



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

SPEECH BY HON. LUCIA IIPUMBU, MP

MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE

ON THE OCCASION

NAMIBIA ANNUAL EXPORTER AWARDS

BY

**USAID SOUTHERN AFRICA TRADE AND INVESTMENT HUB IN
COLLABORATION WITH NAMIBIA MANUFACTURING ASSOCIATION**

05 AUGUST 2021

Programme Director;

Mr. Mark Anthony White, Acting USAID Country Representative

Mr. Brian Black - Chairperson of the Namibian Manufacturers Association

Ronnie Varkevisser, CEO of Namibia Manufacturers Association;

Ms. Shireen Strauss, Senior Program Development Specialist – USAID

Distinguished Captains of Industries and other invited guests;

Our Esteemed Nominees

Public Participants present;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure and honor for me to address you, at this very important occasion which is the first ever Namibia Annual Exporter Awards, being held in collaboration between the USAID Southern Africa Trade and Investment Hub (USAID TradeHub) and Namibia Manufacturers Association (NMA).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namibia has an open economy that is susceptible to global market competition, and as a result, the country has been experiencing a negative Balance of Payment over the years, due to exceeding imports higher than our exports as a result of our limited production basket. Besides high tech products and consumables which forms part of Namibia's main imports, Namibia continue to import large quantity of basic commodities and other products that our business community can venture into. There is therefore an opportunity for Namibia to increase production capacity and as a result increase exports.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia created a conducive environment for trade for both local businesses and investors. Furthermore, Namibia has negotiated the following agreements in order to ensure market access of Namibian products in international markets, such as:

- Namibia-Zimbabwe Preferential Trade Agreement,
- SADC Free Trade Area
- African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA),
- EU SADC Economic Partnership Agreement,
- SACU EFTA,
- SACU Mercosur,

- SACU UK plus Mozambique,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the notable trade arrangement that Namibia focus on is the market opportunity for our products into the US under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which is a non-reciprocal unilateral trade arrangement aimed at strengthening trade and investment relations between the United States and the sub-Saharan African region through the promotion of free-market systems, reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers.

AGOA has been in existence for two decades and has been amended half a dozen times since its promulgation on May 18, 2000. It is through this arrangement that Namibian meat and meat products was able to enter the USA market. We are all aware that, the current cycle of AGOA stretches from July 2015 to September 2025, which is the longest extension in the history of the preference program. In 2014, Namibia was ranked the 6th highest Southern African Development Community (SADC) exporter to the United States.

Namibia continues to appreciate a continuous support from the USAID TradeHub, which has assisted Namibia in developing AGOA Utilization Strategy. The strategy seeks to increase Namibia's exports under the AGOA program, which allows Namibia to export over 6,400 products on a duty free to the United States. The strategy further provides a prioritized roadmap on how Namibia can increase its exports to the United States under the duty-free market access under AGOA, and it recommends steps to address the policy, supply-side, and market challenges faced by potential Namibian exporters.

The AGOA Utilization Strategy identifies priority sectors and categorises them into short-term (e.g., beef and fish, semi-precious stones, grapes, dates, devil's claw), medium-term (e.g., specialty foods/organic pearl millet products, handicrafts, leather products), and long-term (e.g., indigenous natural products) export potential. To date Namibia has successfully accessed the duty free US market and managed to export various products such Beef, Charcoal, Beer (Windhoek Lager) to mention but a few.

The impact of Covid 19 pandemic and other external factors facing world economies have negatively contributed to our domestic industries in sectors such as construction, manufacturing, mining and tourism sector. Despite several economic challenges that face our people, this event seeks to recognize the outstanding performance and extraordinary efforts by our business people who make strides in overcoming market entry hurdles and achieving successful and consistent trade. The Ministry will continue to support those efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I have mentioned earlier, a couple of market has been secured including in the Continent, therefore exporters are encouraged to take opportunities of the continental market opportune. Hence, the call is now upon you entrepreneurs, to work hard and utilize the opportunity made available for you, to thrive globally and to contribute to the country foreign exchange reserves through export earnings.

Towards the end, I wish to congratulate the exporters who will receive awards today, and to encourage all other business fraternities to double their efforts in penetrating the foreign market.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that, you are all winners in one way or the other. For the mere fact that you have employed fellow Namibians, and have your products and services made available in the Namibian markets deserve a rounds of applause.

Thank you very much USAID Southern Africa Trade and Investment Hub (USAID TradeHub) and Namibia Manufacturers Association for hosting this event. Your unwavering support could not go unnoticed. Through your commitment, Namibia will surely one day reap the fruit of your efforts and will have more exporters to be presented with awards in the near future.

I thank you.