



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

**BY**

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**ON THE OCCASION OF THE OF THE INVEST IN NAMIBIA SESSION AT  
THE US – AFRICA BUSINESS SUMMIT**

**GABORONE, BOTSWANA**

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**Director of Proceedings**

**H.E Nangolo Mbumba – Vice President of the Republic of Namibia**

**Hon. Calle Schletwein – Minister of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform**

**Maureen Magreth Hinda-Mbuende – Deputy Minister of Finance**

**H. E Asser Kapere – High Commissioner of the Republic of Namibia in Botswana**

**Ms. Nangula Uaandja – CEO of NIPDB**

**Mr. Conrand Dempsey – CEO First Rand Namibia Group**

**Private Sector Representative and Business Community**

**Distinguished invited Guests**

**Members of the media**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

Good Morning,

I am deeply honoured and privileged to give welcoming remarks at the Namibian plenary of the 15<sup>TH</sup> U.S.- Africa Business Summit (USABS) – Invest in Namibia Session, which is a major platform that aims at cementing both trade and investment linkages between us. Moreover it is befitting that this summit is held in one of the world’s fastest growing economies over the past decade, our gracious host Botswana. We can only acknowledge our gratitude to our cordial host and His Excellency President Masisi for the warm reception we are accorded so far.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

The 15<sup>th</sup> Summit comes at a time when geopolitical forces are indeed fraught and shaping both current and future path of global growth. Consequently we are meeting during a period of global inflation, impending debt crisis afflicting some of our economies, observed strategic positioning and repositioning around matters of critical raw materials and a decarbonisation path as well as unfortunate armed conflicts around the globe. These contextual realities continues to present a worrying economic and political outlook.

Yet, the core themes of the 15<sup>th</sup> Summit on global value chains and energy also signals that Africa is indeed a vital frontier of our collective economic prosperity to help derisk such a uncertain international landscape.

The Summit theme on '*Enhancing Africa's Value in Global Value Chains*' needs additional corroboration in terms of our current context. Africa's role in global trade is growing and so much more at an accelerated rate over the past decade. However Africa merely accounts for only 3 (three) percent of global trade. In addition Africa's share of intra-continental trade is less than 13%, compared to close to 50% in North America, 53% in Asia and almost 70% in Europe. These sobering statistics have immense implications on the developing and integration of Africa's value in global value chains. Dire implications are thus felt in terms of limited specialisation, economies of scale, competition and technology diffusion. These then feeds into a circular self-defeating mechanisms that continues to stall Africa's ability to accrue much value into global value chains.

Similarly dissimilarities manifest themselves when we look at the energy issue for Africa. The available metrics posit that Sub-Saharan Africa emits a tiny fraction of carbon dioxide emissions. In fact the contribution is just 1.9% of the world's emissions. However, energy poverty is a key feature of lives whilst also recognising the critical role Africa is to play in a just energy transition and overall decarbonisation path.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Despite the sobering data as outlined above, it is important to outline our key resolves and recommendations to ensure a viable outcome in terms of integrating Africa fully into the global value chains framework whilst securing its role in the energy transition. The creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) is Africa's resolve to directly confront the very low intra-African continental trade amongst ourselves. A key pillar of this envisaged African single market is the fostering of regional and or crossborder special economic zones (SEZ).

We view the creation of such special economic zones as also stepping stones for the creation of capabilities that can help Africa integrate effectively into the global value chains. In this instance, the support of the USA is important through various platforms such as AGOA in ensuring a competitive market outlet for African goods. In the same vein we should not forget the critical role of our micro, small and medium enterprises both in the informal and formal segments of our economies. The recent Memorandum of Understanding between the United States of America Development Foundation (USADF) and the Namibian Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade is a key example of ensuring that entrepreneurship is fostered at even micro level.

It is our fervent hope that such cooperation around market outlet and entrepreneurship development will be the basic building block of ensuring the ultimate integration of Africa into viable global value chains. Competitiveness for Africa's integration into global value chains also calls for frontloading digital capabilities that also support entrepreneurship. To this end the recently launched Digital Transformation with Africa Initiative as a signature initiative of the *U.S. Strategy Towards Sub Saharan Africa* is very much welcome. Finally in this area the December 2022 memorandum of understanding between the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and the AFCFTA Secretariat vitally includes the '*advancement of industrial and regional value chain development*' as an cooperation area.

Similarly for aspects pertaining to energy critical examination of how we can leverage the USA - Africa cooperation should be at the forefront. Despite our extremely low per capital carbon dioxide emissions, energy poverty is extremely high and renewable investment levels into Africa not necessarily optimal. To this end our USA-Africa cooperation should invest critically in the early stages of energy project development such as the renewable energy initiatives, with much attention and investment paid to project preparation and innovative finance that can support early-stage risk capital.

With those brief remarks, it is now my honoured pleasure to introduce our keynote speaker at this Namibian plenary, who in fact does not need introduction among many of us. Amongst his many prestigious portfolios held, H.E Dr. Nangolo Mbumba is the current Vice President of the Republic of Namibia. Dr. Mbumba has headed a number of Namibian ministries before assuming his Vice Presidency portfolio, which includes Agriculture, Water and Rural Development, Finance, Information and Broadcasting, Education and Safety and Security. This is a clear testimony that Dr. Mbumba possesses multifaceted experience and enormous amount of wisdom on which we can tap from greatly. His Excellency Vice President has made significant contributions and has achieved huge milestones in relations to the betterment of the lives of Namibian citizens. Dr. Mbumba has remained a key proponent of full economic emancipation of the African continent. It is indeed my singular honour to request you all to help me welcome Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President of the Republic of Namibia to the podium to deliver the Keynote address.

**I Thank you**