



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**  
**OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT**  
**REMARKS BY EXCELLENCY LUCIA WITBOOI**  
**VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**  
**ON THE**  
**OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE**  
**DIVISIONS OF DISABILITY AFFAIRS AND MARGINALIZED**  
**COMMUNITIES PLANNING WORKSHOP**  
**MONDAY, 16 MARCH 2026**  
**WINDHOEK, KHOMAS REGION**

- **Director of Ceremonies;**
- **Mr. Mateus Kaholongo, the Executive Director in the Presidency;**
- **The Management of the Office of the President;**
- **Director, Deputy Directors and Staff Members of the Divisions of Disability Affairs and Marginalised Communities;**
- **Members of the Media;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**Good Morning**

**It is an honour to join you today for the official opening of this important Planning Workshop for the Divisions of Disability Affairs and Marginalized Communities. This session offers an important moment to reflect on our progress, identify gaps, and collectively discuss the way forward in advancing the rights, dignity, and socio-economic development of persons with disabilities and our Indigenous minority communities.**

**As we begin our engagement, I encourage you to treat this session with seriousness, and as an opportunity to make a**

**strategic effort to align our activities and goals with the Eighth Administration's broader vision of inclusivity and equitable development for all Namibians.**

**Director of Ceremonies;**

**Over the past year, notable progress has been achieved through the efforts of the Divisions of Disability Affairs and Marginalized Communities. I am particularly pleased to note the successful engagement with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities and community members in Keetmanshoop, which resulted in practical recommendations to initiate development projects at the Keetmanshoop Disability Resource Centre. In addition, the launch of the Sign Language Application in Walvis Bay in collaboration with the Namibian National Association of the Deaf, marked an important step toward improving communication accessibility for the deaf community.**

**Another milestone was the launch of the Disability Cost Report in Windhoek in partnership with UNICEF. This report presents critical evidence on the additional costs faced by people taking care of persons with disabilities and will inform policy decisions and resource allocation.**

**Equally important was the launch of the reviewed National Policy on Disability and its Implementation Plan for the period 2025 to 2035. This policy framework provides a strategic roadmap for strengthening disability inclusion across all sectors of our society.**

**Furthermore, the commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in Opuwo, Kunene Region, which attracted more than 500 participants, demonstrated growing national awareness and commitment to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities.**

**Director of Ceremonies;**

**I would like to highlight various institutional visits undertaken to better understand the realities on the ground. These included visits to facilities such as the Centre for the Visually Impaired in Windhoek, the Side By Side Early Intervention Centre, as well as disability support institutions in the Zambezi Region and other parts of the country. Such engagements directly allow to assess**

**service delivery and identify areas where further support is required.**

**Similarly, the Division responsible for Indigenous Minority Communities has continued to advance important initiatives aimed at improving livelihoods and promoting social inclusion. Among these was the commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples in Tsumeb, as well as participation in community-based activities such as the Dr Libertine Amathila Sports Tournament in Outjo.**

**In addition, site visits were conducted to several communities and projects in Gobabis, Drimiopsis, Otjinene, Skoonheid, and Epukiro, as well as engagements with institutions such as the N/a'an ku sê Foundation. These visits remain critical in strengthening partnerships and ensuring that development interventions respond directly to community needs.**

**Director of Ceremonies;**

**As we look forward, the two divisions have outlined a number of priority initiatives that must be pursued. Within the Division of Disability Affairs, planned activities include the initiation and implementation of development projects at the Keetmanshoop Disability Resource Centre, the development of a project in Rehoboth focusing on children with disabilities, the extension of the Disability Mainstreaming Plan, and plans for land allocation for the establishment of a Disability Resource Centre in Ongwediva.**

**For the Division responsible for Indigenous Minority Communities, key initiatives include the revival of two food production projects aimed at strengthening sustainable food security. These projects will be implemented at Farm Ondera in the Guinas Constituency of Oshikoto Region and Farm Uitkoms in the Omatako Constituency of Otjozondjupa Region. A feasibility study is also planned to assess the viability of agricultural development at Ehomba Settlement in the Epupa Constituency of Kunene Region. Further initiatives include the implementation of housing and sanitation programmes, as well as enhanced engagement with students from marginalized**

**communities to better understand and address the challenges they continue to face.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**While these achievements and plans are encouraging, we must also acknowledge the challenges that remain. Limited financial resources continue to constrain the implementation of several important initiatives, particularly within the Division of Disability Affairs, where there is currently no dedicated funding for project implementation.**

**The Division responsible for Indigenous Minority Communities also faces structural and policy challenges, including the limited benefits currently accumulating to communities that are listed as shareholders in Exclusive Prospecting Licences, tourism concessions, and fishing quotas. In addition, the issue of land allocated to Indigenous Minority communities being occupied by non-Indigenous Minority groups requires urgent and coordinated attention.**

**Equally important is the need to strengthen institutional capacity within the Division for Marginalized Communities, which currently operates with a lean structure while addressing complex national challenges.**

**Director of Ceremonies;**

**In light of these realities, I would like to encourage all of you gathered here today. This planning workshop is about honest reflection, it is about measuring progress, it is about being clear about what we must do next so that we improve in our work and strategies efforts to address the concerns of persons with disabilities and Indigenous Minority communities at the local and regional level.**

**We must remember our primary mandate is service delivery. Let this planning workshop not only be a discussion, but a commitment to enhancing our capacity, aligning our resources, and ensuring we meet the expectations of our people with integrity and dignity.**

**Therefore, I challenge this team to be proactive and come up with a Plan which is both ambitious and realistic,**

**resulting in a concrete roadmap for improving service delivery.**

**Before I conclude, allow me to share two important updates. Firstly, the Ministry of Health and Social Services is currently finalizing the Standard Guidelines on Medical Assessment for Disability, which will provide greater clarity and consistency in disability assessments nationwide.**

**Secondly, improvements in the procurement and availability of wheelchairs are anticipated during the 2026/2027 financial year, which will significantly enhance mobility support for persons with disabilities.**

**There is also ongoing discussion regarding the possible change in terminology from “Marginalized Communities” to “Indigenous Minorities.” This consideration reflects our commitment to ensuring that language used in policy and public discourse respects identity and promotes dignity.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**As I conclude, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all staff members, partners, and**

**stakeholders who continue to support the work of these two critical divisions. Your commitment and dedication to improving the lives of vulnerable members of our society are commendable and align with the Eighth Administration's broader vision of inclusivity and equitable development for all Namibians.**

**With these remarks, it is now my honour and privilege to officially declare the Disability Affairs and Marginalized Divisions Planning Workshop from the 16<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026 officially open.**

**I thank you.**