



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**RIGHT HONOURABLE DR. SAARA KUUGONGELWA-AMADHILA**

**PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**AT THE SME SWAKOPMUND MINI EXPO 2018 GALA DINNER**

**FRIDAY, 17 AUGUST 2018**

**NEW MULTIPURPOSE CENTRE,  
SWAKOPMUND**

*Embargo 17 August 2018 at 20h00*

- Director of Ceremonies;
- Honourable Governor of Erongo Region, Comrade Cleopas Mutjavikua;
- Your Worship the Mayor of Swakopmund, Comrade Paulina Ndahafa Nashilundo;
- Honourable Regional and Local Authorities Councillors;
- Senior Government officials;
- Captains of Industry;
- Members of the media;
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Evening!

Allow me to express my regret for not being able to personally be with you at this evening event aimed at raising funds for the holding of the first ever SME Swakopmund Mini Exposition in Swakopmund.

At the onset, I would like to commend the organizers of this event for coming up with the idea of holding an exposition to specifically cater for the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as the role of Small and Medium-Scale Enterprise in the national economy cannot be over emphasised. These enterprises are the engines of growth and development for any given economy.

The impact of SMEs is felt through the utilization of local raw materials, employment generation, encouragement of rural development, development of entrepreneurship, mobilization of local savings, linkages with bigger industries, provision of regional balance by spreading investments more evenly, provision of avenue for self-employment and provision of opportunity for training of semi-skilled workers.

Thus countries rely on the dynamism, resourcefulness and risk tasking of small and medium enterprises to trigger and sustain the process of economic growth.

Our government has been giving increased policy attention to these enterprises because of the important role played by the small and medium enterprises in economic development. I, therefore, want to congratulate the organizers for putting the work of SME on the spotlight through this exposition.

Expositions are important marketing tool for a large number of industries because they provide opportunities for networking, marketing and promoting goods and services to specific audience. I am informed this expo will specifically cater for SMEs who are in the manufacturing and designing industries or have created products using raw materials from Namibia. Further, I am informed that it will also cater for individuals who have invested their talents in developing service industries uniquely to Namibia.

The SME Swakopmund Mini expo 2018 is thus promoting the ideals of the Growth at Home Strategy.

The Growth at Home Strategy comprises three Strategic Intervention Areas supporting value addition, securing market access and improving the investment climate in the country. Specifically, the program targets to support businesses focusing on value addition to agro and fish processing; steel manufacturing; chemicals, mineral beneficiation, building materials and pharmaceuticals and cosmetics sectors.

I am mentioning the above at this platform to encourage our SME's to engage in businesses that have been identified to contribute optimally to the economic growth of Namibia.

As stated earlier, the Government has adopted a Policy for Small Business Development in recognition of the important role and contribution the SME sector makes to economic growth and development. Almost 40,000 SMEs are currently registered in Namibia and contribute to the country's economy in various ways such as employment creation and generations, adding value to the gross domestic product of the country and helping towards the realization of the 2030 vision agenda.

However, it is also a fact that majorities of SME face challenges ranging from access to finance, employee turnover and availability of affordable business premises which impede their operation. Other challenges facing the growth of the SME sector is the supply chains of our local retailers which make it very difficult for SME to get their products onto the retail shelves of our local markets and this is said to be on account of procurement system that excludes local producers.

The Government has thus approved an SME's support facility for SME's that include a Credit Guarantee Scheme, a Venture Capital Fund and Mentorship Program.

I am, further pleased to note the development of the Retail Sector Charter which was launched in 2016, and sets out guidelines for the sourcing and supplier development of local products to ensure they find space on our shelves. I encourage the SMEs here tonight to thoroughly study the charter and make maximum use of it.

Through the new Public Procurement dispensation, increased priority is given to SME's through tender preferential and preference for local products for supply to Government Contracts. The NEEF also contains a pillar for the development of SME's and local enterprises development through local procurement of goods and services

Further, an SME Portal Site has been developed. The aim of the SME Portal Site is to develop the local economy through sales promotion of SMEs, facilitating the establishment of partnership among international organizations, private sectors and NGOs. I want to again, encourage SMEs to use this platform for exchange of ideas and experience as well as for marketing your services to others.

In conclusion, as we look forward to the holding of the exposition, I am sure that it will provide participants with a glimpse of the latest and most innovative products available in Swakopmund and at the same time serve as a platform for sharing good ideas and best practices.

Having said that, ladies and gentlemen, the purpose of tonight's gala dinner is to raise sufficient funds to ensure the successful hosting of the SME Swakopmund Mini Expo 2018.

On behalf of the Office of the Prime Minister, I make a pledge of N\$5000 towards this initiative. I also appeal to the participants to contribute towards this initiative.

I wish you success with this fundraising gala dinner.

I thank you for your attention.

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