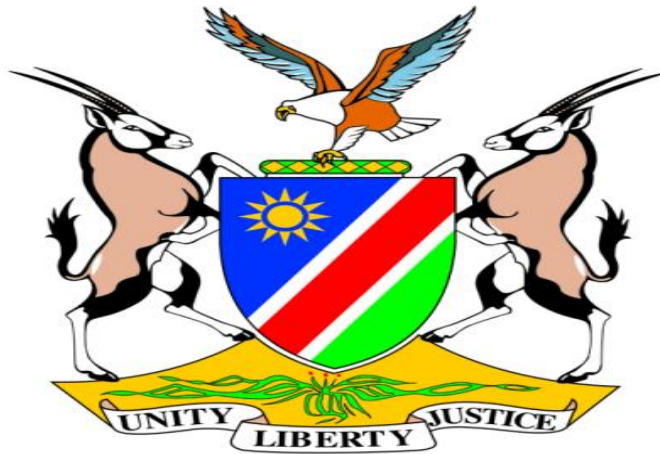


# **REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY  
HON. LUCIA IPUMBU, MP  
MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE IN NAMIBIA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
LAUNCH OF THE BUSINESS AND INTELLECTUAL  
PROPERTY AUTHORITY'S WALVISBAY BRANCH**

**29 SEPTEMBER 2021  
WALVISBAY, NAMIBIA**

**Director of Ceremonies,  
Honourable Neville Andre - Governor of the Erongo Region,  
Mr. Riundja Kaakunga - Chairperson of the BIPA Board of Directors  
Ms. Vivienne Katjuongua - BIPA Chief Executive Officer  
Executive Directors of Government Offices/Ministries and Agencies,  
Representatives of Civil Society,  
Executive Management of the Business and Intellectual Property Authority,  
Members of the Business Community and Captains of Industry,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Members of the Media,**

**Good Morning**

1. Today marks a truly special and momentous occasion not only for us as government officials, but more so, for the people of the Erongo Region as we witness the inauguration of the BIPA office in Walvis Bay.
2. The Erongo region has, since independence, played an integral role in the success of Namibia's economy. Walvis Bay in particular, is one of the sought - after harbors in the sub - region, connecting the world to Africa from the northern, eastern and west regions.
3. From the onset, I would like to extend appreciation to BIPA management and all other stakeholders who conceived and performed the necessary groundwork for this office to be inaugurated today.
4. The Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA) was established in terms of the BIPA Act, 2016 (Act No. 8 of 2016), with the purpose to register and protect business and intellectual property rights. Further, through the effective execution of its mandate, BIPA contributes nationally to an increase in economic growth, foreign and domestic investment and improvement in the areas of employment creation. Business and Intellectual Property Registrations are core to improving Namibia's competitiveness with the view of promoting commerce, trade and investments, as well as remarkable and profitable innovation.

5. I am informed that, the BIPA Board and management has over the last year considered relocating the BIPA office from Swakopmund to Walvis Bay, a consideration that was primarily driven by demand and trend statistics. BIPA has been operating from an office on the premises of the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade in Swakopmund since February 2018. The office was established in line with the initiative to decentralise services to the regions, in line with the government's objective to take services to the people especially in a sparsely populated Namibia and BIPA's decentralisation strategy, and in doing so; spread the Agency's footprint and improve accessibility to BIPA services.
6. Moving the office to Walvisbay was a strategic move from BIPA and the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade, as we believed that most of the businesses in the Erongo region are situated in Walvisbay; and if BIPA wants to empower the business owner it is important that we locate our operations where the businesses are situated.
7. The long - term aim of the office is to become an advocacy center for businesses through the rendering of training and provision of information to businesses to understand the requirements and obligations of business owners better. The move is also aligned with the MIT's Industrialisation drive and current move to establishing Industrial parks in the region. The Authority will further continue to conduct outreach activities on intervals specifically in other towns where the office may not be present.
8. In addition to the inauguration of the office today, BIPA has two more milestones that the Authority celebrating today. This includes the launch of the Annual Report 2019/20 as well as BIPA's new 5-year strategic plan for the period 2019/20 – 2025/26. The ISBP is aimed to drive BIPA's strategic direction for the period 2019/20 – 2025/26.
9. Further, the current Board together with the BIPA management developed the latest strategic plan towards the end of the 2020. The focus of the strategic plan 2021/22 – 2025/26 is centered on financial sustainability and efficiency through

automation. BIPA's strategic plan for the period 2019/20 – 2021/22 was aimed to rectify the challenges and shortcoming in the original plan by ensuring that operation targets are aligned with strategic priorities in order to fulfil BIPA's obligations and to do so in the best interest of its stakeholders and ensure prudent and optimum utilisation of BIPA's resources, while promoting good corporate governance principles.

10. The revision was also further necessitated to ensure alignment with the national development documents such as the Harambe Prosperity Plan (HPP), Vision 2030 (V2030) and the Fifth National Development Plan (NDP5). The alignment to these documents was crucial as it impacted Namibia's international ranking on indices such as the Global Ease of Doing Business ranking, the Global Competitiveness Ranking (GCI) and even the Global Innovation Index (GII). The revised plan further aimed to eliminate bureaucratic bottlenecks in the registration process and thereby making it easier to start a business.
11. The strategic plan being launched today was operationalised on 01 April 2021. This strategic vision has a dual focus of innovation and efficiency, while at the same time promotes good and sound financial management to ensure long term financial sustainability. The development of the plan was premised on further improving the ease of doing business in Namibia while providing for the protection of IP rights.
12. Looking at BIPA's annual report during the period under review, the authority declare a surplus of N\$17 million, which was mainly derived from its Annual Duties revenue stream. Despite a cost increase of 11% from the following year, BIPA's positive cash flows eliminated the need for short-term borrowing. The financial year also saw a N\$25 million increase of the authority's net assets. This is highly commendable as self-sustainability of the institution reduce the already burdened financial obligations of the Ministry.

**Ladies and gentlemen;**

13. It is critical to note that, one of the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade 's main functions are to create and ensure conditions and opportunities for job creation,

economic growth and socio-economic development. The prime source of employment and growth in an economy is private sector investments and business establishments. It is equally true that the ease with which an entrepreneur or investor can set up and operate a business as well as the protection of industrial property rights are important considerations in investment decisions.

14. The Ministry has championed the creation of BIPA to serve as the One – Stop - Centre for all business and Intellectual Property Services (IPS) registration and related matters, on behalf of the government. Subsequently, the BIPA processes of business registration and licensing is crucial, as an effective business registration system and processes will facilitate business establishment, investment and growth of existing enterprises. Equally important, is for BIPA services to be accessible, in strategic locations.

**Director of Ceremonies,**

15. Allow me at this point to briefly narrate the impact of COVID -19 on the Economy. On 13 March 2020 Namibia recorded its first COVID-19 case, following this; the President declared a state of emergency that subsequently imposed a travel ban on all international flights in and out of Namibia. While these measures were deemed necessary to arrest the geographical spread of the virus; the snowball effects of the measures were a significant impact on various sectors of the economy; crippling industries and aggravating inequality and poverty; in particular tourism and entertainment, as social distancing measures were enforced; resulting in significant job losses. The disease has effectively undone some socio-economic gains made during the past three decades.
16. This as we know, had a detrimental impact on especially businesses in the tourism sector, of which many are located in the Erongo region. The establishment of the BIPA Office in Walvis Bay, further aims to ensure that those entities that operate in the informal business sector, now has the opportunity to become part of the formal business sector and become registered to ease access to various available business assistance services.

- 17.** Needless to say, there are many benefits from being a registered business entity. As earlier alluded to, investors confidence, both domestic and foreign is largely based on ethical and legal business conduct. Therefore, by ensuring your business is registered and doing business legally, you have already won half the battle to attract investment.
- 18.** Other local opportunities also exist for registered entities, and this of course is largely available through the public procurement process, which in turn also requires registration with the competent authority.
- 19.** The Namibian Government through respective Offices, Ministries and Agencies will continue taking services to the people. We should also remember that we are moving towards embracing the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolutions and can therefore not always rely only on brick – and - mortar service centre such as this one.
- 20.** That is why we have launched the online portal for business registration towards the end of last year called the Integrated Client Service Facility (ICSF), to improve access and ensure a more efficient and effective delivery of services locally and internationally.
- 21.** I am also reliably informed that BIPA is in the process of revamping its registration system, a move that will support the country's vision of improving investor relations and ultimately make doing business easier.
- 22.** Today we are also launching BIPA's Integrated Strategic Plan for the next five years. The strategy will support the institution's strategic objectives to become a centre of excellence. Through this plan, BIPA will make concerted efforts to improve its internal processes to the benefit of the general public. This is also includes the strengthening of corporate governance and risk management which are vital in ensuring transparent management of public resources to the benefit of our people. This will further culminate in the authority becoming a financially independent and delivering operational excellence.

**23.** The economy was already weak prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore, **it was important for Government to recommit its focus to development, access to services for the people, and independence and sustainability through business ownership; and through that boost economic activity.** This move from BIPA thus comes at the right time as it will play a pivotal part in promoting and realising the Government's strategic focus in the region, particularly in the Tourism, Fishing and Manufacturing Industries.

**24.** In conclusion, we acknowledge that we have great challenges. But through the collective efforts from both public and private sectors as well as every Namibian, we can place the Namibian economy on a sound and sustainable growth path.

**Ladies and Gentlemen, with these few remarks, I now declare the BIPA Walvis Bay Office, officially open. It is further my pleasure to now officially make these documents available to our stakeholders.**