

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**WELCOME REMARKS BY HONOURABLE IMMANUEL
NGATJIZEKO, MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION
TRADE AND SME DEVELOPMENT ON THE OCCASION
OF THE OPENING OF THE INVEST IN NAMIBIA
CONFERENCE 2016**

8 NOVEMBER 2016

Director of Ceremonies,
Your Excellency Dr Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia
Honourable Ministers present here,
Ambassadors and High Commissioners,
Distinguished foreign delegates,
Esteemed captains of industries present,
Members of the Business Community,
Distinguished invited guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my proud privilege to welcome you here today and indeed to welcome you to this timely International Investment Conference in Namibia in an effort to promote *Investment for Inclusive Growth and Industrialization*. Timely, because, with a downturn in the global economy, it's time to take stock and realign our focus on the best strategies to overcome present hurdles in economic bottlenecks and consolidate our industry gains for long term sustainable development. Indeed, Namibia is poised for direct investment, as Government has undertaken major economic reforms in macro-economic management by embracing market oriented policies with private sector playing a leading role.

Director of Ceremonies,

I am specifically delighted to note all of you here today, from various countries, sectors and industries, which reflect our unified goal to prosper into an emerging economic jewel that is Namibia. This Conference represents our firm commitment, as the Namibian Government to reconnect policymaking at the executive level to the global and local expertise and hard work that comes from investors such as yourselves.

The Conference signals also the new approach of this Government towards a more inclusive civil dialogue regarding the objectives of the country. By putting "Inclusive growth" at the forefront it highlights the importance of strengthening the social dimension of Namibia in all its facets;

- by alleviating poverty;
- by building societies that are more cohesive;
- by modernizing social protection and promoting social investment; and
- by improving employment opportunities.

All of this, of course, would not be possible without our President's, His Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob, vision which he outlined in the Harambee Prosperity Plan a short while ago.

Master of Ceremonies

Although the current global economy remains volatile, we would like to proof with this Conference that Namibia is still ideally positioned to benefit from this present economic environment by offering investors more conducive avenues to attain a better return on their investments.

The general global trend of high levels of growth that were common in the last ten years is slowing down and projections for 2016 throughout to 2020 remain subdued. Furthermore, the expansion in emerging market and developing economies, while still accounts for over 70 percent of global growth, declined for the fifth consecutive year, while a modest recovery continued in advanced economies. There are three key transitions which continue to influence the global outlook and Namibia which are as follows:

1. The gradual slowdown and rebalancing of economic activity in China away from investment and manufacturing toward consumption and services have

led to a slowdown in imports and exports. This is in part a reflection of the globally weaker investment and manufacturing environment.

2. Lower prices for energy and other commodities. Such as the decline in fuel prices and the either constant or fall in commodity prices.
3. Growing uncertainty and volatile economic performance among two neighbouring economic power house over the recent months has been one of the contributing factors in the fall of the Namibian Dollar in relation to the American Dollar due to the pegged relationship between Namibia and South Africa. More importantly, the growing threat of a credit rating downgrade may also negatively impact Namibia's economic outlook.

This new approach builds on the lessons learnt to develop a flexible and output-oriented structure from the previous National Development Plans. Our ambition for this Conference is to foster a greater level of engagement and deeper dialogue with all stakeholders with the aim of making Namibia top of mind when it comes to foreign direct investment in the region.

With Namibia being on the brink of the 5th National Development Plan (NDP5) which pushes Namibia towards the implementation of NDP4, it is important that key growth and development areas in relation to;

- Sustainable Energy Development
- Water Infrastructure Development
- And, expanding the manufacturing base of the country are emphasized.

With regard to the last point, expanding the manufacturing base encompasses three key sectors;

- Fisheries sector
- Agro-processing sector
- And SME Development

In addition, investment in the tourism sector is strongly encouraged since it is the second largest contributor to foreign currency reserves. With Namibia being ranked as 4th most favoured travel destination in Africa, prospective investors can be assured that Namibia's tourism sector with its high standards in environmental protection is only going to grow further.

These objectives are ever more important in light of our government's decision to implement policies and new measures to improve and streamline the ease of doing business in the country which have an over arching goal towards creating a more socially-just society through economic empowerment. This is to be achieved by implementing policies that strive for a broader and more meaningful ownership by Namibians. Equitable empowerment can only be achieved through Namibia's present day ability to attract foreign direct investment by improving the population's skill base and broad economic participation.

Last but not least, Namibia has always been a country that is friendly to foreign direct investment. For example, Namibia has stipulated and implemented large amount of investment incentives through our Economic Development Incentives Program (EDI). The new Investment Promotion Act which has been recently enacted aims to improve Namibia's ability to attract and retain meaningful foreign direct investment into Namibia for long term sustainable development.

The discerning investor, looking for attractive fiscal benefits and an appropriate enabling environment, surely cannot afford to miss the opportunity that Namibia offers.

I Thank You