

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: 24 MARCH 2020
EMBARGO: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAMIBIA'S RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT CAN CREATE JOBS

Windhoek – Namibia's transport sector can create more jobs, should the country take development of the railway network as a catalyst of economic development seriously. This is the view of Dawie Moller, the Managing Director of D&M Rail Construction – a company specialising in the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of our country's rail network.

Moller was responding to an recent article in "*Die Republikein*" newspaper which argued that the country's ailing railway network needs urgent attention. He agrees with this assessment that rail plays a critical role in Namibia's economic growth. "*Government's vision to transform Namibia into a logistics hub connecting SADC to international markets relies heavily on the service offering to the transport chain. Having a good rail connection will translate to increased volumes of cargo movement, increased trade and increased revenue for Namibia,*" he said.

He lauded Government for the investment it has made in the country's transport infrastructure over the years and for prioritising further investment in railway infrastructure in particular under the current National Development Plan 5 (NDP5).

The company chief says he is excited about the mooted *Africa Integrated High-Speed Railway Network's* call to expedite its implementation gained momentum at the recently concluded workshop in Namibia, attended by transport and freight experts from Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. "*This ambitious project will result in an integrated, cross-border, high-speed railway network for the continent. The integrated continental rail network will comprise sets of individual links in different countries, thus Namibia cannot afford to lag behind. We should actually be leading other countries in Southern Africa,*" he emphasized.

Moller says that his company has been and pledges to continue to play its part at home to ensure that this dream is realise adding that it has so far constructed and/or upgraded over 600 kms of railway track and rehabilitated countless kilometres across the country.

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“We could have gone the mechanized route in our operations as is the norm worldwide and indeed with some of those wishing to enter the local railway maintenance industry. But where would that put our nation’s aspirations towards job creation?” he asks. And to this end, his company took a conscious decision to always put people first. “Our decision to opt for a labour intensive approach resulted in us employing over 500 Namibia men and women forming our workforce.” Moller is quick to add that the rate of production remains on par with machine-based productivity.

Moller emphasized that he greatly values his company’s collaboration with both Government and private sector, as they are equally important and complementary partners in Namibia’s development. *“We are currently upgrading the Kranzberg-Tsumeb line (261km thus far) and engaged in other projects. The strategic importance of this particular railway line is that it’s part of interlinking the country’s railway network. This stretch will play an integral role in terms of moving bulk commodities over long distances in a much safer and more cost effective manner,”* the company chief explained.

The MD also pointed out that his company’s primary objective is to ensure that the railway network is operational and that the trains keep moving at all times. *“Therefore we work on railway tracks needing rehabilitation when trains are not running so as to ensure that schedules are not affected”.*

On the issue of safety, Dawie concluded that workers safety is paramount in their operations and *“we implement strict guidelines and measures in this regard and I am proud to say that we have an exemplary safety record with no fatalities reported since we took over operations of this company some fifteen years ago,”* Moller concluded.

Issued by USI HOEBEB COMMUNICATIONS (UHC) on behalf of D&M Rail Construction.

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Please Note:

Attached, the article to which D&M Rail responded as it appeared in a recent edition of “Die Republikein”