integration.

The presence of my counterparts from Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe at this occasion bears testimony of firstly, the importance that SADC governments attach to sustainable power generation as a catalyst for economic development and the commitment of Member States to regional integration and cooperation, he said.

The Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) has elevated the

Caprivi Link Inter-Connector to be one of the its priority projects by virtue of its regional strategic importance.

Pohamba noted that the optimal utilisation of the new transmission line, which connects the Zambian and Namibian electricity networks will be enhanced by the completion of the envisaged ZIZABONA Inter-Connection which will link Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana and Namibia.

On the domestic front Namibia through Mines and Energy and NamPower as the implementing agent has vigorously pursued several power generation and transmission projects.

These projects include the Hwange Power Station Rehabilitation Project that commenced in 2007 and the construction of the N\$375 million 22 MW Anixas heavy-fuel diesel power plant at Walvis Bay due for completion in March 2011.

Others are the Ruacana fourth Unit Project involving the installation of the fourth 92 MW generation unit, which

will increase capacity of the power station from the current 240 MW to 320 MW to be completed in 2012 at a cost of N\$750 million.

The other is the Orange River Hydro Power Plants Project while the Kudu Gas-to-Power Project remains a crucial project where NamPower will team up with several investors.

Southern Africa is endowed with diverse natural resources. This time has come for us to join hands to harness renewable resources, such as solar energy and water resources for the betterment of the living standards of our people, he said.

On his part President Rupiah Banda of Zambia said: This project is just one of the joint infrastructural projects that the two countries have embarked on.

The other project which aims at making it easier for our people to trade with each other is the Trans-Caprivi Highway and Bridge which runs over the Zambezi. With these developments it is expected that our people will use them to trade with one another and better their lives, noted Banda.



AC transformers at the Inter-Connector facility near Katima Mulilo.

NAMIBIAN FRESH PRODUCE HITS MARKET

Windhoek - The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry's Green Scheme projects are starting to bear fruit - literally.

Recently, the Ndonga Linena Irrigation Project near Rundu in the Kavango region, under management by the service provider Shikunino Trading Enterprises has been delivering fresh produce including watermelons, sweet potatoes, sweet corn and butternuts to Fruit and Veg City as well as FreshMark (which supplies retailers such as Shoprite/Checkers with fresh produce) on a weekly basis. These included the following produce to each of the abovementioned clients:

- Eight (8) tonnes of potatoes
- 18,000 cobs/heads of sweet corn
- 11,000 ten kilogramme bags of butternuts and
- 10,000 water melons

Three loads of 34 tonnes each of fresh produce has also been delivered to Swakopmund during the past few weeks.



It has also delivered eight loads of 34 tonnes each of onions to Oshikango while there are still more than 1000 tonnes of onions on site at the Ndonga Linena project waiting to be transhipped to the markets.

...more/
-2-

The project further supplies the local catering companies (which cater for schools, the police and army) with weekly fresh produce whilst the local retailers in Rundu

also benefit from fresh fruit and vegetables from just around the corner.

The project, which has 200 hectares under production by Shikunino Trading Enterprises and a similar number of hectares by

small-scale farmers is currently harvesting more than 25 hectares of onions; 7.5 ha of potatoes; 50 ha of wheat; 5 ha of pumpkins; 4 ha of sweet melons; 1 ha of green beans and 11.5 ha each of water melons and butternuts. In addition, the project plants 1 hectare of sweet corn per week and 5 hectares of sweet potatoes per month.

The Managing Director of Shikunino Trading Enterprises, Mr Hans Nghixulifa says that their recent supply of fresh produce to the Namibian market shows that local producers are making headway towards ensuring that they meet the demands of the market place. "Our recent showing proves that Namibia can indeed meet the demands of the market place and we urge Namibians to start supporting local produce, increase demand and surely we can endeavour to meet that demand," Mr Nghixulifa said.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and

Forestry, Mr Andrew Ndishishi says that the project has shown how effective public/private partnerships can be in managing the Green Scheme projects. "Ndonga Linena Irrigation Project's performance clearly testifies that the Green Scheme Projects can and do work and surely sends a clear message to our detractors. We remain confident that with the completion of our fresh produce hubs in Rundu, Ongwediva and Windhoek, our producers will find additional and easier markets for their produce, while Namibian consumers can now have access to fresh Namibian produce," Ndishishi says.

"There are still tremendous opportunities for Namibian business people to tap into the Green Scheme projects such as transportation of fresh produce, distribution, packaging, warehousing and storage and even in the production itself such as the one happening at Ndonga Linena," Ndishishi concluded.