



MIT

Ministry of
Industrialisation
& Trade

STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE

ON THE OCCASION INAUGURATION OF OMAHEKE

INNOVATION VILLAGE: O-SPACE,

FRIDAY, 11 JUNE 2021

**Director of Ceremony,
Hon. Pijoo Nganate - Governor of Omaheke Region,
Hon. Ignatious Kariseb – Chairperson of Omaheke Regional Council
His Worship Elvin Gariseb – Deputy Mayor of Gobabis Town
Hon. Regional and Local Authority Councilors Present,
Dr. Vetja Haakuria – Chairperson of the O - Space
Distinguished Traditional and Community Leaders,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me great pleasure to speak to you this morning, at the official inauguration of the Omaheke Innovation village “The O-Space” initiative. This event is the culmination of enormous collective effort from the Office of the Omaheke Governor and that of local people, in an endeavor to add value to socio-economic development to the Namibian Society as well as promoting business entrepreneurship and innovation in the region.

The O-Space creativity seeks to nurture entrepreneurship and facility-accelerating business through supporting established business start-up, integrating small businesses, youth and creative industries in the region. Putting the interests of the Namibian people FIRST is what excites us the most. This is because we at the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade communicate the “Growth at Home” language – Growing at Home first, is essential for development and remains our top priority.

A pragmatic creativity of such magnitude in the region is a powerful tool that ignites innovative potential to thaw unemployment among especially women and youth by getting them involved in growing the economy of the country.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade in collaboration with key stakeholders and development partners developed programmes designed to assist Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSMEs) and further aimed at supporting various start-ups and growing businesses to withstand the worst of Covid-19 pandemic. Through Start-up Namibia we aim to have national hubs with regional outreach with a target to create at least 150 sustainable startups by December 2023. We have no doubt that, “the O-Space” initiative will come onboard in offering practical solutions to aspiring business owners and equally providing a much needed support of a conducive platform to increase productive business in our economy.

Let this inauguration lay foundation now in order to reap desired fruits in the future aimed at promoting business, trade and sustainable development within the country and the International business fraternities. The Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade through the “Growth at Home” initiative, is committed to support industrial, trade, investment and business activities in the country. Where business is involved, we at MIT value and believe that MSMEs development is the catalyst for the

development of the industrialisation base of any nation. It is in this connection that we recognize the critical role of Micro, Small and Medium – sized Enterprises in the socio-economic development and economic diversification of the country.

The government is well aware of the importance of the MSMEs, start-ups and youth entrepreneurship and the role it is playing to develop our economy, hence the Ministry is set to implement appropriate policies and programs with a view to enhance businesses growth these include development of a National Informal Economy and Entrepreneurship Development Policy, that is currently in the pipeline. The policy’s objective is to develop the informal economy and its participants into commercially viable and mainstream economy sector, which could contribute to the economic growth of our country and its inhabitant in a sustainable manner.

The policy will further seek to address challenges faced by informal economy including infrastructure, entrepreneurial development, and institutional support. Additionally, the policy is to be developed into a national business promotion act to help ensure that it is integrated with the Namibia Investment Promotion Act with the main emphasis on sector reservation and ensuring the attraction of viable and complementary foreign investment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Among many reasons to celebrate this event, the following objectives and pillars are of great importance to note:

- Public Private Partnership (PPP) in Namibia, is not just a sounding “Gong” but a reality,
- This event creates a platform to expedite the “Growth at Home” initiative, and harness innovation especially in the era of the 4th Industrial Revolution.
- Enable the business community and members of the public to get involved in regional projects.
- Women and youth entrepreneurship and skills development through which collaborations can be forged with some of the Ministry’s existing programmes such as the EMPRETEC Programme.
- Agri business entrepreneurship which we believe is very critical especially with lessons from the pandemic to expand our productive capacities and forge new innovative ways of agriprenuership including value addition to our agricultural produce for further shelving in our local markets and export as proudly Namibian made products. Namibia has thus far acquired its own Bar code which will ease the market access of our local products.
- Innovation and incubation programme will play a critical role in nurturing our start-ups update until such a time that they have grow and become competitive. Our MSMEs must also protect their unique ideas through BIPA as part of the Intellectual Property Rights. This will

drive new ideas which can be developed further into tangible solution based outcomes.

- Early stage financing - Most entrepreneurs are challenged financially to actualise their business ideas which is critical to innovation as most financial institutions are mostly reluctant to provide operational financing due to the perceived risk associated with MSMEs, limited business development skills, minimal expectation for profitability including risks inherent in financing relatively small business proposition with no asset base.

The ministry continues to put in place various interventions to assist the MSMEs to acquire appropriate production technology in the form of equipment and machinery to improve their productivity and competitiveness (where funds permit). As nation we do not have a choice but to industrialise and to continue devising strategies to defend and sustain local and upcoming enterprises, which is to grow at home.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia, through the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade is committed to supporting MSMEs together with private sector in realizing our country's Vision 2030 and in fostering increased business for economic growth. But for private sector growth to bring about a high and sustainable national economic growth and development, it is critical that such growth enhances local beneficiation, including employment creation and market linkages, and that it promotes

economic resilience, diversification through innovation and industrial development, while promoting market access for locally produced products.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is now my distinct honor to officially launch the Omaheke Innovation village “The O-Space” initiative and wish you all successful business deals. Thank you once again for inviting me to be part of a large crowd of witnesses to this very important event.

I thank you!