



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

HON. LUCIA IIPUMBU, MP

MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCHING OF THE MARKET ACCESS
SUPPORT PROGRAM (MASP)**

VENUE: AVANI HOTEL, WINDHOEK

DATE: THURSDAY, 28 AUGUST 2024

Director of Ceremonies – Ms. Ndiitah Nghipondoka-Robiati: Deputy Executive Director: MIT

Hon. Verna Sinimbo – Deputy Minister: MIT

Mr. Travis Adkins - President and Chief Executive Officer, USADF;

H.E. Margret Mensah-Williams – Namibian Ambassador to the USA

H.E. Randy R. Berry - United States Ambassador to Namibia;

All Senior Government Officials

All Senior Private Sector Officials

Captains of the Industries

Members of the Business Community;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning

1. It is with great pleasure that I stand before you today to witness the official launch of the Market Access Support Program. Today's event is a result of the Trade Mission between the United States of America (USA) – Namibia hosted by our Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade in June 2022 which was held in Windhoek, Namibia where a business delegation consisting of business people from these sectors visited Namibia to explore business opportunities in Agriculture and Agro processing, Education, Health, Finance as well as Mining.
2. Among the abovementioned delegation, United States - African Development Foundation (USADF) a public corporation of the Government of the United States of America was one of those that attended and expressed keen interest to work together with the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade to support manufacturing and value addition in Namibia and increase competitiveness of businesses in national, regional and international markets.

3. In order to formalize the support that we are witnessing today, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the USADF and MIT on the 14 December 2022 during the US - Africa Leaders' Summit held in Washington, DC - USA. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) provides a strategic overview on the implementation of the signed Memorandum of Understanding in Namibia.
4. This strategic initiative promises to unlock the existing and new opportunities and pathways within various sectors including value chain development for MSMEs engaged in production, manufacturing, value addition and processing of produces and other priority sectors of the economy with a special focus on women and youth across all our 14 regions.
5. The proposed top priority areas for support are; the Agricultural Sector & its value chain i.e. horticulture, agro-processing, livestock farming & marketing, poultry farming SMEs i.e. woodwork, garment production, metal fabrication, cosmetics and detergents, Digital services The Project has the option to fund multiple points along the agricultural value chains, including producers, logistics, processors, and exporters.
6. As we all know, the agricultural and MSMEs Sectors are the engine of our economy. The agricultural sector in particular does not only provide food security but also plays a critical role in creating employment, reducing poverty and driving economic growth.
7. It is worth mentioning that a large section of Namibia's most disadvantaged population is engaged in micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), Cooperatives, Associations, Community Projects, Producers and / or Farmers' Groups and individual enterprises in all fourteen (14) regions of the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

8. The Government recognises the vital role that the said business sectors plays in the country's socio-economic development. In 1997, the Government through the then Ministry of Trade and Industry launched the Policy and Programme on Small Business Development, outlining specific pro-active policy interventions and programme aimed at addressing identified key constraints on the effective operation, growth and development of MSMEs in the country.
9. Our various local producers at different level of operation are the unsung heroes who ensure that our field are productive, our markets are vibrant and, the community within which they operate are nourished. However, despite their hard work and dedication, they face numerous challenges, particularly access to finance, technology, capacity building, and entering new and lucrative markets.
10. Such barriers exist mainly because of the high cost involved in sourcing or acquiring technology and inputs, the cost of which is often beyond the reach and means of potential micro, small and medium enterprises in the country. The high costs are not only due to the high direct purchase costs, but also the high cost of access to finance from financial institutions and Financial Development Corporations.
11. The first Industrial Policy of 2012 and its implementation strategy, the Growth at Home Strategy (2014), were adopted and launched. The Policy and its Strategy prioritised access to local and international markets of locally produced products as key to stimulating and enhancing local manufacturing, processing and value addition in the country.

12. Subsequent to the launch of the Industrial Policy and its implementation Strategy, the 1997 Policy and Programme on Small Business Development was revised and resulted into the MSMEs Policy of 2016. The National Quality Policy of 1999 was also revised. Currently the revised National Quality Policy (2020 – 2025) is in place. It has an overarching objective of facilitating local, regional, and international trade of locally produced goods without compromising quality, safety and health of consumers.
13. Today, we are witnessing a bold step taken towards addressing some of the critical alluded challenges in facilitating and enhancing trade, productivity and competitiveness to assist various enterprises in the agricultural sector as well as micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with a special focus on women and youth.
14. The key support to be given under this Program is capacity building and financial assistance after which an applicant has gone through a thorough application, screening and onsite verification once short-listed. This support has been identified due to the fact that project promoters and project owners need to be capacitated so that they can improve their product quality and packaging to mastering digital marketing and e-commerce, to ensure that our SMEs are well-prepared to meet the demands of modern markets.
15. While the Financial Support in the form of grants will provide an opportunity to qualifying projects to have access to finance that remains one of the biggest hurdles for most categories of entrepreneurs across all the economic sectors and industries. Therefore, through this program, tailored financial products in a form of a grant will be offered to assist them to invest in new technologies, expand their operations, and enhance their competitiveness.

Director of Proceedings,

16. This Program is also intended to support entrepreneurs in other ways such as helping them to improve and increase skills development, innovation, productive capacities, product quality, that would result in food security, employment -creation, poverty reduction, survival and growth in general. However, to ensure that this intervention will have the desired impact in our communities, the Ministry will ensure that the beneficiaries are capacitated, and their activities are monitored regularly.
17. As partners in this strategic initiative, our commitment is that both the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade and the United States African Development Foundation (USADF) endeavors to working closely with industry operators in order to enhance various sectors in order to produce products that can compete on a global stage.
18. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed to making this program a reality. Your dedication, commitment, and passion are truly inspiring. To our potential beneficiaries; I want to say this: We believe in you. We believe in your potential, your creativity, and your ability to transform challenges into opportunities. This program is for you, and we are here to support you every step of the way.
19. I encourage both existing and emerging entrepreneurs in the targeted sectors especially MSMEs specifically those owned by women and the youth to take advantage of this support to improve their businesses and contribute to poverty reduction and national socio-economic development.
20. With these few remarks, I therefore declare the Market Access Support Program officially launched!

I THANK YOU