

NAMIBIA TOWARDS AN 'ECONOLOGICAL' APPROACH

Report on the visit to France of a delegation from the Namibian Senate, invited by the France – Southern Africa Inter-parliamentary Group

October 5th to 8th, 2015

Invited by Mr Antoine Lefèvre, Chair of the France-Southern Africa inter-parliamentary friendship group, a delegation of the National Council of Namibia, led by its President, Mr Asser Kapere, with Mr Johannes Nakwafila, MP, and Mr Thomas Shipo, Chief Officer to the President, was welcomed in Paris and Picardie from October 5th to 8th, 2015, along with Mr David Thomas, Counsellor of the Embassy of Namibia.



Mr Antoine Lefèvre, Chair of the France-Southern Africa friendship group, and Mr René Danési, Deputy Chair for Namibia, welcome the Namibian delegation comprised of Mr Asser Kapere, President of the National Council, Mr Johannes Nakwafila and Mr Thomas Shipo, Chief Officer to the President.

The visit focused on energy production and related waste treatment operations on the one hand, and the promotion of automated cattle breeding on the other hand.

With 2.3 million people scattered over an area one and a half times that of France, Namibia has vast mineral resources (diamonds, copper, uranium, manganese, zinc) as well as significant renewable energy sources.

Leading up to the Paris Conference on climate, the delegation focused on the conditions for

the exploitation of such resources, in order to **promote an 'econological' approach, namely reconciling ecology and economy**. Indeed, the delegation wished to learn about the latest technological advances to preserve those resources and reduce related greenhouse gas emissions in order to sustainably manage its development, especially in urban areas.

I. Uranium : the producer meets the operator

The Namibian delegation visited the 650-hectare site of **Areva in Tricastin**, in the municipalities of Pierrelatte, Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux and Bollène, in the departments of Drôme and Vaucluse. The group has a special relationship with Namibia, where it has undertaken a uranium mining project. It has also built a seawater desalination plant there, which has been helping to meet the water needs of the Erongo region since 2010.



The Namibian delegation with Mr Antoine Lefèvre on the Tricastin site

The visit was an opportunity to show the Namibian MPs the steps following the mining of uranium, since Areva deals with the rest of the nuclear cycle.

Led by Mr Frédéric de Agostini, Director of the Tricastin site, the delegation visited the construction site of the COMURHEX II conversion plant and the Georges Besse II Nord enrichment plant. The former aims to chemically convert the extracted uranium while the latter enriches it for use in a reactor. Both plants meet the **highest post-Fukushima standards**.

The visitors were also able to review the means implemented for environmental monitoring. Over **33,000 analyses** of water, air, fish, plants and sediments among others are carried out annually at 300 monitoring points. Radioactivity levels detected in 2014 were 4,000 times lower than the one-year regulatory limit.

As for the **management of radioactive waste** from the Tricastin plant, it was stated that 90% of it has a 'very low intensity' radiological activity, namely less than 100 becquerels per gram. Packaged on site, the waste is then transferred to a specialized ANDRA disposal route.

Faced with the nuclear market slowdown since Fukushima, the group has chosen to **refocus on its core activities** – uranium mining, conversion and enrichment. This strategy along with restructuring measures should help to **restore its financial stability**.

The visit was followed by a meeting in Paris on French-Namibian relations, with Mr Olivier Wantz, Deputy Director General in charge of Mines-Amont activities.

II. Looking for blue gold

With one of the driest climates in Sub-Saharan Africa, and particularly affected by drought, Namibia is sorely lacking water. When visiting one of Veolia's six research centres in Maisons-Laffitte, the delegation enquired about **the latest innovations in terms of exploitation of subterranean groundwater**.



Mr Jean-Luc Willems, Director of International Relations at Veolia, welcomes the Namibian delegation

Veolia holds over 2000 patents. Mr Jean-Luc Willems did a presentation on drinking water production chains, as well as its networks' management, describing the processes implemented in relation with **desalination platforms**.

Also discussed were treatment methods of organic matter in drinking water networks and reusing wastewater to irrigate crops in areas facing water stress.



Veolia Water Research Centre in Maisons-Laffitte

Discussions also focused on **circular economy** models. Indeed, sustainable development advocated by Veolia links issues related to water, which is required for all industrial processes, with the issues of waste management and energy recovery.

The delegation thus familiarised itself with the recycling, storage and heat treatment of non-hazardous waste.

III. Renewable energy – a strategic issue for Namibia

The Namibian delegation then went to Roye, in the department of Somme, to visit the InnoVent **wind farm**, managed by Mr Grégoire Verhaeghe.

Specialising in the development and exploitation wind and solar farms in France and Africa, the company has built – in four months – a 16-hectare solar park in Omburu, Namibia, which opened on May 8th, 2015. Its annual production amounts to 1% of the electricity generated by Namibia.



Mr Verhaeghe welcomes Messrs Kapere and Nakwafila

The meeting focused on the **proposed renewable energy facilities** that would enable Namibia to achieve **total, stable and competitive energy autonomy**, while being able to export an energy surplus of 14%.

The program includes building a fleet of 40 solar photovoltaic farms (200 MW), 160 wind turbines (500 MW), 10 biomass plants (50 MW) and 5 hydro-solar plants (50 MW). The wind project, which could provide 40% of Namibia's energy, may be operational within 12 months.



Wind turbines at the wind farm in Roye, department of Somme, Picardie region

IV. Automation for food security

Welcomed by Mr Stéphane Verscheure, Director of the Departmental Institute of Breeding of the Chamber of Agriculture of the Somme, the delegation discussed cattle breeding and the dairy industry. The cooperative's organisation highly interested the MPs, since they themselves own cattle farms.



GAEC Niquet farm in Belloy-sur-Somme

In Belloy-sur-Somme, the Namibian delegation then met with Anne-Sophie and Fabien Niquet, operators of an automated cattle farm with about one hundred dairy cows. The Somme department is a pioneer in this field. 10% of dairy farms there are equipped with a milking robot, as opposed to 4% on average in France.

The annual milk production of the Belloy farm amounts to one million litres. The computerisation of milking not only alleviates daily tasks but also allows greater monitoring and **health checks**. The **operating conditions are especially animal-friendly** in terms of space, food and milking. Indeed, the farm has 171 hectares of agricultural land providing more than 80% of the dairy cows' food needs.

V. Successful inter-parliamentary dialogue

The quality of the French-Namibian relationship was reaffirmed during a very warm **luncheon hosted by the France-Southern Africa friendship group, chaired by Mr Antoine Lefèvre and Mr René Danési**.



The delegation's luncheon with Ms Josette Durrieu, Ms Sophie Joissains, Mr Jean-Marie Bockel, Mr Gérard César, Mr René Danési, Mr Stéphane Gompertz, Mr Antoine Lefèvre, Mr Jeanny Lorgeoux, Mr Andreas Mittler, Mr Bertrand Pancher, Mr Michael Roux, Mr David Thomas, Mr Henri-Luc Thibault Grégoire and Mr Thomas Verhaeghe.

Finally, at a hearing, the Namibian delegation met with **Mr Jean-Claude Gaudin, Vice-President of the Senate, Chair of the Bureau Delegation for international activities and friendship groups**. He was pleased to welcome his Namibian fellow MPs in France two years after a Senate delegation officially visited Namibia.



M. Jean-Claude Gaudin, Vice-President of the Senate, meets the delegation with Mr Antoine Lefèvre, Chair of the France-Southern Africa friendship group, and Mr René Danési, Deputy Chair for Namibia.



The Namibian delegation is greeted at a session chaired by Mr Gérard Larcher, President of the Senate.

Members of the Namibian delegation



Mr Asser Kuveri KAPERER
President of the National Council



Mr Johannes NAKWAFILA
Member of the National Council



Mr Thomas SHIPO
Chief Officer

Members of the French delegation



Mr Jean-Claude GAUDIN
Vice-President of the Senate
Senator (The Republicans)
of Bouches-du-Rhône



Mr Antoine LEFÈVRE
Chair of the France-Southern Africa
friendship group
Senator (The Republicans) of Aisne



Mr René DANESI
Deputy Chair
of the France-Southern Africa
friendship group
Senator (The Republicans)
of Haut-Rhin

Members of the friendship group: http://www.senat.fr/groupe-interparlementaire-amitie/ami_646.html