



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

ANNUAL REVIEW

2011 / 2012

This Annual Review is submitted to the Hon. Minister of Health and Social Services in accordance with the requirements stipulated in Section 15(5) of the Atomic Energy and Radiation Protection Act (Act No 5 of 2005) and covers the activities of the *Atomic Energy Board* and of the *National Radiation Protection Authority*

Objectives of the Atomic Energy and Radiation Protection Act Act No 5 of 2005

- to minimize the exposure of persons and the environment in Namibia to the effects of harmful radiation
- to ensure that adequate control is exercised over the possession, production, processing, sale, export and import of radiation sources and nuclear material
- to create the necessary mechanisms to facilitate compliance with the obligations of Namibia under international agreements relating to nuclear energy, nuclear weapons and protection against the harmful effects of radiation.

photos: Stock.XCHNG image bank



The role of the Atomic Energy Board is to advise on matters relating to nuclear energy and radiation sources, including sources of non-ionizing radiation such as protection against harmful radiation resulting from the use of mobile phones and base station. In this connection, the Atomic Energy Board has taken note of the continuing debate and controversy surrounding the effects on health as a result of mobile phone use and the presence of base stations near residential sites.

The Board further acknowledges the usefulness of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guide as a means to protect against the adverse health effects associated with electromagnetic fields (EMF). It should be recognized that these guidelines are based on short-term, immediate health effects such as stimulation of peripheral nerves and muscles, shocks and burns caused by touching conducting objects, and elevated tissue temperatures resulting from absorption of energy during exposure to EMF (e.g. non-ionizing radiation from the use of cell phones and base stations).

Similarly the Board takes note that the ICNIRP guidelines do not guarantee adequate protection against the long-term effects of exposure, such as increased risk of cancer. As concluded by ICNIRP, available data are insufficient to provide a basis for setting exposure restrictions. This is a matter of current investigation by the international community, including WHO, and therefore calls for patience before conclusive evidence is presented to warrant further protective measures or not.

The Board is convinced that appropriate requirements must be put in place to ensure protection of persons against the harmful effects of radiation without unduly depriving the nation or individuals of the beneficial utilization of the technology. As an advisory body to Government on radiation sources, the Board acknowledges the collective responsibility to ensure that the benefit of technology is maximized while the harmful effect or perceived harmful effect is reduced.

While the Board supports the adoption of the ICNIRP guideline, it believes that there must be a deliberate consideration of the concerns of all stakeholders. For this reason, the Board has started the process of consulting broadly in order to find a common and amicable approach of regulating sources of non-ionizing radiation, such as protection against radiation from base stations.