

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



DRAFT STATEMENT

BY

HER EXCELLENCY DR NETUMBO NANDI NDAITWAH,

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,

AT THE

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE ONGWEDIVA TRADE FAIR

AUGUST 24, 2024

ONGWEDIVA, OSHANA REGION

**Directors of Ceremonies,
Hon. Lucia Iipumbu, Minister of Industrialization and
Trade,
Hon. Ministers and Deputy Ministers,
Hon. Elia Irimari, Governor of Oshana Region and other
Governors present,
Esteemed Traditional, Spiritual and Community Leaders
present,
Hon. Regional and Local Authorities Councillors,
Your Worship, Taarah Shalyefu, Mayor of Ongwediva
Town,
Sponsors,
Captains of Industry,
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

At the onset, I extend the apology of His Excellency Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, President of the Republic of Namibia, who for other equally important national responsibilities is not able to attend this event. However, he has delegated me and sent his best wishes. I am therefore, pleased to attend the official opening of the 23rd edition of the Ongwediva Annual Trade Fair.

This Trade Fair which is held in collaboration between the Oshana Regional Council, Ongwediva Town Council, and State-Owned Enterprises creates an opportunity for these stakeholders to improve synergies and create public-private partnerships as well as the conducive environment where our businesses thrive and contribute to economic growth and job creation for the unemployed Namibians.

This year, the Ongwediva Annual Trade Fair is held under the Theme “*Bridging Tradition and Innovation*”. This theme demonstrates a clear departure from the ordinary way of conducting business to the new business culture of innovation. Change and innovation are critical enabling factors for businesses to become competitive in the local, regional and international markets. Indeed, for our businesses to grow and expand, particularly our small and medium enterprises, they should embrace innovation.

Moreover, for our local businesses to participate successfully in the regional and global economy, they require to adopt innovative, smart and appropriate

technologies that put them at par with their counterparts internationally.

In 2022, the Government of the Republic of Namibia established a Taskforce in order to drive Namibia's Fourth Industrial Revolution and transform Namibia's economy, increase its productivity and enhance global trade. The purpose of our national fourth industrial revolution drive is to create jobs, boost exports, generate wealth, diversify our national economy and broaden our tax base. In this context, our Government's new approach and strategic thrust towards economic development embraces innovation in a rapidly changing global market. It also underlines the significant importance we attach to the role of the private sector in social economic development.

I therefore, appeal to our businesses big and small to start embracing smart technologies to improve productivity in their businesses. In so doing, they will be able to think out of the box and create new entrepreneurial initiatives, increase productivity and profitability for their businesses and they will be able to save the nation.

Namibia is known for its abundance of natural resources with particular reference to minerals. Of late, in addition to the discovery of oil and gas rare earth and critical minerals are being discovered in Namibia. As a nation and more particularly our entrepreneurs we must be ready to work together and take advantage of the new opportunities to the benefit of our people. We must all abreast the government policy of value addition and prepare our to fully participate in the new industries also through the local content policy.

Director of Ceremonies,

I am informed that the agricultural sector has a strong representation at this Trade Fair. It is pleasing that irrespective of the negative climatic conditions affecting our farmers this year, due to drought, the Ongwediva Trade Fair has partnered with farmers to ensure that they are provided with an opportunity to showcase their products. During this Trade Fair, they will be able to share information with each other on the best way to be resilient and keep improving on our agricultural production. Remember agriculture is critical for Industrialisation as most natural raw material needed

in industries are from agriculture. In addition to food, one can think of fabric, leather wear, paper, carpets furnitures, clings, floors and many more.

Director of Ceremonies,

Like in any other areas of business, agriculture, as a business should also embrace technological innovation. In fact, increased agricultural productivity, supported by innovation and adoption of climate resilience strategies is the way to go for our farmers and agricultural producers to be successful. It is for this reason that our government has decided to increase investment in green schemes and to support farmers in both livestock and crop production. Also in face of the negative impacts of climate change, we are moving to conservation agriculture that includes different methods of irrigation. This is the only way we will be able to produce enough food for our people to improve food security in the country and to support industrialization for sustainable development to be realised in the service of our people

I am further informed that youth entrepreneurs from Oshana Region and beyond are also participating in the

Trade Fair. I therefore, call on the young entrepreneurs to take their calling very seriously as the future of our country is in their hands. In other words, the youth are the future business leaders of our country. The government will put in place friendly policies and laws to advance the growth of young entrepreneurs and the local business people in general. However , Trade Fair like this one, provides an opportunity to the participants to learn the skills and roles of business so that they can be economically empowered and meaningfully participate in the socio-economic development of our country. I therefore, commend all of you who have find it fit to participate in the Ongwediva Trade Fair 2024.

Indeed, the Trade Fair also provides an opportunity to business personalities , farmers and individuals to market and showcase their products, while at the same time exchange business information and benchmark with best business practices with their counterparts from other parts of World. The lessons learnt, would enable them to improve their operations, thereby enabling them to contribute to the socio-economic development of our country.

Director of Ceremonies,

We must continue to strengthen our SMEs to enable them to play their role in the economic mainstream. Therefore, opportunities offered by the Trade Fair and other similar initiatives in our country create the right platforms to test their products, processes, ideas and strategies. During events of this nature, our SMEs can also learn from their counterparts from Namibia and other countries.

I understand this year, a total of 457 exhibitors are participating in this Trade Fair, of which 17 are from international. This is a welcome move as it will encourage trade and investment in and out of Namibia. International participation would also contribute to the realization of the Africa Continent Free Trade Agreement, to which Namibia is part.

Director of Ceremonies,

I would therefore, like to commend various business entities from Namibia, the SADC region and beyond for

participating in this Ongwediva Trade Fair. Your participation enhances trade relations and strengthen people to people contact between our countries.

The Ongwediva Trade Fair would not have materialized without the support of promoters and sponsors who despite limited resources have availed financial support to the Ongwediva Trade Fair. I would therefore, express my appreciation to MTC, FNB Namibia and Standard Bank who are the Gold Category Sponsors, as well as other sponsors who made meaningful contributions towards the realization of this magnificent event. Let us continue to work together and support one another to create Namibia we all want to live in.

I also would like to thank other members of the business community from across Namibian business landscape who are participating in the Ongwediva Trade Fair. Please continue to contribute to the development of our businesses so that we can enhance the growth and competitiveness of our national economy.

Director of Ceremonies,

Dear exhibitors,

All invited guests,

At this point, I take this opportunity to wish you all a successful and rewarding business activities. With that, I now have the honour to declare the 23rd Edition of Ongwediva Annual Trade Fair officially opened.

I thank you.