



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

HON. LUCIA IIPUMBU, MP

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL
TRADE POLICY AND THE NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME
FOR INVESTMENT (NAPI)**

**VENUE: WINDHOEK COUNTRY CLUB RESORT
WINDHOEK**

DATE: MONDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2024

Director of Ceremonies – Ms. Diana Tjiposa – Deputy Director - Trade Policy: MIT

Mr. Sikongo Haihambo – Executive Director: MIT

Ms. Ndiitah Nghipondoka Robiati – DED: Trade & Commerce: MIT

Dr. Michael Humavindu – DED: DID and Investment Policy: MIT

Esteemed Ambassadors in our midst

Distinguished Invited Guests,

Captains of the Industries,

Dear Colleagues from the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade and other Ministries,

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning,

It is a great honour and privilege to address you today as we gather to mark a pivotal moment in Namibia's economic journey—the official launch of the **Namibian National Trade Policy** and the **National Action Programme for Investment (NAPI)**.

Today, we are not merely launching documents; we are setting forth a transformative agenda that will shape the future of trade and investment in Namibia for decades to come. These frameworks represent our collective commitment to fostering economic growth, enhancing regional and international competitiveness, and ultimately improving the livelihoods of our people.

I will start with the National Trade Policy (NTP):

The **National Trade Policy** we launch today is designed to strengthen Namibia's position as a regional and global player in trade related aspects. We were deliberate in crafting a policy that responds to the current needs of our economy, ensuring that our trade strategies are inclusive, sustainable, and aligned with the global economic dynamics.

As the global economic landscape undergoes accelerated transformation, Namibia is committed to strategically position herself to capitalise on available opportunities and to be able to navigate through the challenges associated with those changes. The launch of our National Trade Policy is a testament to our commitment to ensuring that Namibia's trade relations with the rest of the world is enhanced. The National Trade Policy is aligned to the national, regional and international policy agenda for Namibia.

Using the National Trade Policy as one of the tools, there are numerous objectives that needs to be achieved and these include amongst others:

- The consolidation and diversification of existing markets for Namibian goods and services;
- The increase of Namibia's exports of goods and services in regional, continental and global markets;
- The empowerment of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), women and youth owned business with critical market entry points such as access to finance, skills and market information;
- The enhancement of Namibia's inclusive and competitive domestic trading environment for goods and services; and
- To increase Namibia's institutional and technical capacity to effectively negotiate and implement trade agreements and trade-related initiatives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Previously Namibia's engagement in this regard was informed by our membership to Regional and International Organisations such as the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

This policy is an outcome of a very collaborative endeavor that has involved extensive consultations with stakeholders from a variety of sectors, including government agencies, private enterprises, civil society and international cooperating partners. I am profoundly grateful for the assistance, time, expertise and insights that have been invested in the creation of this National Trade Policy which we believe is inclusive, robust, and forward-thinking.

Suffice to state at this juncture that in accordance with the set guidance for government policy drafting by the National Planning Commission, the National Trade Policy includes an implementation framework.

Moving on to the National Action Programme for Investment (NAPI):

As a committed member of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), Namibia shares the vision of regional integration and collective prosperity. We recognize that attracting and facilitating investment is central to our shared goal of sustained economic development and deeper regional integration. In this context, the NAPI serves as a crucial instrument in our broader strategy for growth and industrialisation.

Our commitment to regional integration is not just a matter of policy; it is a vision for our future. The SADC Finance and Investment Protocol (FIP) has laid the foundation for this vision, guiding member states towards a cohesive approach in

improving the investment and business environment. Under the Investment Annex of the FIP, several programs and projects have been initiated, one of which is the Investment Policy Framework (IPF). The IPF provides a roadmap for member states to develop National Action Plans for Investment, ensuring that our national policies align with regional objectives.

Our NAPI is not an isolated effort, but a reflection of our broader national development framework, which includes Vision 2030, the National Development Plans, the "Growth at Home Strategy," and the Harambee Prosperity Plans. These documents outline our commitment to economic diversification, competitiveness, and inclusive growth, and they form the bedrock upon which the NAPI is built.

It is important to emphasise that the NAPI outlines our priorities for investment reforms over the next three years, focusing on immediate and medium-term objectives. Through comprehensive stakeholder consultations and data analysis, we have identified key areas that require our attention. These priorities are structured around five core objectives, which have been mentioned by the presenter, however I am highlighting them once more again, because they serve as our guiding principles towards enhancing our investment environment. These are:

- Promoting a Coherent and Transparent Investment Environment whereby we aim to establish a business environment that is clear, predictable, and conducive to investment.
- Enhancing Market Access and Competition through the improvement of market access and ensuring fair competition.
- Securing and Protecting Investors' Rights as we endeavor to safeguarding both local and international investors' rights

- Promoting Responsible Business Conduct whereby we emphasize the importance of responsible business practices that contribute to sustainable development.
- Fostering Regional and Global Cooperation: We recognize the value of collaboration with both regional and global partners to advance our investment goals.

Having mentioned the principles, it is of course essential to note that the implementation of the NAPI will be overseen by a Technical Working Group (TWG). The TWG will be constituted of officials with diverse expertise, from different institutions, and it will utilize a mechanism called the Rapid Results Approach (RRA), which is designed to measure progress, review outcomes, and make necessary adjustments. All in all, the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade will play a pivotal role in overseeing these processes to ensure that we meet our targets and milestones.

Director of Proceedings,

Allow me therefore to extend deepest gratitude to all the stakeholders who have contributed to the development and validation of the National Trade Policy and the National Action Programme for Investment. Your insights and input have been invaluable. We are also thankful for the support from the SADC Secretariat and the SADC Support Consortium, for the technical support towards the development of the NAPI.

Furthermore, I would also like to extend appreciation to our development cooperation partners, Southern African Development Community-Trade Related Facility (SADC-TRF) through the EU, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and United Nations Development Programme Namibia (UNDP). This milestone could not have been attained without your support.

Let me also applaud the staff members of the Ministry who played a pivotal role in ensuring that these key documents are duly finalised within the given timelines.

The NAPI represents our commitment to fostering a favourable investment climate, driving economic growth, and achieving our industrialisation objectives. Together, let us work towards realizing these goals, enhancing our competitiveness, and contributing to the prosperity of our nation and the entire SADC region.

The Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade will be responsible for the strategic management and implementation of the National Trade Policy, however the respective agencies are expected to manage and facilitate aspects of trade policy which fall within their mandates as set out in the Implementation Plan.

At the same time, while government provides the policy and regulatory environment for trade and investment, the conduct of trade in domestic, regional and international markets should be led, managed and owned by the private sector in Namibia.

It is in that regard, *Ladies and gentlemen* that I encourage business operators to establish their own administrative and coordination mechanisms through their associations and to partner with government in the implementation of the national trade policy.

I earnestly urge all stakeholders to maintain a collaborative and partnership-oriented approach as we implement this trade policy. I am certain that we can achieve our goal of a prosperous and industrialised Namibia by working together, as the success of this policy is dependent on it.

I thank you