



**OFFICIAL STATEMENT BY HIS WORSHIP, JOSEPH UAPINGENE,
DEPUTY MAYOR OF WINDHOEK, ON THE OCCASION OF
THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING OF APRIL 2024**

**25 April 2024
17:30
Council Chambers**

Councillor Bernardus Araeb, Chairperson of the Management Committee of the City of Windhoek;

All Local Authority Council Members, present;

Reverend Joel Fikeipo of the Hosiana Parish;

Mr. Moses Matyayi, Chief Executive Officer of the City of Windhoek;

All Strategic Executives and Senior Officials, present;

Windhoek Residents;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good evening,

I extend a warm welcome to all of you to the Ordinary Council Meeting of April 2024. Please allow me to reflect on the following matters:

1. Strategic and Budget Review Workshop

Last week we concluded our annual strategic and budget review cycle where we evaluated the progress to date and challenges encountered in the implementation of our Strategic Plan (2022-2027) for the period 2023/24. We also deliberated on our budget priorities for the 2024/25 financial year which commences on 1 July 2024.

During the workshop Council members prioritised the following key items for the 2024/25 budget:

- Markets;
- High mast lights per constituency;
- Upgrading of bus stops;
- Paving of streets;
- Land delivery and affordable housing;
- Basic Services (for example sanitation, water, and electrification projects)

Other priorities included the development of new soccer fields, youth and social development programmes, renovating the Greenwell Matongo library, SME development programmes, preserving the old council chambers as a heritage site, and consideration to use the Ramatex space as a uniform factory.

While our performance evaluation indicates that we are on course, the challenges underscore the need for continuous improvements in organisational capacity which includes a Work Study/Productivity Audit and economic development strategies. The nature of our operating environment is dynamic. In recognising that, we also identified strategic risks and devised mitigating strategies for the upcoming years. The alignment between our strategic plan and budget is crucial to fulfil our service delivery mandate. That said, I want to stress the necessity for innovative approaches and stakeholder engagement for long-term sustainability.

In her opening remarks during the said workshop, Her Worship, Queen Omagano Kamati, the Mayor of Windhoek, stressed the imperative for Windhoek to adapt to the changing landscape and embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution. She also emphasised the need to report on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) compliance. She reminded us that the goal is to ensure that every dollar spent brings maximum benefits to the community. As we prepare the final budget for tabling at Council and onward submission to the Minister of Urban and Rural Development, we remain committed to ensure sound financial stewardship and propose the requisite funding modalities for implementation.

Lastly, our deliberations also emphasised the need to see a growth budget which implies that movements and concerns raised require more evidence-based analysis for informed decision-making. Details of the final budget will be communicated in due course.

2. Windhoek's first solid waste buy-back centre

On 12 April 2024 we made history by inaugurating Windhoek's first solid waste buy-back centre, a testament of the partnership between the City of Windhoek and the City of Bremen, Germany. The waste buy-back centre is a facility where residents can earn an income by selling recycled items. This project came about through non-refundable grant funding by the European Union, valued at over N\$36 million.

The inauguration of this waste buy-back centre signifies more than just a physical structure; it symbolises our collective dedication to environmental stewardship, economic empowerment, and community development. The establishment of this facility is also in alignment with the objectives outlined in the 2018 National Waste Management Strategy, that seeks to position Namibia as a leader in Africa in terms of solid waste management standards by 2028, with a subsequent focus on waste reduction and achieving zero waste to landfill. Additionally, it complements the City of Windhoek's Integrated Waste Management Plan at municipal level.

3. Renovation of the oldest historic building - Alte Feste and other historic heritage resources

Council noted, with appreciation, Government's plans to renovate the oldest historic building in Windhoek, the Alte Feste. We are committed to the protection, management, and celebration of Windhoek's tangible and intangible cultural heritage. I join the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Heritage, Dr. Job Amupanda, in commending the Minister of Education, Arts and Culture, Honourable Ester Anna Nghipondoka, for the renovation and repurposing of the Alte Feste.

The protection and use of the city's historic heritage resources are fundamental to the sustainable management of Windhoek's natural and physical resources. Upon the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Heritage, the Municipal Council of Windhoek at its meeting held on 31 August 2023 resolved, amongst other matters, that seven houses built between 1959 and 1960 (older than 50 years), in the townships of Herero, Damara, Nama, Ovambo, Donkerhoek, Gemengde

and Khomasdal be identified and preserved as city heritage resources. We are about to embark on this exciting project and will keep residents informed on progress.

4. Namibia Tourism Expo

I invite residents and visitors to our beautiful capital city to visit the City of Windhoek stand at the Namibia Tourism Expo which started yesterday and will last until Friday, 26 April 2024, at the Windhoek Country Club Resort. At our stand visitors can learn more about the many tourist attractions and important heritage sites of Windhoek. We also have a pay-point handy where residents can come and settle their accounts whilst enjoying the expo. This is another example of how we strive to connect with our communities and make it easy for them to interact with us.

The event is hosted by Namibia Media Holdings and serves as a networking platform for the Tourism Sector. It is also an opportunity to attract new business and keep abreast of new trends in the market. The theme for the five years which started last year is "Beyond Borders" and this year, the focus is on KAZA, (the Kavango Zambezi Trans-frontier Park). The aim is for the KAZA member states of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe to start marketing these destinations as one. The City of Windhoek, with the approval of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy in 2022, has put strategies in place, to outline possible institutional arrangements that can help resolve communication and alignment concerns in terms of the strategic planning of tourism activities at a local level.

In the Namibian context, the tourism sector enjoyed steady growth since independence and is the third largest contributor to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with N\$14,3 billion in 2022, while the total National Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stands at around N\$206 billion.

The recent Namibian Local Content Conference 2024 aimed to empower Namibian local content by ensuring that the oil and gas discoveries in the country benefit Namibians. The recent discoveries consolidate Namibia's future role as an oil and gas-producing nation with the potential to impact the international energy landscape. We anticipate an increase in arrivals at the Hosea Kutako International Airport with this increase in exploration of gas, oil and other minerals taking place in the country. This will have a significant impact on the hospitality industry, office rental space, and leisure activities in the city. The headquarters of the institutions that will finance and develop the oil and gas industries are in Windhoek. And if they are not here yet, we realise that Windhoek, as the economic hub of Namibia, will welcome them sooner rather than later. The same goes for all the related servicing companies of the oil and gas investors looking to do business in Namibia. We must seize the opportunity to host them in Windhoek as the base from where they manage their local, and even regional business activities, while working with all stakeholders to ensure mutual benefits for our residents, especially the SME entrepreneurs, the youth, and the unemployed.

More positive impacts on tourist arrivals are anticipated following the recent introduction of the visa-on-arrival programme by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security.

Tourism is not merely an industry, it is a gateway to cultural exchange, economic growth, and global understanding. It is therefore vitally important, as a local authority, that we gear ourselves to create a conducive environment for the growth of our tourism and related industries.

Council is committed to enhancing our visitors' experience, by investing in infrastructure and promoting sustainable tourism practices that preserve the beauty and integrity of Windhoek for generations to come.

5. Extension of Pensioners Debt Relief Programme

We have registered around 3,000 pensioners for our Debt Relief Programme so far and I encourage more pensioners to come and register. To this end, the registration process has been extended to 31 May 2024. However, henceforth, the registrations will be strictly conducted at the Katutura Customer Care Office on Independence Avenue, during the weekdays, from Mondays to Fridays, between 08h00 and 16h00. No registrations are currently being done at our head office.

Residents are reminded that while we remain committed to the social welfare of residents, the allocation of N\$524 million towards relieving 100% of pensioners' debt and interest, and 50% interest for non-pensioners and businesses, is done not only to provide relief to our residents, but also to adhere to accounting principles and practices.

6. Windhoek's water usage levels

The three dams supplying water to Windhoek are currently experiencing significantly reduced levels of water due to minimal inflow during the rainy season. As a result, NamWater has decided to decrease the water supply to the City of Windhoek from 75% to 40% of our total water demand. In light of this, we all must double our efforts to save water. Currently, there is a requirement to reduce water consumption by at least 10%. Unfortunately, we are still not reaching this target and not saving enough water as per the current Category C Water Scarcity, defined by the City's Water Demand Management Plan. With the continued, extended water shortage, we may soon be forced to declare a more severe Category D, or Severe Water Scarcity, with even more associated restrictions compared to the current Category C. Therefore, I once again use this opportunity to appeal to all our residents to immediately start using water responsibly and wisely to avoid a water crisis.

7. Electricity pre-paid meter update project

As residents may be aware by now, our Electricity team is busy updating all pre-paid electricity meters in Windhoek. These updates need to be completed by 24 November this year and we need the public's participation. Please co-operate with our officials and allow them to enter your homes to update your meters.

This work is done, per suburb, every Monday to Friday from 8:00 to 19:00, and over weekends from 8:00 to 16:30. The team is currently attending to houses in Goreangab, Hakahana, Havana, Katutura, Okuryangava, and Wanaheda.

8. Courtesy call on the Speaker of the Namibian National Assembly

On 10 April, Her Worship, Queen Omagano Kamati, paid a courtesy call on the Speaker of the Namibian National Assembly, Honourable Professor Peter Katjavivi. During the visit, the two discussed various issues pertaining to the development of Windhoek and areas of co-operation with various sister cities of Windhoek. Mayor Kamati enlightened the Speaker on her participation in the African Cities Leadership Programme, which is part of the 2024 African Mayoral Leadership Initiative (AMALI). Through this programme the mayor committed to improving Windhoek's sanitation challenges in her official capacity. Honourable Professor Katjavivi said that it is important to strengthen the professional capabilities of the City of Windhoek while taking full advantage of city-to-city developmental cooperation opportunities.

9. Windhoek /Ae //Gams Arts & Cultural Festival

Please join us for two days of fun and entertainment during the Windhoek /Ae //Gams Arts & Cultural Festival on Friday, 26 April 2024 and Saturday, 27 April 2024. Come and embrace the spirit of togetherness as we explore and celebrate the heartbeat of Windhoek our people, arts, and culture.

There will be an exciting up-cycling fashion show, lots of music, comedy shows, poetry sessions, delicious traditional food, children's activities and much more. Entrance is free, so come and join in the fun at the City of Windhoek Upper Parking Area on 26 and 27 April 2024.

10. In conclusion

As we approach winter, which includes the driest months of the year, coupled with windy conditions, we again face the risk of wildfires. I urge all our residents to help us in preventing wildfires by being extra cautious when handling fire. Residents should avoid throwing cigarette buds on the ground, because they are likely to start fires during this dry season. Hot works and unauthorised burning should also be avoided. Residents with thatched roofs should test their sprayers and have their garden hoses ready. Please be vigilant when a fire jumps towards your property, and inform our Emergency Control Room on 061 - 211 111 as soon as you notice the fire approaching. Let us work together to stay safe this winter.

Ladies and gentlemen, this concludes the announcements for this month's Ordinary Council meeting but allow me to leave you with these words from the Book of Proverbs (24:27):

"Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that build your house."

As we look ahead towards the new financial year, let us reflect on lessons learned, re-visit previous assumptions and re-position ourselves to work harder and deliver on our mandate.

With these few words, I thank you.

**His Worship, Joseph Uapingene
Deputy Mayor of Windhoek**