

Save the environment by using less plastic bags

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A campaign for a plastic free environment was launched at the Namibia Scientific Society recently.

Elize Shakalela, an independent environmental legal consultant and Miss Earth Namibia 2016, and Chris Brown of the Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE) were guest speakers at the event, with the opening speech held by Liina Ndilipo Namupala, deputy chairperson of the standing committee on human resources and community development.

Plastic bags have become common in Namibia because they are cheap, easily accessible and convenient.

However, the impact of its use on the environment, agriculture, marine life, livestock and wildlife is is be severe.

Improperly disposed plastic bags have caused the death of many livestock and due to the drought it becomes critical for Namibia to implement plastic management measures.

The worst impacts of improper plastic disposal is often observed in the ocean. Hence in 2005 the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) made a call to promote the global ban of plastic bags, particularly to curb marine littering.

Research indicates that plastic bags can persist for up to 1000 years in the environment and only degrade thereafter.

Also lobbying for the campaign is Sophia Swartz (chairperson of the parliamentary standing committee on natural resources management, PDK (one of Namibia's top musical bands), Elize Shakaela and The Dogg (campaign awareness focal person).

Through collaboration with relevant stakeholders, the campaign aims to discourage the use of plastic bags by developing plastic-free mind changing educational strategies, and stimulate discussions around enacting plastic free legislation.

Speakers gave some tips to a plastic bag free lifestyle, including the recycling of plastic bags and replacing it with canvas bags.

The campaign is in line with the principles outlined in Agenda 2063 adopted by African countries and advances the implementation of the state principles of conservation and preservation as articulated in the Namibian Constitution, the Environmental Management Act, the Water Ordinance Act, the Nature Conservation Ordinance, Namibia's policy on climate change and the Harambee Prosperity Plan.



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