

**Message by the Honourable Minister of  
Environment and Tourism,  
Ms. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah**

**On occasion of the  
International Coastal Clean Up  
(18 & 19 September 2009)**

**Dear and esteemed learners and teachers**

I find it difficult to express my joy and happiness that our young people are taking part in this international cleaning up event.

For millennia, the natural degradation processes were able to cope with the types and quantities of waste produced, without serious strain on the environment. Today, the natural environmental absorption capacity is pushed to the limit. We have and busy converting our desert into garden of plastic flowers and our coastal areas a decaying ground for tins and other pollutants.

Today, some countries are affected by “mountains” of uncollected waste, which has now become difficult to handle. Pollution in some of these countries is so critical that water has to be boiled first, and then cooled down before it can be considered safe for drinking purposes. *We don't want this situation to take place in Namibia.* In addition, irresponsible dumping of harmful wastes like medical waste and many others has significantly increased the rate of environmental diseases in developing countries. Many of the victims are women and children, workers, and the marginalized poor.

In light of these observations, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the issues surrounding the environment are no longer matters of theory alone. Instead, they are now matters of real life and development. In fact, it must be understood that human life will never be sustainable even for a minute without the support of the environment.

In the quest for food and shelter, humankind has developed quantities and kinds of waste that are beyond the capacity of the natural degradation processes. For a while the excess was accommodated by way of *ad hoc* arrangements for its disposal

Namibia has a unique coast. It needs our care. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism is calling for a coastal stewardship. In this regard, the MET has in place NACOMA programme which aims among others, at educating Namibians about the uniqueness, biodiversity and benefits of the coast and the need for sustainable development and conservation. We in the MET have realized that inaccessible information has contributed to a lack of awareness, and made it hard for many

Namibians to become interested partners in coastal stewardship. It is on this basis that I have launched a coastal information campaign logo last year known as coastodian.

***Caring for the Coast, Caring for the Future***, stated by logo of the Coastodian awareness-raising and education campaign, is being embodied by you as learners, the youth, Namibia's future, on the occasion of International Coastal Clean Up in Namibia today and tomorrow.

I am sure you have been told this many a time: you are the citizen and leaders of tomorrow.

It is quite significant and heartening to observe, that our future citizens and leaders are already taking up their responsibility of becoming the custodians of the Namibian coast.

You are setting the example by participating in this worldwide coastal clean up. It is quite ironic, though, that most of the pollution and rubbish if not all, were caused and left along our coast possibly by adults, the very people who should know better.

I want to praise and congratulate you for your efforts to clean up the coast and to show your fellow Namibians what can be achieved. It is demonstrates that the collection of rubbish should become a priority, while the first priority should remain, we all should refrain from littering and polluting our coast.

I have learned that about 400 learners in Grade 6 from Henties Bay, Swakopmund and Lüderitz are participating in this biggest yet clean up in Namibia. I also understand a log of all the debris you will collect will be submitted by the NACOMA project on their behalf to the Ocean Conservancy NGO, the international organizers of this event.

Namibia will be represented in the final report and Namibian students will be recognized as taking an active part an international effort to clean our beaches!

Along with helping to rid the coast of unsightly and potential dangerous garbage, you can participate in an art competition sponsored by NACOMA. Using recycled materials and their imagination, each school or class will construct an art installation that will serve as a container for the garbage they collect.

On behalf of my Ministry I wish to thank you the learners, the teachers and your schools for making Namibia proud by contributing to the International Clean Up.

Remember every effort eventually counts and hopefully will your contribution encourage our fellow Namibians to do the same, not only during the International Clean Up but also during the rest of the year. Not only in relation to the coast, but to clean up the whole Namibia. I am looking forward to the day when Namibia will be free from plastics all over the places, including the bushes. The Ministry once again congratulates you and wish you lot's of success in your endeavours.