



Republic of Namibia

**STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE CARL HG SCHLETTWEIN
MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
2nd MADE IN NAMIBIA EXPO GALA DINNER AND AWARDS
GIVING CEREMONY**

**NAMPOWER CONVENTION CENTER
WINDHOEK**

WEDNESDAY, 30 JULY 2014

Director of Ceremonies
Ministers and Deputy Ministers Present
Regional Governors
Your Worship the Mayor of the City of Windhoek
Members of Parliament and National Council
Heads of the Diplomatic Missions
Regional and Local Authorities Councillors
Captains of Industry
Distinguished Exhibitors
Members of the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for the warm welcome.

I am indeed delighted to be here with all of you this evening, and I wish to particularly thank the Honourable Minister of Trade and Industry for the opportunity accorded to me to speak at this momentous occasion, marking the staging of the Made in Namibia Expo for the second time. In that regard I must commend the Ministry of Trade and Industry for having decided to make the Made in Namibia Expo a repeat feature of our national trade calendar. This is an event where we showcase and promote the industrial and entrepreneurial achievements of our enterprises in the manufacturing and services sector, as epitomized by the products and innovations we will be viewing at the Made in Namibia Expo during this week. And with this Award Ceremony and gala dinner we want to celebrate and recognize those behind these noble achievements, while indulging in a naturally Namibian cuisine.

Director of Ceremonies

Ladies and Gentlemen

This morning I attended the official opening of the Expo by His Excellency the President and we toured the exhibition. I was very pleased to see an improvement in the variety of products made in Namibia and many of which are developed from our own natural resources. In order to develop and sustain important local industries, government policy measures and strategies should be visibly effective. During my time at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, I have seen that every company would want to grow, whether they are big, medium or small. But in this growth they do not want charity, they want opportunities. Creating opportunities should be at the heart of any growth and development agenda.

A number of elements are crucial to creating opportunities for growth. In our own Namibian context and given historical facts, the skills, technology, finance and the trade infrastructure are the key enablers; they offer amazing opportunities. As government as private sector and as development agents, this is where we should focus our efforts with a view to providing the necessary environment for the growth, domestication and also internationalization of our economic players. It is through cooperation and collaboration between the public and private sector that we can steer growth at home and move our country to greater heights.

Therefore the theme and strategy of *Growth at Home* is right; to also help us re-examine the effectiveness of our policies and sharpen the

delivery of our strategies, and the need to harness efforts as stakeholders to deliver better outcomes.

To perhaps reflect a bit on Namibia's productivity challenges and why it is important to get our growth strategy settings right, some important reforms to increase Namibia's economic diversification can be cited here. The launching of the Industrial Policy heralded an important milestone in our drive for industrialization, value addition and strengthening of national value chains to achieve growth in our economy. Equally, the adoption of the Policy and Programme for Small Business Development is in recognition of the important role and contribution the SME sector can make to economic growth and development. We have realized that the Namibian SME sector is optimistic, motivated, diverse and distinctive and should be supported and encouraged to grow and flourish.

Also importantly, the promulgation of the Namibian competition law and policy is a key plank of government's regulatory environment as it influences the day to day decisions of our businesses and the day to day choices faced by Namibian consumers. As such government is getting the Namibian competition law right as has been confirmed by the recent review it underwent by UNCTAD in Geneva. A further important element is establishing national standards for our market to protect both consumers as well as our own manufacturers against inferior products as well as assisting our own manufacturers to meet the required standards to enable them to enter the retail market at home and abroad.

It is thus crucially important that we should continue to build a competitive business environment to promote investment, growth, jobs and incomes, durable benefits for consumers; an economy built on opportunity to thrive and prosper and not on unfair trade practices / financial muscle / market power. Therefore our producers must be given the confidence they need in the domestic market such as through infant industry protection measures, marketing assistance and access to distribution and retail chains and networks.

Director of Ceremonies

Ladies and Gentlemen

No one should be under any illusion of just how difficult it is to enter the manufacturing sector. Manufacturers operate in a highly competitive field which is often far from level. I want to mention just two of the many challenges that exist.

Firstly, our manufacturers have to compete against sophisticated products that are well established in our market and which are manufactured by large companies who have had the benefit of more experience and economies of scale and perhaps also a level of support from their governments which we can't match.

Secondly, the supply chains of our local retailers make it very difficult for a local manufacturer to get their goods onto the retail shelves because procurement by these retailers are centralized somewhere else and are often done in a manner which effectively excludes local producers.

I am pleased to say that our Ministry is working to address both of these challenges. Our options to deal with the first challenge are nevertheless limited since we are part of the Southern African Customs Union which provides for the free flow of goods across our borders. What we can do is to use infant industry protection to put an additional duty on the import of the same goods that are manufactured here when we are convinced that we have the domestic manufacturing capacity to supply our market efficiently, to enable our own manufacturers to establish in our market. Such measures are almost always challenged by the importers and consumers do not always support infant industry protection because they fear prices will go up and some of them may prefer the imported products. In the interest of achieving ***growth at home*** and creating jobs as well as protecting investments made in manufacturing as well as jobs created, we nevertheless need to recognize the importance of this policy measure. From my side I am also encouraging all Government entities to procure locally manufactured goods in the interest of strengthening our manufacturing sector.

Regarding the problem of finding our own products on retail shelves, I am pleased to say that our retailers have shown commitment to change this situation. They are in a process of developing a retail charter that will set out good practice guidelines for local sourcing and supplier development. Further, our Ministry together with other partners such as the FABlab and the Polytechnic of Namibia are providing support in product development to young entrepreneurs to create the up-to-date cutting edge products that consumers want to buy.

In my eyes every one of our exhibitors and everyone else in the manufacturing sector who could not be with us is something of a hero, and I congratulate all of them.

Now coming to the Awards, I must say that this is not a measure of pass or failure in any one's business. Every participant in the Expo is a winner because you have made a contribution to the Growth at Home by producing a product and in your best and unique way. The award is just another way of saying well done and we should continue to be innovative to grow our economy and improve our competitiveness. I therefore want to herald and encourage all exhibitors to work harder and be achievers in your business endeavours. You can count on our support and we will do our best to assist you to extent possible.

I thank you.