



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

HON. LUCIA IIPUMBU, MP

MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE

**ON THE OCCASION OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ON
CONSUMER PROTECTION AND LIQUOR LICENCING AND
RELATED MATTERS
AT**

**MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS
NEW BUILDING, TRAINING HALL, GROUND FLOOR
WINDHOEK, KHOMAS REGION
FRIDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Director of Ceremony;

Hon. Laura McLeod Katjirua - Governor of Khomas Region;

Hon. Verna Sinimbo – Deputy Minister of Industrialisation and Trade;

Mr. Harris Salionga - His Worship Acting Chief Magistrate, Office of the Judiciary;

Mr. Alweendo Venatias - Chairperson of the Khomas Regional Liquor Licensing Committee;

Senior Government Officials;

Captains of the Industries;

Members of the Business Community;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning

1. It is with great sense of honor that we are gathered here today, to create awareness, share and deliberate on issues of mutual business and entrepreneurial interests on the Consumer Protection Policy as well as the administration of our National law, the Liquor Act, Act No. 6 of 1998. This engagement comes at an opportune time considering that the festive season is upon us. The festive season should be one where we spend time with our loved ones, especially family and friends. Each year, there are incidents that occur which turn what is supposed to be a season of happiness into one of sadness and pain for some people. The majority of road accidents are linked to alcohol consumption and in the same vein this period also carries with it abuses against consumers as businesses look to maximize profits.

2. Today's engagement is aimed towards creating a common understanding with regards to the implementation of the Liquor Act and to educate consumers about their rights. This session also provides us as stakeholders with a platform to identify possible shortcomings of the Liquor Act and propose amendments with a view to make the Act current. We must work together for a better quality of life for the citizens of Namibia. This means that we must never allow alcohol to threaten the stability of our country while being cognizant of the fact that alcohol does contribute to the GDP of our country, hence it is a fine balancing act.
3. As we are aware that, it has been a very long and difficult period for all of us, since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in November 2019 which, have severely affected various industries including the Liquor Industry, we have sailed through and made it possible to reactivate our business operations while observing the COVID-19 protocols. On this regard, I wish to extend a word of appreciation to our business community for adhering to the COVID-19 protocols, noting that the said protocols to a certain extent had an adverse impact on your businesses.
4. The Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade administers the Liquor Act, Act No. 6 of 1998 that makes provision for the licensing of all establishments in the supply and sale of liquors in our country. The Ministry fulfils this mammoth task together with its key strategic partner, which is the Office of the Judiciary that provides both the Leadership and Secretariat services to all Liquor Licensing Committees in all the Regions. The Ministry has noted with concern complaints raised pertaining to the operation of the Regional Liquor Licensing Committees and in the application and implementation of the Act and its regulations, that is why we are embarking on Regional engagements with the Committees so as to ensure that there is uniformity in this regard.

5. As we are gathered here today, we must make use of this opportunity to deliberate and ensure that the finer details of the Act are understood and complied with in its current form by all of us as stakeholders for the sole benefit of all Namibians in different industries or other social portfolio. The presence of different various stakeholders, such as local authorities, consumers, business community as well as representatives of various business communities is indeed a notable positive response to our Ministry to collectively assist our entrepreneurs and a step in the right direction for entrepreneurs and liquor traders to meeting government half way in establishing practical business solutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. Indeed, this initiative is aiming at disseminating information to the business community at regional level and equip them in order to address the challenges in the administration of the Liquor Act and conforming to certain laws and regulations.

7. Furthermore, the Ministry launched the National Consumer Protection Policy 2020 – 2025 in September 2021. The main objectives of the Policy is to seek an effective Consumer Protection Framework and develop the knowledge and skills necessary for Consumers to understand their rights associated with their spending and investment choices as well as to encourage fair trade in order to ensure a competitive economy.

8. In the same vein, the Policy highlighted the need for legislation to address unfair commercial practices affecting businesses and consumers, including marketing tactics, advertising campaigns, sales promotions, collusion and other unethical business practices directed at influencing consumer decisions in the marketplace. The Government considers that the effective protection of consumer rights is a vital component and therefore ranks high on the agenda of the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade.

9. To achieve this, the Ministry has dedicated its Division of Consumer Protection and Internal Market Regulation to serve as a National Consumer Protection Office. This Office is charged to liaise with other sector-regulatory bodies and institutions as well as to attend to all complaints of consumers and secure an even playing ground for all businesses to educate consumers about their rights and the available mechanisms to redress their complaints while the legal framework is being finalized.
10. This engagement serves as a stepping-stone in which the Ministry has established consumer education and information dissemination with consumers and a foundation to liaise with relevant Offices, Ministries, Agencies and sector regulators towards effective implementation of the National Consumer Protection Policy.
11. Therefore, it is my hope that this stakeholder's engagement will provide us with in-depth knowledge and skills in order to effectively address and provide assistance to entrepreneurs when faced with challenges in the administration of the Liquor Act and ensure that information reaches all relevant stakeholders and Consumers for the proper implementation of the Policy.

I therefore urge us all, to take advantage of this opportunity and strongly encourage active participation during our engagement so that this engagement will culminate in long-term growth of our businesses that may drive our economic prosperity and structural transformation.

Thank you very much!