



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY: HONOURABLE LUCIA
IIPUMBU**

**MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND
TRADE**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL
OPENING OF THE 13TH EDITION OF EENHANA**

EXPO

DATE: 02 AUGUST 2023

EENHANA CONVENTION CENTRE

***THEME: "REVIVING LOCAL ECONOMY
THROUGH BUSINESS RESILIENCE,
INNOVATION & DIVERSIFICATION"***

Program Director

Hon. Walde Ndevashiya - Governor of Oshana Region

Your Worship Omri-Onn Kavandje - Mayor of Eenhana Town,

Hon. Erastus Nikondemus - Patron of Eenhana Expo

FNB Namibia - the Official Sponsor 13th edition of Eenhana Expo

Mr Gabriel Mueshange Benjamin - Chief Executive Officer of Eenhana Town Council and Chairperson of Eenhana Expo

Distinguished invited Guests

Member of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning to you all,

Let me use this opportunity to appreciate you all for being here today while in the same vein thanking Eenhana Town Council through the organising committee under the leadership of Chairperson of Eenhana Expo for the invitation and hosting us at this 13th edition of Eenhana Expo. I further want to appreciate all the exhibitors for partaking in the EXPO which is held under the befitting theme ***"Reviving Local Economy Through Business Resilience, Innovation & Diversification"*** It is indeed a great honour and pleasure for me to officiate at this very important exposition.

Allow me at the onset to duly commend Eenhana Town Council for driving this noble initiative, which fits well within the mandate of the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade (MIT) through our objective of trade promotion.

I am pleased to note that the theme of this year's expo focuses on resilience as we are committed to reviving our respective businesses and the economy at large. The lessons learned from the pandemic and the ongoing geo political situation around the globe calls for our concerted efforts to look at various avenues of becoming self-reliant especially in terms of food production.

Now is the time as Namibians and Ohangwena region specifically the Eenhana town to look at innovative mechanisms aimed at accelerating structural economic transformation in order to ensure that our businesses embrace the changing times.

I am reliable informed that this year's Eenhana Exhibition host about 200 exhibitors, which is very commendable. However, our clarion call remains that we want to see our businesses growing from the levels of informal activities and MSMEs to reputable enterprises. This can only be achieved through deliberate efforts to diversify our business portfolios and venture into value addition of our products. This platform must also assist us to learn valuable business lessons from one another while ensuring that we forge collaborations which may culminate into sustainable business ventures.

The growth of our economic landscape is pegged on our quest to use all our available resources and innovate new products to serve our local market and ultimately export. Therefore, for our businesses to thrive, innovation should be looked from the broader perspective, which includes new products development, innovative business models and processes and

as well as adopting modern business management style. We have a variety of products at our disposals most of which goes to waste without adding value. These includes most raw materials such as marula, Kalahari melons, ximenia, which are very critical inputs in the cosmetic industry. Other products which may be value added and transformed into differentiated products includes eembe, wood, palm fruits, marula juice etc.

Ohangwena region is endowed with a wide range of resources, which can be leveraged on to bring about the much-needed economic activities in order to create jobs especially for our youths. There are key niche sectors which we need to pay special attention to and turn them into viable businesses. These includes agriculture and agro processing, cosmetics, textile, tourism and manufacturing.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We have good benchmarking lessons of some of our local businesses in the region who have taken the lead over the years in those sectors which I just mentioned. I am aware of a poultry farm in Ondobe, a Cultural tourism business and training centre at Ongula and some small manufacturing activities such as tailoring to mention but a few. We therefore need to provide the much needed support to these ventures collectively as public and private sector.

I also wish to appeal to our informal sector operators and youthful startups to benchmark of these successful enterprises. Therefore, it is critical that we look at available opportunities and resources to transform them into

viable economic initiatives from which we can derive livelihood. I urge you all to take advantage of events such as this one to market our products, which are in abundance as one witnesses as we drive around this vast region.

I would like to challenge our young people gathered here to be innovative and come up with concepts on how they can add value to the resources of this region and other products produced locally by the community. The Ministry will support such initiatives, as we believe that is the way to grow our country's economy.

This expo is very important in the sense that it has brought together various Small and Medium - Sized Enterprises of Ohangwena region and other parts of the country especially those from the informal sector to share ideas, which may lead to creation and development of new enterprises, job opportunities, value addition and poverty alleviation in our communities.

Our Growth at Home strategy drives home the point that as a country we should add value to our raw materials and produce high value goods for our own consumption and for export. It further emphasises the need to develop value chains so that the impact of interventions is maximised. Furthermore, the Ministry is currently finalising an Informal Economy and Entrepreneurship National Policy to cover the informal sections of our entrepreneurs as well as our youthful start-ups and general entrepreneurship.

I wish to sincerely thank FNB Namibia as the main sponsor for this event while on the same note calling up on local financial institutions to avail tailor made funding mechanisms and opportunities to our local startups, which may aid them to grow. In the same vein I implore our exhibitors here to take advantage of available funding opportunities as well to engage relevant various institutions and seek information relating to standardisation and business registrations as well as all other aspects which will place your businesses and products in a better position to reach wider market both locally and internationally.

Director of Ceremonies

The Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade (MIT) is committed to promoting these local economic development activities and initiatives geared towards achieving economic growth, accelerating business development, and nurture entrepreneurial culture in our economy. Expos are platform where business networks and relationships are formed between customers, producers and suppliers that will sustain the survival of a business. The MIT will further continue to support this exposition and others around the country as they play a role in community development to achieve our national goals and objectives.

The Namibian Government believes that investments especially in the manufacturing, farming and agro-processing business sectors are key fundamental to economic growth of our country. Therefore, investment in these sectors has the potential to assist in achieving desired economic growth and development and secure investment that can create sustainable employment in our communities.

MIT will strive to implement our mandate of supporting your activities and programs aimed at assisting existing upcoming and potential entrepreneurs like the SMEs to develop, grow and expand their businesses. We will further support new and aspiring entrepreneurs to conceptualize and translate their business ideas into bankable business plans and actual self-employment businesses, especially those in the agricultural sector.

The fiscal consolidation has seen many Government support initiatives ceasing to exist due to limited budget resulting from various occurrences such as economic downturn, drought and Covid – 19 pandemic. The Ministry is however focusing on other targeted interventions programs aimed at building the technical and managerial capacities of local enterprises, especially SMEs, such as: the provision of affordable business premises for production through and trading purposes through NIDA and entrepreneurial training and mentorship to enhance our SMEs operational and production capacities.

Other support mechanisms in the form of funds will be afforded through our business support flagship programmes such as the Equipment Aid Scheme as well as through other collaborative initiatives with local and international development partners. These programmes will be availed soon and participation will be announced in local print media this months

There is no doubt that with Government and private sector support and the willingness of the people to work together; there are great prospects for development in all parts of our country including at the grassroots. I am confident that this expo will create many opportunities to our business

endeavors. Let me further implore up on all of us here to team up and form joint ventures to upscale our output for a wider market and explore other market access opportunities in the retailing sector.

In closing, let me once again congratulate the Eenhana Town Council for this initiative. This Expo must serve as a vehicles of rural economic development to improve the lives of our people. An Expo lasts for one week but emphasis must be placed on the sustainability of the business post this event. Our Ministry's doors remain open and ready to collaborate where possible to make this expo bigger and expand its scope.

It is my pleasure now to declare the 13th edition of Eenhana Expo 2023 officially open and I wish all exhibitors a profitable engagement and networking with one another.

I thank you.