



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
THE PRESIDENCY**

**STATEMENT BY
HER EXCELLENCY DR. NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
EIGHTH (8th) EDITION OF THE NAMIBIA
INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CONFERENCE 2026**

**THEME: "THE ROAD TO FIRST OIL & BEYOND:
PARTNERSHIP, INVESTMENT, GROWTH"**

**DROOMBOS ESTATE
WINDHOEK, KHOMAS REGION**

15 APRIL 2026

Director of Ceremonies;
Honourable Cabinet Ministers present;
Honourable Members of Parliament present;
Honourable Kornelia Shilunga, Special Advisor and Head
of Namibia's Upstream Petroleum Unit;
Mr. Carlo McLeod, Special Advisor and Deputy Head of
Namibia's Upstream Petroleum Unit;
Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Ms. Ndapwilapo Selma Shimutwiken, Founder and
Convenor of the Namibia International Energy
Conference;
Chief Executive Officers and Managing Directors of
State-Owned Enterprises;
African Energy Chamber;
Esteemed Captains of Industry;
Distinguished Members of the Business Community;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

As Namibia stands on the threshold of a new chapter in its development, we are here not only to reflect on progress but also to shape the path ahead, to ensure success.

I commend the organisers of this Conference for convening a platform that is both timely and necessary. At a moment such as this, spaces for dialogue, partnership, and shared understanding are essential.

I am particularly proud to learn that, this is a fully Namibian-owned initiative, conceived and driven by one of our own daughters of the soil. This reflects the depth of talent within our country and the growing role of women as architects of our economic future.

Namibia's progress must remain inclusive, homegrown, and anchored in the capabilities of its people, for development to be sustained.

The theme of the conference, *"The Road to First Oil & Beyond: Partnership, Investment, Growth,"* reflects our collective ambition as we stand on the verge of a new

energy era. An era that requires cooperation, efficiency and the utilization of the available relevant skills.

Director of Ceremonies,

Vision and deliberate action have defined Namibia's journey towards energy self-sufficiency. Since independence, Government has prioritised the establishment of strong institutions and sound policies to ensure the effective management of our natural resources.

The enactment of the Petroleum Act of 1991 and the establishment of PetroFund in 1992 demonstrates the foresight of our founding leadership. These frameworks were created long before the full existence of Namibia's hydrocarbon potential was known.

Today, the realities we face require a modernised framework that reflects current technologies, industry practices, and national ambitions. Modernisation is not merely a legal exercise; it is a strategic necessity to ensure competitiveness, institutional readiness, and sustainable value creation.

The theme of this conference tells us that the road to the first oil and beyond requires investment and partnership for economic growth and development to be realised. Hence, a need for strategic reforms to give confidence to the investors and the citizens.

Director of Ceremonies,

The Petroleum Exploration and Production Amendment Bill currently before Parliament represents a significant step in strengthening governance, enhancing transparency, and providing regulatory clarity to investors, while safeguarding the national interest through the natural resources beneficiation agenda.

A key reform is the placement of the Upstream Petroleum Unit under the Presidency. This reflects the strategic importance of the sector and ensures policy coherence, faster decision-making, improved coordination, and strengthened accountability and shared prosperity.

Under the principle of “*Business Unusual*,” we need to engage and work together in the spirit of trust and

transparency for mutual benefit, to reach the first oil as per our strategic national plans.

Further, targeted amendments will address operational and technical aspects to support the transition from exploration to production.

This conference provides an opportunity to deepen our understanding of a sector that is often viewed with both optimism and caution. While narratives of the "*resource curse*" persist, Namibia must define its own trajectory.

We must approach this sector with clarity and discipline, ensuring that our resources become a foundation for national development, institutional strength, and long-term prosperity.

Director of Ceremonies,

We must also remain mindful of the global context. Geopolitical developments, including the war in the Middle East, a critical region in the oil supply.

These realities require Namibia to remain pragmatic, resilient, and forward-looking in its policy approach.

Director of Ceremonies,

Through the strategic promotion of our geological potential, Namibia has attracted significant global investment, positioning the country as an emerging energy player.

This progress is underpinned by major offshore discoveries, particularly in the Orange Basin. TotalEnergies and its partners made the Venus discovery, one of the largest deepwater oil finds globally in recent years. Shell has confirmed multiple discoveries, including Graff, Jonker, La Rona, and Lesedi.

Galp Energia has reported significant findings in the Mopane complex. Additional discoveries by Rhino Resources and Azule Energy Namibia, including the Capricornus and Volans prospects, further reinforce this potential.

Collectively, these discoveries confirm Namibia as a proven and highly prospective petroleum province, with the scale and quality to compete globally.

Director of Ceremonies,

The implications of these discoveries are significant. They present a pathway to economic transformation through increased revenues, infrastructure development, industrial growth, and employment creation. They also position Namibia within the global energy system during a period of transition.

Government's focus is to convert these resources into long-term national value through prudent management, local capacity development, and economic diversification.

Director of Ceremonies,

The development of Namibia's oil and gas sector is firmly anchored in the country's broader national development framework and long-term policy direction.

Our approach is guided by Vision 2030, which sets out Namibia's aspiration to become a prosperous and industrialised nation.

The petroleum sector provides a critical opportunity to accelerate this vision by unlocking new sources of revenue, supporting industrialisation, and enabling large-scale infrastructure development and address the unemployment crisis in the country.

In the medium term, the sector aligns with the objectives of National Development Plan 6 (NDP6), which prioritises economic diversification, value addition, employment creation, and sustainable resource management.

Oil and gas developments are expected to be a driving force in advancing these priorities by stimulating linked industries and expanding the country's productive base.

Equally, the sector reflects the commitments outlined in the SWAPO Party Election Manifesto, which emphasises inclusive growth, national ownership of resources, youth empowerment, and shared prosperity. The emphasis on

local content, skills development, and broad-based participation directly reflects these commitments.

Taken together, these policy frameworks ensure that Namibia's petroleum sector is developed within a clear strategic context. The objective is not only to produce oil, but to leverage this opportunity to advance national development, strengthen economic resilience, and improve the livelihoods of all Namibians and contribute to global trade and economic growth.

Director of Ceremonies,

Cabinet has approved, in principle, the Upstream Local Content Policy following extensive consultations nationwide. This policy ensures that Namibians participate meaningfully in the sector through skills development, employment creation, and enterprise growth.

It is designed to ensure that the development of our petroleum resources translates into tangible socio-economic benefits for all Namibians.

Director of Ceremonies,

As Namibia transitions from exploration to development, the focus is on execution, timely project delivery, and value realisation. Partnership remains central to achieving these objectives.

While first oil is a critical landmark, it is not the end goal. The objective is structural transformation, inclusive growth, and long-term prosperity.

Namibia remains committed to maintaining a stable, transparent, and predictable environment that attracts investment while safeguarding national interests. Good governance, accountability, and ethical leadership will remain the foundation of this effort.

Director of Ceremonies,

Namibia stands at a pivotal moment. The responsibility before us is to ensure that our natural resources translate into shared prosperity and sustainable development.

It is now my honour to declare the Eighth (8th) Edition of the Namibia International Energy Conference Officially Open.

I thank you.