

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



STATEMENT

BY

**H.E PRESIDENT HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
ONDANGWA TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION**

29 APRIL 2014

ONDANGWA
Check Against Delivery

**Director of Ceremonies;
Honourable Ministers;
Honourable Members of Parliament;
Honourable Governor of the Oshana Region; Hon Clemes
Kashipulwa
Your Majesty, King Elifas Kauluma;
Your Worship the Mayor of the Town of Ondangwa; Mr
Leonard Sunday Negonga;
Representatives of Local Authorities and Regional
Councillors;
Captains of Industry;
Your Excellency Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Distinguished Exhibitors and visitors;
Members of the media;
Ladies and Gentlemen;**

I am pleased to join the organizers, exhibitors and visitors here today at the official opening of the fourth Ondangwa Trade and Industrial Exhibition.

My presence here today demonstrates our Government's full support for this event and indeed similar initiatives that are aimed at promoting economic, trade and commercial activities in our country.

Trade fairs and similar initiatives have always been platforms for the exchange of knowledge. In today's knowledge-based society, information has become a decisive resource. The production, selection, filtration and channelling of information have thus become some of the most important tasks in a national economy.

I am pleased to note that this exhibition aims to create an opportunity for business people in and around Ondangwa to market their products and services as well as using the platform to attract potential investors to the town of Ondangwa.

I am also informed that the Ondangwa Trade and Industrial Exhibition has experienced remarkable benefits from past exhibitions and that it grew each year – attracting a massive number of exhibitors and spectators.

I am further informed that the organizers expect the number to grow substantially, as a lot of improvements were made with regard to the intensified marketing

strategies and the program, which amongst others include a livestock auction, boxing bonanza and the Day of the Majesty the King and His Council of Headmen, where the royal establishment history of the area will be narrated.

I thus would like to commend the organizers of this event for putting up a good exhibition. Their efforts undoubtedly bear all the hallmarks of visionary and dedicated leadership, which must be applauded.

Director of Ceremonies;

It is my fervent hope that this year's Trade and Industrial Exhibition will steer the organizers, exhibitors, visitors and the entire spectrum of stakeholders to make use of this platform to think, plan and act with innovation to grow our businesses and defy all adversity.

The Northern Tannery as a manufacturing entity is best positioned to propel Ondangwa and the entire region to become the Industrial hub in the northern region. It is therefore important that this tannery is supported at all levels to ensure sustained growth and to provide more employment.

Whilst we have received fairly good rains in our northern regions and country-wide it has given us further impetus on our ability as a nation to produce goods and services.

It is therefore of utmost importance that we use platforms such as exhibitions, trade fairs and expositions to explore alternative business opportunities, develop new markets and identify new trends to grow our businesses. In addition, making linkages between businesses, and adding value to our raw materials by developing and strengthening local and regional value chains should be embraced at all costs.

Director of Ceremonies;

The Government recognizes the vital role of the private sector as an important source of employment creation, investment and economic growth.

Trade fairs and expositions play an important role in linking and bringing together businesses and business operators to explore and forge mutually beneficial networks and partnerships, be it joint venture investments, sourcing of inputs or sale of finished goods.

Such events thus provide the platform for exposure of businesses and the goods and services that they produce for consumers.

I am therefore pleased to note that the Exhibition and Trade Fair Industry in Namibia has expanded across all regions.

While the initiative is commendable for its contribution towards local economic development, trade and investment and community development at large, the industry should be encouraged to develop and enforce a regulatory framework to add more value and to ensure that standards are maintained.

The government will continue to support events of this nature in order to create awareness of the importance of our domestic market. Similarly, we will continue to support entrepreneurs to participate and exhibit at these events.

Director of Ceremonies;

The government will also continue to implement practical policies aimed at encouraging investment, industrialization and economic growth.

We will continue to put measures in place to support the local small and medium enterprises (SME) so that they can become more profitable and effectively participate in the country's mainstream economy in order to contribute to the growth of our economy as we move towards Vision 2030.

In this context, mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that local businesses especially SMEs access public tenders for the provision of services and implementation of government funded development projects. This facility is accessible through the SME Bank and the Development Bank of Namibia, hence the government is aware that one of the greatest obstacles faced by local entrepreneurs and small businesses is access to capital, particularly start-up capital and bridging finance.

In this regard, the Ministry of Trade and Industry has established the SME Bank to ease these problems. Our target is entrepreneurial youth, women and men who have been deterred from starting new businesses due to lack of collateral and access to finance.

The government, through the Ministry of Trade and Industry has adopted the concept of “Growth at Home” as an economic strategy. This strategy aims at diversifying the economy and encouraging local value addition and manufacturing.

The “Growth at Home” strategy’s emphasis is on the diversification of our economy towards a higher level and contribution to local value addition and manufacturing.

The Growth at Home Strategy aims to reinforce the importance of accelerating economic growth, reducing income inequality and increasing employment. Government alone will not achieve this without the involvement of the private sector. Hence, occasions like this are very much appreciated as they bring us closer to the successful realization Vision 2030.

It also advocates for enhanced local supply side capacity as well as better coordination and collaboration between all role players in the economy, including public-private dialogue.

I believe that such value addition to our resources and industrialization in general will create the much needed employment.

Director of Ceremonies;

Other interventions by the Government just to mention a few are such as the:

- **Business Sites and Premises Development Programme; which gives affordable Sites and Premises to SMEs, and thus reduces or takes care of the portion of money SMEs would have borrowed to construct their own premises in order to produce products or trade;**
- **Business Support Service Programme, where business plans and feasibility studies are developed, entrepreneur training and mentorship services among others are offered free of charge to entrepreneurs;**
- **Equipment Aid Scheme – Government recognizes the important role that the SME sector can play in the socio-economic development of Namibia. To this end the Ministry of Trade and Industry has put in place this intervention to assist the SMEs to acquire appropriate production technology in the form of equipment and**

machinery to improve their productivity and competitiveness;

- **The Export Marketing Assistance Programme (EMAP) which is designed to promote growth of trade and to enable export manufacturers to be competitive. The purpose of this programme is to assist exporters of Namibian manufactured products in respect of activities geared towards the development of new export markets.**

In conclusion, I would like to once again commend the organizers of this event for the invitation whilst wishing all the exhibitors and visitors a successful and rewarding exhibition.

With these remarks I now have the honor to declare the fourth Ondangwa Trade and Industrial Exhibition 2014 officially open.

I thank you.