

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**WELCOMING REMARKS**

**BY**

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**INDUSTRIES, MINES AND ENERGY**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE RURAL WOMEN**

**PARLIAMENT WITH MEN AS PARTNERS SESSION.**

**23 SEPTEMBER 2025**

**PARLIAMENT BUILDING,  
WINDHOEK**

**Hon. Chairperson**

**Honourable Members**

Allow me to begin by apprising this House that the Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy is constitutionally mandated to serve as custodian of Namibia's geological, mineral, and energy resources. In fulfilling this mandate, the Ministry strives to ensure that these resources drive socioeconomic development through industrialisation and value addition, with the Namibian people firmly at the centre of its strategies, programmes, and activities.

For the purpose of this 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Rural Women Parliament with Men as Partners, I wish to highlight a number of programmes implemented by our Ministry which, in my view, contribute directly to **Economic Empowerment and Inclusion**, the theme of this gathering. These initiatives, which support Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) across the country, include:

- a) Equipment Aid Scheme Program,
- b) Entrepreneurship Development Program (known as EMPRETEC - Namibia),
- c) Gemstone and Polishing Training Program, and
- d) other activities performed by the Ministry's Regional Offices in the Regions.

**(1) The Equipment Aid Scheme Program** was created in 2009/2010 Financial Year by the late Dr. Hage Geingob, then Minister of Trade and Industry, with the chief objective to aid the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises with production equipment to minimize the cost of business set-up and boost their production capacities.

However, the programme was temporarily suspended between 2016 and 2022 due to the fiscal consolidation measures of 2016–2019, as well as the impact of COVID-19. In 2023, it was re-engineered and reintroduced with revised criteria to ensure alignment with current business needs and to improve operational efficiency.

The programme now prioritises key sectors such as manufacturing, including garments and metal fabrication, agro-food processing, gemstone and dimension stone processing, including small-scale mining, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, as well as heating and ventilation.

Since its inception, a total of **3,213 MSMEs** across all fourteen (14) regions have benefited - including beneficiaries from the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 Financial Years. As a result, a number of these MSMEs have grown into larger enterprises, enhancing production, creating jobs, and increasing revenue. Some of them now serve as champions and role models for other existing and emerging entrepreneurs.

**(2) The Equipment Aid Scheme Program (EMPRETEC – Namibia)** is designed with the objectives to Foster Inclusive and Equitable Economic Participation by equipping Entrepreneurs with transformational Skills and Mindset change, which is executed through innovative, skills and behavior-based entrepreneurial training, with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The program's other training packages are designed to instill core Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies, foster growth-oriented mindsets, and support the transition from subsistence to commercial enterprises, targeting unemployed youth, women, veterans, and rural populations, especially informal entrepreneurs and subsistence farmers, to enhance their economic empowerment and contributions to national development goals.

The Equipment Aid Scheme Program was introduced in 2019, but actual training and educational activities started 2023/2024 Financial Year, with the total number of trained Micro Small Medium Enterprises amounting to 138 entrepreneurs from all corners of Namibia, and about 325 individuals trained under financial literacy through regional offices.

### **(3) Gemstone Cutting and Polishing Training Program:**

Under this Program, the Ministry operates three (3) Gemstone Training Centers located in Karibib, equipped with machines and other necessary resources to ensure adequate learning conditions; with the main goals to develop specialized skills in gemstone cutting and polishing (also applicable to Diamond cutting and polishing, which are also the basis of jewelry making), to enhance skills development targeting the youth and women.

The Training Program is anchored on small-scale mining, as a sub-sector of the mining industry, which provides livelihoods for many Namibians, particularly in rural regions rich in gemstones, with the purpose to contribute to poverty alleviation and employment creation across the regions and the country at large, providing a six-month specialized training to about 30 Namibian youths every year.

From the program's inception in 2016 to date, 235 Namibians have been successfully trained, about 68% of them have secured jobs in the diamond industry. Currently, there are 28 Trainees enrolled and for 2025/2026 Financial Year, at the Centre.

Our Ministry, through the small-scale mining division promotes the formalization of the small-scale mining subsector by:

- Assisting Small-Scale Miners (SSM) to apply for mining claims and providing information for compliance on the requirements of the Minerals Act. To date, there are 951 Registered mining claims.

- Other support services include: Assistance with pegging of claims, adjudicating on land or farm access disputes through Minerals Ancillary Rights Commission (MARC), facilitating the formation of small-scale mining legal groups such as associations or co-operatives so that any form of support to Small Scale Mining can be channelled through recognized legal entities.
- The Ministry also liaises with external agencies and development partners such as United Nations Development Plan to optimize support for Small Scale Miners.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

**Honourable Members,**

Small-scale mining targets smaller ore bodies that are often neglected by large mining companies, focusing mainly on easily mineable materials such as semi-precious stones, dimension stone, and industrial minerals, which require relatively low capital investment and limited technical expertise. Mineral rights applications are open to all Namibians aged 18 years and above, with mining claims reserved exclusively for Namibian citizens. The majority of these claims are registered in the Erongo, Kunene, and ||Karas regions, owing to their rich mineral endowments.

However, some of the challenges experienced by Small Scale Mining include:

- Limited access to finance from financial institutions, due to risk associated with businesses of this nature.
- There is a lack of sustainable markets,
- Land access challenges (most of the mining activities take place on commercial farmland privately owned by individuals. A

- contract is made by the landowner often at the Small Scale Miner's disadvantage or to completely deter Small Scale Miner from proceeding with their operations).
- Lack of financial resources to meet the requirements of the Environmental Management Act No. 7 of 2007 (The Environmental Management Act provides for issuance of environmental clearance certificates (ECC) prior to commencement of any listed activities such as small-scale mining operations). **The ECC is a pre-requisite for issuance of mineral rights.**

**(4) Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy (MIME):** Through its Directorate of Energy, is responsible for coordinating, planning, financing, and implementing national electricity programmes.

Namibia's National Electrification Policy sets an ambitious target of achieving universal access to electricity by 2040, with the National Development Plan 6 (NDP6) aiming to increase access from 59% to 70% during its implementation period. This means, electrifying 200,000 households by the year 2030. For rural women and their communities, expanding access to reliable and affordable electricity is transformative, as it opens doors to better healthcare, education, and economic opportunities, while also reducing the burden of daily chores and improving safety. Imagine communities without electricity - children would study by the dim-light of candles, clinics would struggle to store vaccines and small businesses would not be able to operate beyond daylight hours.

Rural electrification is therefore not just about infrastructure; it is about empowering women, supporting families, and unlocking the full potential of rural Namibia for a more inclusive and prosperous future.

## **(5) Other activities performed by the Ministry's Regional Offices in the Regions.**

The Ministerial Regional Offices are strategically placed to represent the entire Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy, implementing all activities that the ministry provides to the public, including support activities to the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) aligned to the Ministry.

They implement legislations, policy strategies and programmes aimed at creating a conducive environment for developing local micro small, medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector as well as promoting industrialisation and economic development in the regions in a manner that contributes towards integrating historically disadvantaged Namibians into the mainstream of the economy.

The new mandate is to provide support on Mining and Energy development, industrial, entrepreneurial and Small Medium, Micro Enterprises development support services, entailing project planning and development, business mentorship, incubation services and entrepreneurial skills training.

The Regional Offices also facilitate stakeholder engagement in the regions to promote industrial and economic development, conducting information sharing sessions to inform about the Ministry's programs and activities, Liquor licensing and business registration in support of BIPA.

### **Honourable Members**

I would like to conclude by emphasising that the programs and initiatives I have highlighted are designed to support Namibia's aspiration of becoming an industrialised nation, as outlined in Vision 2030 and the National Development Plans (NDPs).

Similarly, Namibia's Industrial Policy and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Policy focus on promoting industrialisation, ensuring equitable income distribution, and generating employment through the production of goods and services, all for poverty alleviation and sustainable economic growth in our country.

**I THANK YOU**