



# **REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**REMARKS BY HON. LUCIA IIPUMBU**

**MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE  
OKAHAO OPEN MARKET**

**TUESDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2022**

**VENUE: OKAHAO**

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**Program Director - Mr. Junias Jakob : CEO – Okahao Town Council**

**Hon. Erginus Endjala – Governor of Omusati Region**

**Hon. Cornelia Iiyambula – Mayor of Okahao Town and Chair of Management Committee**

**Hon. Julia Katoole – Deputy Mayor of Okahao Town**

**Hon. Leonard Shikulo - Regional Councilor of Okahao Constituency and other Regional and local Councilors present**

**Mr. Ali Darani - Rani Group**

**Ms. Aili Anongeni : Chairperson of the Open Market Committee**

**Captains of the industry and esteemed invited guests,**

**Members of the of media,**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

**Good Morning to you all,**

I am honoured and delighted to address you this afternoon to mark an important occasion of inaugurating the Phase 1 of the Okahao Open Market. As it is well - known worldwide, SMEs play a crucial role in the economy of every country, and Namibia is no exception in this regard. It is clear that the economic sector in particular, the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector plays an outstanding and effective role in strengthening and easing business operations. In addition, in focusing our efforts on the economy, we as Government have always emphasized the role and participation of the private sector in rebuilding our country.

As we are mandated to empower various SMEs across the country, our aim is also to strengthen the existing ties between the Ministry of Industrialisation (MIT) and Trade and the various enterprises in an effort to encourage an open dialogue between government institutions and the private sector to support our Ministry's "Growth at Home" strategy and to assist our businesses to graduate from being SME to being business champions in your own right.

Allow me at this juncture to appreciate the Rani Group for a donation of N\$ 1000, 000.00 for the construction of the Okahao Open Market. I am reliably informed that this project is planned to be implemented in two phases, with the completion of the first phase of about 86 stalls being inaugurated here today. We are further happy to note that the next phase will commence soon which envisages to construct another 70 stalls for our traders.

The Ministry remains the interface between the government and private sector. The government is keen to work with all stakeholders in our quest to create a conducive environment by legislating and implementing appropriate and relevant policies, laws and regulations and infrastructures such as these for the private sector to thrive.

I am aware that there has been complains by traders that the first Open Market which was constructed by the Town Council is far from the customers. There is therefore no doubt the proximity of this Open Market is strategically located and provides a focal meeting point where both sellers and buyers can exchange goods and services.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We want our people to play their role, to be self - sufficient because countless working opportunities are available in different sectors, agriculture and agro-food processing, manufacturing and services. We must never forget that smart partnerships such as the one we are witnessing here today can do a great deal in terms improving the service delivery, but the real engine of growth in this area is you the entrepreneurs, the business community, it is you the private sector. But again, I would like to reiterate that without a genuine and serious contribution by the private sector such this one by Ranni Group is commendable as Government alone cannot carry out this paramount duty.

This Open Market could not have come at a better time, considering the high rate of unemployment in the country, which is further excersabated by the heavy dependency of our economy on exporting our raw natural resources to other countries for further processing and production of finished products and services. This implies that we export crucial and highly skilled jobs to these countries.

This platform will provide an avenue for SMEs and informal traders to participate in an environment where they can share experiences and conduct business with one another, thereby reducing the risks inherent in business start-ups. They develop increased awareness of and access to information on support services available to them by all services providers. They gain access to facilities and equipment otherwise unavailable or unaffordable and they increase visibility and presence in the marketplace. They pay below market rents and share reduced building maintenance responsibilities, thus, increases in job creation, job retention, and improves the local economic base by transforming under-utilized industrial based activities into a centre/hub of productivity.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

The availability of affordable operating infrastructures is often the prime incentive for small businesses to venture into starting their own businesses rather than seeking for jobs. The development of this Open Market is therefore, also aimed at creating economic independency and self-employment, as opposed to Namibia remaining a country of job seekers. It is our hope that this Open Market will contribute to the reduction of the unemployment rate in this area, thus creating jobs for the residents of Okahao and surroundings, instead of relying on government alone to create jobs.

This Open Market should be the vehicle for the private sector to be creative and innovative through adding value to our natural resources and thus, creating jobs and improving living standards for ourselves. Let me also applaud the Council of Okahao Town for developing a modern trading facility for its business community. Many Local Authorities are still struggling to provide conducive trading spaces but Okahao has successfully managed to do so in a short period after becoming a Town. The business community should also make sure that this facility is kept clean and no vandalism of any sort.

I am proud of the Council's commitment and level of responsibility towards its residents particularly the business community by constructing such a wonderful facility. As food for thought, I live you with these great and visionary words from His Excellency President Hage G. Geingob of "No Namibian should feel left out". These words of wisdom should be imbedded in each and everyone's hearts today and be a constant reminder that whatever we embark on it is for the benefit of each and every Namibian.

Director of Ceremonies; It is now my honour and privilege to declare the OKahak Open Market officially opened.

**I thank you.**