



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY

HON. VERNA SINIMBO, MP

MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE (MIT) AT

THE

BIPA AND THE EMBASSY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

OF CHINA INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY STAKEHOLDER

ENGAGEMENT EVENT

ON

TUESDAY, 28 MARCH 2023

Your Excellency, Mr Zhao Weiping. Ambassador of of the
People's Republic of China

Ms. Nancy Watyoka, Member of the BIPA Board of Directors

Ms. Vivienne Katjuongua, BIPA CEO

BIPA Executives and BIPA Staff

Distinguished Business Community,

Media representatives,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am honored to share a few thoughts today at this engagement between BIPA and the Embassy of the People's Republic of China. This event marks a significant milestone in the relationship between the people of our two great nations, and I am pleased to be a part of it. This is yet another demonstration of the friendship between our nations.

2. John Donne, a poet, captured and expressed the essence of friendship and partnership in the poem:

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main...Any man`s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind.”

3. Therefore, cooperation, collaboration and partnership is the only effective and efficient strategy to advance our common interest. I therefore congratulate us all for creating this platform today, for there is no better time to start a conversation, a discussion, a collaboration, except today. There is no better day to strengthen a friendship, except today.

4. As the Chinese Proverb reminds us – *“He who thinks too much about every step he takes, will always stand on one leg”*. I, thus, applaud us all for not thinking too much of this step, but have acted on reshaping our business landscape. This event is a testament to our commitment to supporting businesses in Namibia and creating an enabling environment for them to grow and prosper.

5. It also cements the cordial relationship between Namibia and the People's Republic of China as it provides an opportunity for us to further work together in the areas of trade, investment and economic cooperation.
6. Namibia and the People's Republic of China enjoy a special friendship, expressed through various cooperations.
7. Recently, the two countries, amongst other projects, have been working together on several projects including the development of an industrial park near the Walvis Bay Harbour. The industrial park entails a textile plant, a solar power or wind power generation plant, products assembly or home electrical appliances and machinery in order to strengthen the manufacturing capacity of Namibia.
8. The second phase of the new road to the Hosea Kutako International Airport is also supported by the Chinese

Government, which infrastructure will boost trade and investment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. In the fast-growing digital economy, another component worth discussion is intellectual property protection. The registration and protection of intellectual property is a powerful tool for businesses to protect their ideas, innovations, and creations. Intellectual property can be used as collateral for loans or investments, as it provides a tangible asset that can be valued and leveraged. It is also a very effective tool to scale up their operations.

10. I am pleased to note that Namibia has made significant strides in protecting intellectual property rights in recent years. We have implemented a number of legal frameworks and policies that are designed to protect domestic and foreign inventions and we are continuously working hard to ensure that these frameworks are enforced.

11. However, there is always more work to be done. As we continue to grow and expand our economy, we must remain vigilant in our efforts to protect our intellectual property and ensure that businesses in Namibia have the support they need to thrive.

12. Intellectual property (IP) is also currently high on the African Union (AU)'s agenda because of its eminence in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The AfCFTA was established as a body to enhance Africa's cross-border trade with the basic objective of creating a single market for goods, services, facilitated by movement of persons in order to deepen the economic integration of the African continent.

13. However, international trade is about much more than moving goods and services across borders. Innovation, creativity and ideas represent a large amount of the value that changes hands in international trade and effective

trade policy must enhance this value and facilitate the flow of knowledge-rich goods and services outside our borders.

14. I am confident that this engagement will serve as a valuable resource for the Chinese business community in Namibia, and I encourage you all to take advantage of the services and information that will be provided here today. By working together, we can build a stronger, more prosperous future for our business communities.

15. As a government through BIPA, we stand ready to work with businesses and our partners across the country to allow businesses and investors to use IP as a powerful tool to bring their ideas to the market. We encourage you to support innovators, creators and entrepreneurs in our country and beyond to climb together, scale together and win together.

16. I would also like to encourage strengthened cooperation between BIPA and its sister organisation, China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) especially in areas of patent examination and digitalisation of the business processes.

17. In closing, I would like to express my appreciation to the Embassy of the People's Republic of China for accepting our invitation to partner with BIPA.

18. I encourage all participants to actively engage in the discussions and to take advantage of the services provided by BIPA. As the Chinese Proverb teaches us: *“Listening well is as powerful as talking well, and is also as essential to true conversation.”*

Thank you for your attention, and I wish you all a productive and successful engagement and lasting friendship.