



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

SPEECH BY HON. LUCIA IIPUMBU, MP

MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATIONS ON THE
DRAFT SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE BILL (SEZ), NATIONAL INFORMAL
ECONOMY, STARTUPS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT
POLICY (NIESED), NAMIBIA INVESTMENT PROMOTION AND
FACILITATION REGULATIONS AND NATIONAL COOLING STRATEGY**

VENUE: MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS CONFERENCE HALL, WINDHOEK

DATE: MONDAY, 29 APRIL 2024

Programme Director: Mr. Sikongo Haihambo: Executive Director for MIT

Hon. Laura Veendapi McLeod-Katjirua - Governor: Khomas Region

Your Worship Queen Kamati – Mayor of City of Windhoek

Hon. Regional and Local Authority Councilors Present

Chief Executive Officers Present

Distinguished Captains of Industries and other invited guests;

Our Esteemed Businesses at all levels

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen

I extend a warm welcome to each one of you gathered here today at the Khomas regional Stakeholders Consultations. It is a privilege to have such a diverse group of stakeholders from various sectors joining us to discuss crucial aspects of economic development in our beloved nation of Namibia.

Today's consultations focus on several key initiatives that are integral to our vision of fostering economic growth, promoting entrepreneurship, and ensuring sustainable development. We are here to deliberate on the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Bill and accompanying regulations, the National Informal Economy, Startups, and Entrepreneurship Development Policy (NIESED), Namibia Investment Promotion and Facilitation Regulations, and the National Cooling Strategy.

This is our last consultation on these three key drafts legislative reforms which we are undertaking as the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade (MIT) following similar engagements across the country. Post this engagement, we will duly incorporate all relevant inputs and submit the final documents through the normal government channels for endorsement and approval.

To begin with, as you may all be aware, the Government has phased out the EPZ regime due to challenges identified related to preferential treatment and tax incentives to manufacturers and export processing zones (EPZ) and classified as harmful tax regimes. Namibia was allowed until December 2021 to adapt existing legislation and consequently this translated in the shift from the EPZ to an improved Sustainable Special Economic Zone (SEZ) regime, which aims to increase responsiveness to investors' needs and expedite Namibia's road to industrialization.

The establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) is critical to our economic strategy, aimed at attracting investment, creating employment opportunities, and enhancing industrialization. Namibia through SEZs strives to provide a conducive environment for businesses to thrive, offering various incentives and streamlined regulatory frameworks. Through the SEZ Bill and its accompanying regulations, we also aim to create a framework that fosters innovation, drives productivity, and stimulates economic diversification.

Furthermore, we are aware of the significance of the informal Sector operators to our nation and the contribution of the sector to our socio - economic fabric. The National Informal Economy, Startups, and Entrepreneurship Development Policy (NIESED) underscore our commitment to supporting informal businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs. This work gained more momentum especially since the COVID – 19 pandemic whereby MIT undertook initiatives to cater for the startups and informal traders. It was quite difficult to locate them and provide the necessary sustenance to ease their operations. We have also witnessed over the years the ongoing conflicts between informal traders and the law enforcement agents in terms of adherence to municipal bylaws.

We are therefore committed through this policy and our envisaged Bill to develop the NIESED sectors and its participants into commercially viable and mainstream economy sector, which could contribute to the economic growth of Namibia and its inhabitant in a sustainable manner.

The policy seeks to address challenges faced by startups and the informal economy including infrastructure, entrepreneurial development, and institutional support. The policy stands to further guide the interventions geared to uplift informal trading and available startup ecosystem and establish basis for monitoring and evaluation system with the main aim to transform the NIESED sector players into innovative entrepreneurs focusing on sustainable business activities.

The policy further seeks collaborate with relevant institutions to establish an integrated capacity transformation programmes in entrepreneurship and enterprise development to change the mindset of the entrepreneurs by providing them with the competences and behaviors associated with successful entrepreneurs worldwide.

In parallel, our work on the Namibia Investment Promotion and Facilitation Bill has evolved significantly and to date, we are geared towards retabling the Bill in Parliament soon following extensive second round of consultations. Today we are presenting the accompanying draft regulations of the Namibia Investment Promotion and Facilitation Bill. These are designed to streamline investment procedures, reduce bureaucratic hurdles, and enhance investor confidence. These regulations will facilitate a more efficient investment process, enabling us to attract both domestic and foreign investment across various sectors of the economy.

Additionally, the National Cooling Strategy reflects our commitment to sustainable development and climate action. As we confront the challenges of climate change, it is imperative to adopt strategies that promote energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and mitigate the impacts of rising temperatures. The National Cooling Strategy will guide our efforts in achieving these objectives, ensuring a sustainable and resilient future for generations to come.

We believe these work compliments other efforts undertaken by sector operators, among others the urgent need to manufacture these products locally and impartment of skills in the handling of these gases. This sector further compliment the green industrialisation endeavours.

As we embark on this journey of consultation and collaboration, I urge each one of you to actively participate, share your insights, and contribute constructively to the discourse. Your perspectives, expertise, and feedback are invaluable as we strive to shape policies and regulations that will drive economic prosperity and improve the lives of all Namibians.

I thank you.