



OFFICIAL OPENING STATEMENT

BY

**HON. AMUTSE MODESTUS, MP.
DEPUTY MINISTER OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

**AT THE NAMIBIA INTERNATIONAL CYBERSECURITY CONFERENCE AND
EXHIBITION 2024**

17 JULY 2024

AREBBUSCH TRAVEL LODGE, WINDHOEK

- Director of Proceedings;
- Ms Patricia Gakii, Managing Director: Africa Nesia International Limited;
- Board members from various State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs);
- Chief Executive Officers of State-Owned Enterprises;
- Captains of industry and businesses in ICT;
- Esteemed stakeholders;
- Local and international delegates and participants attending physically and virtually;
- Members of the Organising Committee;
- Distinguished sponsors;
- Members of the media;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning to you all.

We should all be excited and delighted to gather here today at the 4th Annual International High-Level Cybersecurity Conference under the theme **"Emerging Cybersecurity Threats and the country's preparedness to build a safer digital space"**. It is a great pleasure and honour for me to stand before you to deliver the keynote address presence at this prestigious event in the ICT Calendar. This conference aims to provide a platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange among key stakeholders in the cybersecurity domain, catering for the sectors of the economy.

Our gathering here ought to be filled with enriching dialogues taking cognisance of the evolving challenges in the environments we operate. In an era defined by rapid technological advancements and increasing interconnectedness, the importance of cybersecurity cannot be overstated. Just as much as we advocate for digital inclusion, connectivity and embracing digital technologies in our quest towards effective and efficient service delivery to our clientele, we all have an obligation to safeguard our networks,

systems, and data against cyber threats on a daily basis. Cybersecurity is not merely a technical concern but a fundamental pillar of national security, economic stability, and individual privacy in the digital age.

As we discuss the evolving trends and threats of the cybersecurity landscape, and innovative solutions during these three days, it is imperative to acknowledge the importance of collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders. Namibia, like many other countries, is increasingly reliant on digital technologies across sectors such as oil and gas, mining, energy, aviation, mobile, and telecommunications. Cybercrimes know no boundary and every sector is at risk of cyberattacks resulting in potential massive financial losses and reputational risks for organisations and individuals alike. The challenges faced by developing countries in securing the digital economy require collective efforts from governments, industry leaders, academia, civil society and all players in the ecosystem. Through collaboration, we can develop effective strategies and solutions that will safeguard our digital infrastructure and enable us to fully harness the opportunities presented by the digital economy.

Director of proceedings;

Esteemed participants;

The Namibian government strongly believes that individuals/internet users who can unknowingly be the biggest threats to their organisations' networks/infrastructure and themselves need to be educated to remain vigilant and safe on the cyberspace. As a result, the National Cyber Security Strategy and Awareness Creation Plan was developed and is currently in its implementation phase. Salt Essential IT has come on board and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the government to raise awareness on the dangers of cybercrimes and the importance of cybersecurity to all citizens of this country free of charge.

I am equally delighted to state that we have made good progress with Lifeline/Childline Namibia and we are finalising modalities to raise more awareness for the children who are the most vulnerable on the cyberspace. We intend to popularise the National Reporting Portal for Child Sexual Abuse Material, which was launched in Namibia, a partnership between the government, the Internet Watch Foundation, UNICEF and Lifeline/ChildLine. The portal allows anyone to anonymously report digitally abusive materials affecting children with the view of combating cybercrimes towards them. Once reviewed and found offensive, the material is taken down from online platforms. I, therefore, implore you all to forge partnerships and collaborate with the government in jointly cultivating a culture of cyber hygiene within organisations and communities for a more secure and resilient future.

Director of proceedings;

Esteemed participants;

The ever-evolving technological space requires responsive legislative and policy frameworks as well as Strategies. The government has nearly finalised the development of the National Digital Strategy and consolidation of the ICT policy which are pending submission to Cabinet for approval. Consultations on the development of the Data Protection Bill have been completed and which is due for presentation and deliberation at the Cabinet Committee on Legislation (CCL). The Cybercrime Bill is pending refinement before its submission to CCL.

In conclusion, it is my sincere hope that these discussions will yield the desired results of knowledge sharing, collaboration and tangible recommendations with a realistic action plan to shape our cybersecurity landscape. Together, let us embark on this journey towards a safer cyberspace for all.

It is now my pleasure to officially open the Namibia International Cybersecurity Conference and Exhibition 2024 and wish you all a productive and enlightening event.

Thank you for your kind attention.