



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

STATEMENT

BY

RIGHT HONOURABLE DR. SAARA KUUGONGELWA-AMADHILA

PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

AT THE

NATIONAL QUALITY WEEK COMMEMORATION

NAMPOWER CONVENTION HALL

FRIDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2018

18H00

- Director of Ceremonies,
- Honourable Tjekero Tweya, Minister of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development
- Professor Martha Kandawa-Schulz: Chairperson of the Namibian Standards Council;
- Distinguished Councillors of the Namibian Standards Institution;
- Mrs Chie Wasserfall, Chief Executive Officer of the Namibian Standards Institution;
- Invited Guests
- Members of the Media,
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good evening to you all

Allow me to express my profound delight for having been invited to be part of this historic occasion, the Namibia Standards Institution’s National Quality Week Commemoration, marking a celebration of three events;

- i. Firstly, the 10 years anniversary of the Namibia Standards Institution;
- ii. Secondly, National Quality Award to industries, enterprises and individuals who are leading performers in terms of attainment of capacity to meet quality standards that are in line with local, regional and international practices and;
- iii. Thirdly, NSI receiving accreditation certificates from the Southern Africa Development Community Accreditation Services (SADCAS) for having conformed to International Standard Organization (ISO).

Established in 2008 by an Act of Parliament, the Namibia Standard Institute plays a pivotal role in the development and growth of the Namibian economy. As a national Standard Body responsible for promoting standards, quality assurance and control in industry, commerce and public sector, we expect the champion efforts to ensure improved product quality in the country, industrial efficiency and productivity, as well as promoting trade to achieve optimum benefits for the Namibian people.

In this regard, NSI is expected to provide conformity assessment services, certification of systems and inspecting and testing of products and materials¹, and to, at all times, to be mindful of the constant global changes where national Standards are required to address fast-moving and converging technologies. We also expect you to create awareness among the country’s producers and manufactures about this fast changing global environment and the importance of conforming to

¹ NSI core mandate

standards which make the development, manufacturing and supply of products efficient, safer, cleaner and allow for ease of doing business.

Only businesses whose goods meet set standard can have their products competing freely in the international markets. Therefore conformity to accreditation and standards, as components of the country's quality infrastructure, play a critical role in the integrated technical mix necessary for Namibia to trade successfully, both bilaterally and within the multilateral trading system ². This requires our producers to have a full understanding of this mix and hence the need to continuously educate them about the benefit of conforming to NSI Standard.

The Government expects NSI to continually assess its role and contribution to the economy by assessing customer and stakeholder needs through regular engagements and customer satisfaction surveys. Last month, I visited some producers of local fresh produce in the country. They complained about challenges they face in assessing the market provided by Government Procurement System due to the National quality standards that they are not able to meet.

I urge NSI to liaise continuously with local producers and improve your service offerings to be responsive to customer needs. The National Standards should strike a balance between ensuring quality and safety of goods on the one hand, and allowing locally produced goods to find a place in the local market.

In the same vein, I call upon OMAs to ensure that public tender specifications are practical and consider the local situation and the needs of the country. For instance, it makes no sense to disqualify local products that are widely consumed in the country from being supplied to state institutions. The example of this are the produce from small scale farmers, which although they are not posing a health risk, they are not taken up under procurement by public institutions. This is a self-defeating practise that should be addressed with utmost urgency as it undermines the efforts of the Government to use public procurement to promote local production and local enterprise development.

Similarly, such specifications hinder efforts to promote the uptake of local produce by local distributors, thus perpetuating the imports of foreign goods at the expenses of locally produced goods which remain marginalised.

² NSI annual plan 2015/2016

All OMAs have been directed to ensure the full implementation of the Public Procurement Act which provides for preference to be accorded to locally produced goods under public procurement. Ministries have also been urged to ensure the finalisation of their Procurement Plans to ensure that producers are informed about what Government will procure, in good time, for them to prepare to participate in Government procurement and also ensure that their production plans are aligned to local demand of which Government accounts for a large share.

We have put in place the Growth at Home Strategy with value addition as a prominent feature to optimise the country's endowedment in raw materials to build our value addition efforts on. Value addition will be achieved by strengthening value chains, and by creating efficient back and forward linkages to our raw materials, and NSI will have to play a critical role in this process.

We are now in the fourth industrial revolution. The First Industrial Revolution used water and steam power to mechanize production; the Second used electric power to create mass production; the Third used electronics and information technology to automate production. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is building on the Third, the digital revolution that has been occurring since the middle of the last century. It is characterized by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical and digital spheres³. In this regard, Namibia requires a strategic roadmap regarding the opportunities presented by the fourth industrial revolution and the measures required to mitigate its disruptive effect on industry. There is much we can do together to develop appropriate regulatory frameworks, infrastructure and necessary skills to support and enable the 4th Industrial Revolution. Our task is to give practical expression to an economic development that will propel the industrialization of Namibia's economy beyond the digital age and enable us to address the present and future demands of the country.

We should thus continue to invest in human capital by engaging stakeholders such as institution of high education and research institutions in the country to come up with relevant courses that will position the country to produce highly qualified human resources with capacity to enable NSI to compete at international level.

³ The Fourth Industrial Revolution: what it means, how to respond, World Economic Forum, 2017.

Moreover, we need to embrace new technologies and approaches that are merging the physical and digital worlds. As a country, it is imperative that we collectively navigate the risks and leverage the opportunities that arise from the new digital age. All stakeholders need to be ready to build an inclusive economy to create shared prosperity in the country.

In conclusion, let me congratulate those who will receive the National Quality Award. The Awards should serve as an encouragement to all local producers, manufacturers and service providers to strictly align their operations in accordance with the applicable national, regional and international quality requirements. This will enable them to competitively market their products and develop their brands beyond Namibia.

With these few words, I wish NSI more years of success in its pursuit to create a strong quality infrastructure regime in Namibia.

I thank you.
