



*Republic of Namibia*

**MINISTRY OF INDUSTRIALISATION TRADE AND  
SME DEVELOPMENT**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**BY**

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**DEPUTY MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALIZATION, TRADE AND  
SME DEVELOPMENT**

**AT THE**

**THE OFFICIAL INAUGURATION OF THE OSHIKUKU OPEN  
MARKET AND COUNCIL HALL**

**ON**

**MONDAY, 17 JUNE 2015**

**Director of Ceremonies**

**Hon Errki Endjala Hon Governor of Oshana Region**

**Your Worship Councilor Mbockoma Mungandjera: Mayor of Oshikuku Town**

**Hon. Modestus Amutse: Councilor of Oshikuku Constituency**

**Hon. Regional and Local Authorities Councilors**

**Hon. Mrs. Julia Kakwambi-Nakale CEO of Oshikuku Town Council**

**Distinguished Traditional and Spiritual Leaders**

**Distinguished Heads of various Institutions**

**Distinguished Business Community**

**Distinguished invited Guests**

**Members of the media**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

I am honoured and delighted to address you this afternoon at this special occasion to mark an important occasion of inaugurating the Oshikuku Open Market and Council's Hall in the Omusati Region.

As it is well-known worldwide, SMEs play a crucial role in the economy of every country, and Namibia is no exception in this regard.

It is clear that the economic sector in particular, the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector plays an outstanding and effective role in strengthening any political entity in the world. And in focusing our efforts on

the economy, we as Government have always emphasized the role and participation of the private sector in rebuilding our country.

As we are set to empower various SMEs in this region, our aim also is to strengthen the existing ties between the Ministry of Industrialization Trade and SME Development and the various SMEs in an effort to encourage an open dialogue between government institutions and the private sector to support my Ministry's "Growth at Home" strategy and your strategy to successfully graduate from being SME to being business champions in your own right.

The Ministry of Industrialization Trade and SME Development remains the interface between the government, private sector and foreign investors. The government is not here to compete with the private sector but is here to create a conducive environment by legislating and implementing appropriate and relevant policies, laws and regulations and infrastructures such as these for the private sector to operate, in order to generate revenue for government, which in turn is invested back into its society for further development.

There is no doubt that this Open Market will be a turning point for the concepts of ensuring that this location provides a focal meeting point where both sellers and buyers can meet. Consumers would be able to see the range and prices of produce on offer and make choices based on preference and income. Sellers on the other hand can sell their produce and compare the quality and prices of their produce amongst each other. This will in the long run have a positive impact on manufacturing, value

addition and product diversification; development and improvement thus making retail and commercial working and marketing standards, systems and methods better and easier.

The Ministry of Industrialization Trade and SME Development wants local investors to seriously come forward to participate in the economy by utilizing this platform to its maximum capacity. It is time for local investors to give up the culture of thinking only of quick profits or where local investors are unable to think of investment based long-term business planning.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

The Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development in particular, has various programmes and facilities in place to assist the SME sector to establish and grow their businesses.

The Ministry has programmes in place to assist entrepreneurs with advisory services such as business plan formulation, conducting of feasibility studies, providing of mentorship services and business managerial and technical training, provision of equipment, facilitation of securing markets and improving the quality of your products services just to mention a few and we are ready to help you within our mandate.

It is a well-known fact that most small businesses fail within their starting-up stage of operation due to under capitalization and lack of proper management skills. To overcome the adverse prevailing situation, the

Ministry has this ongoing program to construct multi-purpose SME Modules, Industrial Parks, and special built-export oriented industrial infrastructure (EPZ facilities).

These facilities are made available to business operators at affordable rental charges.

Furthermore The Equipment Aid Scheme, for example, aims at assisting SMEs to acquire manufacturing equipment needed to increase their production potential.

To date, the Ministry has assisted more than six hundred and seventy three (673) entrepreneurs with equipment to the value of more than 56.84 million Namibian dollars just over the past last two financial years (2012/2013 and 2013/14). These beneficiaries so far, have created jobs for over two thousand (2, 000) persons throughout the country.

Under this programme SME's are assisted in product development, labelling, packaging and marketing of their product while the Ministry equally assists SMEs with developing business plans and conducting feasibility studies under the Industrial development programme.

Under the Export Marketing Assistance Programme (EMAP), SME's are often invited to participate in trade missions abroad to expose them to potential business linkages. It is, however, up to the individual entrepreneurs to tap into these programmes to see how best they can utilize the programmes and facilities to their own benefit.

The Ministry is currently in the process of reviewing the SME Policy and Programmes of 1997. This review is to ascertain the impact of the SME sector as a result of the implementation of this policy but most importantly to align the SME Policy to other development frameworks such as the National Development Plans and Industry Policy in order to provide integrated support services and incentives to our local entrepreneurs in the country. This envisaged conducive business environment will enable our local entrepreneurs to participate actively in the mainstream of the economy.

These programmes are yet another example of government's commitment to cooperate with and support the private sector especially the SME sector in its activities.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

We want our people today to play their role, to be self-sufficient because countless working opportunities are available in different sectors, agriculture and agro-food processing, manufacturing construction, industry and services.

We must never forget that the government can do a great deal in terms of ensuring the rule of law, providing security, and improving the service infrastructure, but the real engine of growth in the Omusati Region is you the entrepreneurs, the business community, it is you the private sector. But again, I would like to reiterate that without a genuine and serious

contribution by the private sector, the Government alone cannot carry out this paramount duty.

The Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development is forward-looking for a positive economic growth here in Oshikuku in the next five years and we want our people to look to the future with the same spirit. We should learn from the past so that we will not be oppressed by poverty and misery. We have won the political struggle but we have to fight this even tougher struggle, the economic struggle. We should not allow the bitter colonial history of the past to be repeated and hide or justify our weaknesses but turn our weaknesses into profit making business entities.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

This Open Market could not have come at a better time, considering the high rate of unemployment in the country, also mitigated by the heavy dependency of our economy on exporting our raw natural resources to other countries for further processing and production of finished products and services, implying that we export crucial and highly skilled jobs to these countries.

The benefits of this program are clear. SMEs participate in an environment where they can share experiences and conduct business with one another, thereby reducing the risks inherent in business start-ups. They develop increased awareness of and access to information on support services available to them by all services providers. They gain access to facilities

and equipment otherwise unavailable or unaffordable and they increase visibility and presence in the marketplace.

They pay below market rents and share reduced building maintenance responsibilities, thus, increases in job creation, job retention, and improves the local economic base by transforming under-utilized industrial based activities into a centre/hub of productivity. The availability of inexpensive real estate and support services is often the prime incentive for small businesses to venture into starting their own businesses rather than seeking for jobs.

The development of this Open Market is therefore, also aimed at creating economic independency and self-employment, as opposed to Namibia remaining a country of job seekers.

It is our hope that this Open Market will contribute to the reduction of the unemployment rate in this area, thus creating jobs for the residents of Oshikuku and surroundings, instead of relying on government alone to create jobs.

This Open Market and the Community Hall should be the vehicle for the private sector to be creative and innovative through adding value to our natural resources and thus, creating jobs and improving living standards for ourselves. Let me also applaud the Council of Oshikuku for developing a spacious and modern trading facility for its business community. Many Local Authorities are still struggling to provide conducive trading spaces but Oshikuku has successfully managed to do so in a short period after

becoming a Town. The business community should also make sure that this facility is kept clean and no vandalism of any sort. I am proud of the Council's commitment and level of responsibility towards its residents particularly the business community by constructing such a wonderful facility.

As food for thought, I live you with these great and visionary words from His Excellency President Hage G. Geingob of "No Namibian should feel left out". These words of wisdom should be imbedded in each and everyone's hearts today and be a constant reminder that whatever we embark on it is for the benefit of each and every Namibian.

**Director of Ceremonies;**

It is now my honour and privilege to declare the Oshikuku Open Market and the Community Hall officially opened.

**I thank you.**