

Joint Statement against the import of Namibian bushwood for use in power and heat plants in Hamburg

Hamburg, 9th October 2020

The Hamburg Ministry for Environment and Energy and Wärme Hamburg GmbH (the heat production and distribution company owned by the City of Hamburg) are currently assessing a proposal to import large quantity of Namibian bushwood for energy generation. This is based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) dated 2nd June 2020. The bushwood would be used in heat and power plants in Hamburg, for example in Tiefstack.

The project contradicts the principles approved by Hamburg's energy network referendum on 22nd September 2013. The referendum voted in favour of a "mandatory target of a socially just, climate-friendly and democratically controlled energy supply from renewable sources." Importing Namibian bushwood for energy is clearly **not climate-friendly**. This is due not just to the long transport distance but also to the land use changes in Namibia that would result from it.

The proposed project is **not socially just**. Industrial-scale bushwood harvest in Namibia would create some new jobs, but destroy many existing jobs in bushwood removal, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises. Unemployment is already extremely high in Namibia, and there is no public social security for those unemployed. Corporations based in the global North, on the other hand, would profit from the project by selling machinery and transport vehicles and acquiring resources (i.e. wood). The vast majority gains from the value chain would thus occur outside Namibia. On the other hand, the processing and use of bushwood inside Namibia would create many new jobs.

According to the timetable set out in the MoU, a public discussion in Hamburg is only expected once an in principle decision has been made. The referendum vote, however, required **democratic control**. In Namibia, important stakeholders and civil society have so far not - or not adequately - been involved in the discussions.

The German Development Cooperation GmbH (GIZ) and the Hamburg Ministry for Environment and Energy (BUKEA) are on the wrong path with this project that they are pursuing. It would involve replacing hard coal - which harms the climate and has highly problematic social impacts - with a no less problematic use of biomass for energy.

We demand a rapid transition to a 100% renewable heat system, without the import of biomass from the global South both - in Hamburg and elsewhere.

The signatories of this statement therefore reject the project "Transcontinental Biomass Partnership Namibia-Hamburg" proposed by GIZ and will oppose it being realised.

Signatories:

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From outside Germany:

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Almuth Ernsting, Co-Director

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Global Forest Coalition
Simone Lovera, Executive Director

[Updated list of signatories, 31 Oct. 2020]



Background information:

- Memorandum of Understanding:
https://www.hamburger-energetisch.de/WP-Server/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020_05_7-MoU-Working-Group_Namibia-2.pdf
- Projektbeschreibung der GIZ (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH)
<https://www.giz.de/de/weltweit/28648.html>
- Dossier von GIZ und IfaS (Institut für angewandtes Stoffstrommanagement):
https://www.hamburger-energetisch.de/WP-Server/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Dossier_BIP_Namibia_FINAL.pdf

Climate impacts

- Report commissioned by HET e.V. (Hamburger Energetisch), June 2020
Long version: <https://www.hamburger-energetisch.de/WP-Server/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Klimawirkungen-von-Buschholz-aus-Namibia-in-Hamburg-V1-final.pdf>
- Short version: <https://www.hamburger-energetisch.de/WP-Server/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Klimawirkungen-von-Buschholz-aus-Namibia-in-Hamburg-Zusammenfassung.pdf>
- Greenhouse gas emissions according to UNIQUE and an assessment financed by GIZ:
https://www.unique-landuse.de/images/publications/vereinheitlicht/2020-05_Greenhouse_Gas_Assessment_Namibia.pdf
<https://www.dasnamibia.org/download/policies/Climate-Policy-Brief.PDF>
- Assessment of environmental impacts in Namibia:
Strategic Environmental Assessment of Large-Scale Bush Thinning and Value-Addition Activities in Namibia, 2015, Namibian Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF), German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), GIZ, <https://www.dasnamibia.org/download/studies/STUDY-BushThinning-Final.pdf>

Social impacts

- Export of Namibian bushwood – Impacts on the Namibian Labour Market, 2020,
<https://www.hamburger-energetisch.de/WP-Server/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Bushwood-Export-and-Jobs-in-Namibia.pdf>
- Adding Value to Namibian Encroacher Bush, 2015, Namibian Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF), German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), GIZ,
https://www.dasnamibia.org/download/brochures/Brochure_Debushing_Value-Chains-2015.pdf