



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE

**STATEMENT BY HON LUCIA IPUMBU, MINISTER OF
INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE**

**AT THE OCCASION OF THE HANDOVER OF STARTUP NAMIBIA
AND DIGITAL CENTRE EQUIPMENT BY GERMAN FEDERAL
MINISTRY FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND
DEVELOPMENTN**

DATE: THURSDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2023

VENUE: STARTUP NAMIBIA HUB, ERF 120 CULLINAN STREET

Mr. Sikongo Haihambo – Executive Director: MIT

Mr. Ulrike Metzger – Head of Development Cooperation – German Embassy

MIT Management

Members of the Media

Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for joining us today as we are gathered here to acknowledge and express our gratitude for the generous handover of StartUp Namibia equipment by Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (commonly known as BMZ) through the German Embassy and implementing agency GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) to our Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade (MIT). This occasion marks a significant step in our collective efforts to enhance and strengthen the capabilities of the startup ecosystem in Namibia in our efforts to to deliver on our mandate.

The StartUp Namibia project was a a joint Namibian - German technical cooperation project for Sustainable Economic Development by the German Government and implemented by GIZ with the Namibian Ministry of Trade & Industrialisation, Ministry of Higher Education, Technology Innovation (MHETI), and the City of Windhoek (COW). The initial idea had its roots through the MIT work on the 2016 MSME National Policy. The project aimed to create new opportunities for jobs in the StartUp sector and build a vibrant ecosystem across the country enabling new ventures to grow and flourish.

I am therefore deeply honored to accept these valuable equipment to ensure that as MIT we now take the full responsibility of taking the project forward through our EMPRETEC Namibia programme.

The initial project had a lifespan of 3 years starting in 2020 and officially closed its doors end of 2022. However Startup Namibia project has been critical in supporting improvement of the conditions for the establishment and growth of more than a 150 MSMEs in selected regions in Namibia. During COVID-19 period, StartUp Namibia supported 600 MSMEs especially in the informal sector through grant funding which kept many businesses alive.

The handover of these essential equipment reflects the German Government's dedication to promoting economic growth, fostering innovation, and building resilient business ecosystem. These tools and resources will undoubtedly play a pivotal role in empowering our local businesses, facilitating enterprise development, and ultimately contributing to the overall development of our nation as the Ministry intends to put them to use in supporting various enterprises especially startups and scaleups.

As we express our gratitude to the German Government, let us also recognize the collaborative spirit that underlies this technical cooperation partnership. The success of any endeavor relies on the strength of the relationships forged, and German Government has demonstrated its commitment to working hand-in-hand with our government to achieve shared goals.

The equipment provided by GIZ encompasses a range of cutting-edge technological equipment that will significantly enhance our operations as they include among others modern tech machines which will propel us towards a more efficient and effective operational environment.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the team at BMZ, German Embassy and GIZ for their dedication and foresight for collaborating with MIT thus far. Our collaboration has resulted in identifying the areas where our nation could benefit the most especially through the Startup programme which played a significant role during the pandemic by providing the much needed support to the business communities. Your commitment to sustainable development and capacity building is commendable, and we look forward to continuing this fruitful collaboration in the future.

To the Ministerial staff, I encourage you to leverage the opportunities presented by this donation. The equipment at our disposal today are not just instruments; they are catalysts to ease our operations. This equipment also comes timely as the Ministry has just unveil the draft *National Informal Economy, StartUps and Entrepreneurship Development Policy* for stakeholders' comments. The reshaped StartUp Namibia and Digital Technology Centre will thus provide an implementation node to the policy.

In addition this implementation node will provide ample empirical evidence to MIT on how to incentive and support both public and private business incubators under both a policy and legal framework. Harambee Prosperity Plan II directs MIT to follow the *National informal Economy, StartUps and Entrepreneurship Development Policy* with a fully-fledged law to ensure full support to our informal economy and startups ecosystems. Let us thus harness their potential to unlock new avenues for growth.

In conclusion, let me express my sincere appreciation to German Government for their generosity and commitment to our shared vision of a prosperous and sustainable future. As outlined above we still extend a hand of invitation to the German Government to collaborate further on developing StartUp Namibia under our Ministry. Together, we will work towards realizing the full potential of these donated equipment, creating a lasting impact on our enterprise development and industrialisation landscape.

I thank you