



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

REMARKS BY HON. LUCIA IIPUMBU

MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE
NONGOZI CULTURAL EXPO**

“OUR CULTURE OUR FOUNTAIN OF WISDOM”

7 OCTOBER 2022

**VENUE: NONGOZI VILLAGE, MAYEYI TRADITIONAL
AUTHORITY**

Hon. Austin Mukorufu (V) - Silalo Induna of Nongozi Sub - Khuta

Hon. Calvin Shozi - Ngambela (Senior Councilor) of the Mayeyi Traditional Authority

Hon. Alfea Sampofu - Governor of the Mighty Zambezi Region

Hon. Matengu Simushi - Chairperson of the Zambezi Regional Council

Hon. Humphrey Divai - Councilor of the Judea Lyaboloma Constituency and all Regional and local Councilors present

Ms. Regina Ndopu – Lubinda - CRO of the Zambezi Regional Council

Hon. Silalo Indunas of the various Sub-Khuta of the Mayeyi Traditional Authority, Captains of the industry

Esteemed invited guests,

Members of the of media,

Ladies and gentlemen

Good Morning to you all,

Let me use this opportunity to thank the Mayeyi Traditional Authority through the Nongozi Sub - Khuta under the leadership of Hon. Mukorufu (V) for the invitation and hosting us at this crucial event. I further want to appreciate you all for attending the inaugural Nongozi Cultural EXPO held under the befitting theme **“Our Culture Our Fountain of Wisdom”**. It is indeed a great honour and pleasure for me to officiate at this very important occasion.

Allow me at the onset to duly appreciate the Organising Committee of this noble and commendable initiative, which fits well within the mandate of the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade (MIT) through our objective of trade promotion. The process, which culminated into MIT's involvement in the hosting of this cultural EXPO, included a series of consultations with various stakeholders. Allow me therefore at this juncture to appreciate Hon. Mukorufu (V) and his team who initially presented the conception of this idea to us in June this year and we have been part of the process until today. This is a very important event, whose main objective, amongst others, is to showcase products and services of the Nongozi community, as well as products from other parts of the country and form long lasting business relationships.

I am pleased to note that the theme of this year's expo clearly demonstrates that the Nongozi community is committed to take advantage of its rich cultural heritage to advance structural economic transformation in the region. Namibia at large embraces cultural diversity among our societies however we believe that we can tackle various social development challenges that faces our communities by leveraging on our available resources to fight unemployment and poverty.

The Mayeyi Community is widely known for its rich cultural heritage, therefore it is critical that we look at available opportunities and resources to transform them into viable economic initiatives from which we can derive livelihood. I urge you all to take advantage of events such as this one to market our cultural diversity and products that are in abundance and one witnesses as we drive around this vast region. This community is strategically located being home to two national parks, with world - class hospitality establishments frequented by tourists from all parts of the world. The tourists should not only come here to see the beauty of our country, i.e., scenery, fauna and flora but should also come and appreciate our rich cultural heritage. Let us engage the owners of these hospitality facilities to collaborate with the communities in their proximity to sell our arts and showcase our cultural patrimonial at their facilities to entertain the visitors. This will be a win-win situation for both parties.

Apart from the cultural heritage, this community is equally endowed with natural resources such wood and fertile land which has been the mainstay from which the majority if not all derive their livelihoods. Value addition to these resources and produce will go a long way to realise local economic development, food self-sufficiency and transform the local economy and the country at large. I challenge young people gathered here to be innovative and come up with concepts on how they can add value to these resources and other products produced locally by the community. The Ministry will support such initiatives, as we believe that is the way to grow our country's economy.

This expo is very important in the sense that it has brought various Small and Medium - Sized Enterprises of Nongozi and other parts of the country especially those from the informal sector to share ideas, which may lead to creation and development of new enterprises, job opportunities, value addition and poverty alleviation in our communities.

Our Growth at Home strategy drives home the point that as a country we should add value to our raw materials and produce high value goods for our own consumption and for export. It further emphasises the need to develop value chains so that the impact of interventions is maximised. Furthermore, the Ministry is currently finalising an Informal Economy and Entrepreneurship National Policy to cover the uniformalised sections of our entrepreneurs as well as our youthful start-ups and general entrepreneurship. I have taken note of the various informal traders' stalls here which need upgrading and MIT will engage our stakeholders to upgrade these markets as we strive to collectively build an inclusive economy.

Director of Ceremonies

The Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade (MIT) is committed to promoting these local economic development activities and initiatives geared towards achieving economic growth, accelerating business development, and nurture entrepreneurial culture in our economy. Expos are platform where business networks and relationships are formed between customers, producers and suppliers that will sustain the survival of a business. The MIT will further continue to support this exposition and others around the country as they play a role in community development to achieve our national goals and objectives. The Namibian Government believes that investments especially in the manufacturing, farming and agro-processing business sectors are key fundamental to economic growth of our country. Therefore, investment in these sectors has the potential to assist in achieving desired economic growth and development and secure investment that can create sustainable employment in our communities.

MIT will strive to implement our mandate of supporting your activities and programs aimed at assisting existing upcoming and potential entrepreneurs like the SMEs and community of Nongozi to develop, grow and expand their businesses. We will further support new and aspiring entrepreneurs to conceptualize and translate their business ideas into bankable business plans and actual self-employment businesses, including those in the agricultural sector.

The fiscal consolidation has seen many Government support mechanisms ceasing to exist due to various occurrences such as economic downturn, drought and Covid – 19 pandemic. The Ministry is however focusing on other targeted interventions programs aimed at building the technical and managerial capacities of local enterprises, especially SMEs, such as: the provision of affordable business premises for production and trading purposes through NIDA and entrepreneurial training and mentorship to enhance our SMEs operational and production capacities.

There is no doubt that with Government and private sector support and the willingness of the people to work together; there are great prospects for development in all parts of our country including at the grassroots level such as the Nongozi community. I am confident that this expo will create many opportunities to our business endeavors. Let me further implore up on all of us here to team up and form joint ventures to upscale our output for a wider market and explore other market access opportunities in the retailing sector.

In closing, let me take this space to congratulate the Mayeyi traditional authority for this initiative. Our traditional authorities should not only serve as arbitrators to resolve conflicts among communities. They should also be vehicles of rural development to improve the lives of their subjects. It is a commendable move from the community, more so when this is not just a once - off event, but it will be an annual occurrence. Our Ministry's doors remain open and ready to collaborate where possible to make this expo bigger and expand its scope.

It is my pleasure now to declare the Nongozi Cultural Expo 2022 officially open and I wish all exhibitors a profitable engagement and networking with one another.

I thank you.