



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

STATEMENT BY

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MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE

**58TH KEETMANSHOOP AGRICULTURAL AND
INDUSTRIAL SHOW 2013**

3 SEPTEMBER 2013, KEETMANSHOOP

Director of Ceremony

Hon. Bernadus Swartbooi, Governor of the //Karas Region

Hon Ministers

Hon Members of Parliament

Hon Governors

Hon Regional and Local Authority Councillors

Your Worship, the Mayor of Keetmanshoop

Distinguished Traditional and Community Leaders

Esteemed Captains of Industry and Business Executives

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted and very grateful for the invitation extended to me to officiate at the official opening of Keetmanshoop Agricultural and Industrial Show 2013. It is equally pleasing that this year's Show marks the 58th anniversary since the inception of this Show, which has grown from strength to strength and has become a standing activity on the annual business calendar of the great //Karas Region.

I wish to pay tribute to the founders of this business event for their foresight and the current promoters for maintaining it.

Director of ceremonies, ladies and gentlemen;

Trade fairs, exhibitions or shows like this one are important platforms for conducting business on a national and international scale, and are globally recognized as a reliable media for exchange of information for doing business today. They serve various important purposes and bring about

benefits at the level of firms and the economy. One of these is that trade fairs represent a one-stop-shop where industry buyers and sellers come together for a given number of days to show what they have, to see what is available and to do business.

These events also provide producers, suppliers and traders an excellent opportunity to assess opinions from clients and determine market potential, conduct research and evaluate competition, develop commercial structures by identifying new agents and distributors, and initiating joint ventures and project partnerships.

Furthermore, they help in creating an ideal platform for exhibitors to nurture the trust and confidence across the supply chain as well as in the marketing and publicity efforts of participating companies. In addition, business events of this kind create interactions that may lead to joint ventures, tie-ups and they may also help bring in investment in the country. In general, trade fairs and exhibitions contribute to the intensification of competition as well as to an increase in growth and employment.

It is for the reasons and tangible benefits outlined above, that businesses invest in taking part in them, and it is also for the same reasons why Governments, at Central, Regional and Local levels, support such events.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The Keetmanshoop Agricultural and Industrial Show started off and was hosted for the first time in 1955 with the aim of providing farmers from the region with an opportunity to market their products. However, due to the

positive outcomes from the events held, the scope and objectives of the event were expanded over the years to match the prevailing economic realities.

As a result, the Show attracted participants beyond the farming community to include other businesses and also government institutions who sought to showcase the products and services on offer. The Show also provided an opportunity for disseminating information on investment and business opportunities found in Keetmanshoop and the entire //Karas Region, as well as in other parts of Namibia.

Director of Ceremonies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Both the focus and the theme of this year's Show are very much relevant to our national drive towards accelerated and sustainable growth, development and becoming an industrialised and prosperous nation as encapsulated in our Vision 2030, our fourth National Development Plan (NDP4) and our Growth at Home strategy. Firstly, the focus sectors of the Show, namely industrial or manufacturing and agriculture (and agro-industry) are two of the priority sectors under our NDP4. The theme of this year's Show: "*Let's join hands for Prosperity*", highlights the need for unity of purpose, synergy and co-ordination in our individual and collective endeavours to address poverty and unemployment and to bring about growth at home, employment, wealth creation and ultimately prosperity for our people in this Region and other parts of our country. I thus, commend the organisers of this event for the choice of this relevant and inspiring theme.

Director of Ceremonies;

As I have indicated earlier, events like this will help to showcase investment and business opportunities that exist in this town and region. Such opportunities are there and plentiful, and are awaited to be explored. As a government, and in line with our Growth at Home approach, it is our desire to see increased value addition to the mineral and other natural resources found in this region to the optimal benefits of the people of the //Karas region and the entire Namibia, through arrangements such as joint venture partnerships, employment and other such meaningful benefits.

Social harmony and justice and political stability, which are the glue that support the peace that we enjoy since our independence, requires that the benefits of the wealth created and available economic opportunities, especially where such involves or is derived from the exploitation of the non-renewal resources of the country, are fairly shared among the populace to the extent possible.

It is equally important to note that our reliance on the primary sector and exports of raw materials does not only make us vulnerable to external shocks but creates jobs and wealth in those economies to which we export our raw materials, at our peril of course.

We cannot expect to achieve the required levels of sustained economic growth and employment and bring about prosperity (the theme of this year's Show) for our people by continuing business as usual - that is remaining as an exporter of raw materials and importer of consumer goods and price-takers in both cases. We need a paradigm shift and transformation from

being an economy that largely produces what it does not consume, and consumes what it does not produce.

As the first part of the theme suggests, we need to join hands and work together – business, government and civil society – to bring about the desired change and Growth at Home, which should be evident through reduced levels of poverty and inequalities and improved levels of growth, employment, local ownership and local industrial production capacity and competitiveness. On our part, the Ministry of Trade and Industry will continue to work to strengthen dialogue and co-ordination with the leadership of this region and the private sector in identifying opportunities for employment creation and business.

Director of Ceremonies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Business is often attracted to where a business friendly environment exists. I believe that the //Karas Region is a business friendly environment, thanks to the leadership and facilitative role of both the Regional and Local Authorities as well as the support of the Central Government through various offices and ministries, such as the Ministry of Trade and Industry that have implemented various programmes aimed at providing the basic infrastructures for business to set up and to improve the welfare of the people in this region.

The //Karas Region has benefited and will continue to benefit from the Ministry of Trade & Industry's programmes aimed at supporting local entrepreneurship and the growth of the SME sector in the country. One of these programmes is the Sites and Premises, implemented by the Namibia

Development Corporation (NDC), through which the Ministry constructs and leases affordable industrial and business premises to small and emerging entrepreneurs and self-help business initiatives at towns and areas where such basic facilities are not available or beyond the means of SMEs.

At this juncture, allow me to list a few of the business facilities that the Ministry of Trade & Industry has either already undertaken or is undertaking in this town of Keetmanshoop and other parts of this region:

- Constructed the Keetmanshoop Industrial Park in Kronlein;
- Constructed the Keetmanshoop Town Centre Market;
- Constructed an SME Park in Luderitz;
- A new !Homs Ai Community Tourism Market under construction in Tseiblaagte, Keetmanshoop (due completion end September 2013);
and
- A new multi-purpose Business Park under construction in Karasburg.

In addition to the above, the Ministry of Trade and Industry is also planning to implement other developmental projects in this region. The process of identifying the projects was preceded by studies on possible value chains opportunities and in consultations with the leadership and communities in the region. Some of the projects or opportunities that we are looking at are:

- A meat processing plant, in the Karasburg area close to Brukkarros abattoir;
- A feeding lot;

- A multi-purpose convention centre at Keetmanshoop;
- An irrigation project at Bethanie;
- A Swakara wool processing and packaging project;
- Construction of a medium-size garment factory, Keetmanshoop; and
- Furniture-making project from the prosopis trees, just to name but a few, as well as
- The expansion of the dates and grapes projects at Naute being managed by the NDC.

Furthermore, small and medium-sized entrepreneurs in this region, like others from other parts of the country, are eligible for and will continue to benefit from other business support services provided by the government through the Ministry of Trade and Industry and its agencies such as the NDC. These include the provision of production equipment, sponsorship of SMEs to take part in and benefit from Trade Fairs or Shows such as this one, and a range of other business development and mentorship services.

I am also pleased to inform you that the government is also working hard to boost the capacity of the newly established SME Bank to get it on its feet and for it to start performing its SME-financing role more effectively and efficiently. In order to boost or upgrade local production capacity and efficiency, the ministry has also introduced and is in the process of rolling out its Industrial Upgrading and Modernization Programme (IUMP), targeting existing industries and new value chains and manufacturing opportunities in the country.

Director of Ceremony, Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am further pleased to note that over 150 exhibitors are participating at this year's event, which includes exhibitors from neighbouring South Africa. Given the cost involved in taking part in events of this kind, the growing interest from companies and organizations to take part in this trade fair can only be attributed to the value that participants get in return for their money. I wish therefore, to commend the organizers of this Show and partners for hosting yet another attractive Show which, I have no doubt, will be a resounding success. I equally wish the exhibitors and visitors a rewarding experience.

I firmly believe that business friendly conditions and opportunities exist in this region and other parts of our country, and I invite entrepreneurs from the region and beyond to be innovative and take advantage of such opportunities and turn them into into real wealth, jobs and prosperity for our people.

In conclusion, it is now my pleasure to declare the 58th Keetmanhoop Agricultural and Industrial Show officially open.

I thank you!