



Republic of Namibia

KEY NOTE ADDRESS

BY

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DEPUTY MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE

DURING THE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AFCFTA)

18 AUGUST 2022

SAFARI HOTEL, WINDHOEK

Director of Ceremonies,

UN Resident Coordinator, UN Namibia, Mrs. Alka Bhatia,

The Executive Director of Ministry of Industrialization and Trade, Mr. Sikongo Haihambo,

The Executive Director of Ministry of Works and Transport, Mrs. Ester Kapanda,

The Executive Director of Ministry of Agriculture, Mrs Ndiyakupi Nghituwamata,

The Chief Executive Officer of Namibia Trade Forum, Mrs. Stacey Pinto,

**Chief Executive Officer of Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Representative from UNDP,
Mrs. Charity Mwiya,**

Private Sector Representatives and Business Community,

Government Offices, Ministries and Agencies representatives,

Distinguished Panelists,

Members of the Media,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my distinct honor, to deliver the keynote address at this important occasion, which is aimed at information dissemination and awareness creation about the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement.

From the onset, I wish to thank UNDP Namibia for supporting the hosting of this event, noting that the UNDP and all other UN Agencies remains one of important and key partners in our developmental agenda.

As you may be aware, Namibia has negotiated, signed and ratified the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).The AfCFTA

negotiations started in February 2016, but, following several rounds of negotiations, the AfCFTA agreement was signed in March 2018 during the 18th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Governments in Kigali, Rwanda. Subsequently, the Agreement entered into force on 30 May 2019.

The African Continental Free Trade Area is expected to increase intra-African trade, enhance regional and continental value chains, through the establishment of viable and competitive industries in the continent. This could culminate in innovation, employment opportunities and wealth creation to the citizenry of the African people, especially, women and youth. Namibia within the framework of SACU is currently finalizing her tariff offer to the AfCFTA and thereafter, Namibia will soon launch her National AfCFTA Implementation Strategy and Action Plan.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is imperative for Namibian business communities to prepare and take full advantage of the benefits offered under the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement. This entails increasing production capacities, diversification and adding value to our raw materials as well as to ensure that our produce is finding its place of exports on the African continent.

The AfCFTA Secretariat has already made available trading documents that will accompany our exports, such as the AfCFTA Rules of Origin certificate, supplier declaration form and these documents will be made available by NAMRA when trade commences.

It is also important to note that the Pan African Payment and Settlement System has been developed to ensure that trade under the AfCFTA will be done through the African currencies. This means that, Namibian exporters including informal traders will now be

able to settle their imports using the local currency and receive payments in the local currency when exporting goods and services within the continent, this will make trade easier and reduces trading costs to the minimal.

Namibian exporters will have access to trade information such as applicable tariffs, schedules of specific commitments on trade in services, on line. This will instantly provide information to traders on the duty that a specific product attracts in all the African countries and the laws and regulations that are applicable to services sectors, thus enhancing predictability.

Director of Proceedings,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen ,

As you may be aware, the start of trading under the AfCFTA was officially launched in January 2021. This provide us with a perfect opportunity to prepare and gain a better understanding of what the African Continental Free Trade Area is all about and the benefits that it offers.

The Ministry of Industrialization and Trade in collaboration with the Namibia Trade Forum, an Agency under our Ministry will continue to provide necessary information series and ensure that traders are well equipped and ready to trade under the AfCFTA. We also have to ensure that women traders, youth and informal traders are aware of the agreement through all public / private sector dialogue platforms available.

I am therefore delighted to note that this event is once again attended by our development partners, business community and government officials.

I am therefore encouraging you to fully utilize this opportunity to engage with the experts in the room and ensure that you grasp every detail in order to enhance your understanding of the AfCFTA.

With this few remarks, I wish you a fruitful deliberation and successful event,

I thank you!