



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, INNOVATION, YOUTH, SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE

BUDGET SPEECH

FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/2027

VOTE 27

By:

Honourable Dr. Sanet L Steenkamp, MP

Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture

Delivered by:

Honourable Dino Ballotti, MP

Deputy Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture

10 April 2026

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee, Honourable Members,
I rise before you today, feeling both entrusted and greatly responsible as I motivate and seek approval from this August House for **Vote 27: Youth, Sports and National Service** for the Financial Year 2026/2027, on behalf of My Minister, our Minister, Honorable Dr. Sanet Steenkamp.

Allow me to equally thank both the Minister of Finance and the Director General of the National Planning Commission for a well-crafted budget.

Hon Chairperson of the Whole House Committee, please permit me, before I deliver the motivation to express my profound condolences to the Family of my comrade, brother and dear friend, Hon. James Uerikua and his dearest son. Hon Uerikua in the last year that I properly got to know him showed me a rare kind of leadership and camaraderie which has been imprinted into this house and into me. May the souls of our dear brother and his son, rest in eternal peace.

Honourable Chairperson Honourable Members,

This budget must never be observed as a social cost, but rather a strategic national investment in the future of young people, where we focus on empowering our youth, strengthening sport development and advancing inclusive socio-economic growth.

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Members,

Based on our 2023 national census, Namibia's youth (under the age of 35) constitute 71.1% of our population and represent a powerful driver for economic growth and social transformation. However, this potential can only be realised through deliberate and sustained investment. Our young people are our greatest asset and yet without targeted investment, this demographic dividend risks turning into a developmental challenge.

Equally, sport continues to play a critical role in nation-building and employment creation. Sport is a unifier, it promotes discipline and healthy lifestyles and above all it promotes national pride.

This vote is therefore aligned with Government's broader development agenda as articulated in the 6th National Development Plan (NDP6) and the SWAPO Party Manifesto Implementation Plan (SMIP).

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Members,

1. I now turn to the Youth Development Programme.

During the previous financial year, the Ministry recorded significant progress in Youth Empowerment across multiple thematic areas. A total of three hundred and fifty-three (353) youth successfully completed one-year skills training programmes at the !Kai//Ganaxab, Berg Aukas and Frans Dimbare Youth Skills Training Centres, while one hundred and nineteen (119) youth completed semester-based training programmes at Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centres in the following Regions: Khomas, Kunene, Omusati, Ohangwena, //Kharas and Zambezi. In addition, one hundred and four (104) youth from all fourteen regions were trained in mushroom cultivation, with six (6) regions receiving start-up materials to operationalise their projects.

Youth Agriculture Co-operatives across the fourteen (14) Regions have been successfully established. All co-operatives are formally registered, ensuring governance, accountability and access to support mechanisms. This initiative is a cornerstone in addressing youth unemployment through collective production and market participation.

The Ministry also successfully reached four thousand six hundred and eight (4608) young people through comprehensive life skills information, equipping them with essential competencies to navigate life's challenges and to not only make responsible decisions but to contribute meaningfully to society. A total of sixty-two thousand four hundred and ninety-six (62 496) youth were reached with Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services through our youth-friendly clinics in collaboration with the Namibia Planned Parenthood Association (NAPPA). These interventions were implemented across the Zambezi, Ohangwena, Omusati, Kavango East, Erongo, //Kharas and Khomas Regions,

which included targeted programmes for young men, adolescent girls and various community-based outreach initiatives.

Furthermore, youth leadership and participation initiatives reached two hundred and eighty-four (284) young people through structured programmes that strengthened leadership pipelines, expanded participation in governance processes and enhanced Namibia's representation on both regional and global platforms. These included Commonwealth leadership engagements, Nelson Mandela Washington Fellowship Programme, national youth plenary sessions and various international youth platforms.

The Ministry also successfully hosted the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) Consultative Dialogue in August, in Windhoek, which brought together approximately two hundred and fifty (250) young people from across Commonwealth member states and successfully resulted in the adoption of the Windhoek Declaration, positioning Namibia as a leader in youth policy discourse.

Despite these achievements, Honourable Members, challenges remain. Some notable challenges include limited training capacity as well as the need for stronger alignment between skills development and labour market demands.

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Members,

1.1 An amount of **thirty-five million one hundred and four thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$35,104,000)** is allocated for the operational budget for Youth Development Programmes for the 2026/2027 financial year.

This allocation will support youth skills training, constituency-based enterprise development, access to finance through the Namibia Youth Credit Scheme, the expansion of the charcoal production initiative and the scaling up of life skills programmes.

During the period under review, eleven (11) youth enterprises have been funded across constituencies in the regions Kunene, Erongo, Karas, Khomas, Hardap, Oshikoto, Oshana, Omusati and Kavango West.

Under the Namibia Youth Credit Scheme, nine hundred and eight (908) youth were trained in business management during the period under review and in the

2026/2027 financial year, the Ministry targets to empower one thousand nine hundred and sixty (1960) youth through training, financing and mentorship support. The Ministry aims to strengthen monitoring mechanisms, improve loan recovery systems and undertake a comprehensive review of the Scheme to enhance sustainability. It is only through a well-managed revolving fund that this scheme can continue to grow and benefit others.

The Charcoal Youth Self-Employment Project has already trained four hundred (400) youth and in the coming financial year, three hundred and sixty-three (363) youth will be trained and deployed to production sites. I am pleased to inform this August House that our government has secured both production sites as well as market access which will ensure sustainability and income generation.

Looking ahead, the Ministry aims to expand training capacity, introduce short-term skills training programmes at Farm Du Plessis in the Omaheke Region and scale agricultural and enterprise initiatives to ensure equitable access across all fourteen (14) regions and one hundred and twenty-one (121) constituencies.

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Members,

During the period under review, the Ministry has made progress in strengthening youth empowerment infrastructure. Feasibility studies have been completed for the construction of a Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centre in Mariental in the Hardap Region, laying a critical foundation for expanding access to integrated youth services.

In addition, the Ministry has identified eight (8) industrial parks across the Zambezi, Kavango East, Ohangwena, Kunene, Oshana, Hardap, Erongo and //Karas regions where both rehabilitation and re-purposing will take place. These industrial parks are envisaged as catalytic hubs for economic activity, enterprise development and in particular for young aspiring entrepreneurs. These industrial parks must become serious hubs for youth entrepreneurship to thrive.

1.2 An amount of **nineteen million eight hundred thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$19,800,000)** is allocated to Youth Infrastructure Development, which will support the construction of new Multipurpose Youth Resource Centres in towns

such as Mariental, Opuwo, Otjiwarongo and Nkurenkuru as well as the re-purposing and renovation of five (5) Industrial Parks in the regions Zambezi, Kavango East, Ohangwena, Karas and Hardap Regions.

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Members,

The **National Youth Service (NYS)**, established in terms of the National Youth Service Act, (Act No. 6 of 2005) provides structured programmes in national service training, voluntary service and technical & vocational education and training (TVET).

During the period under review, one thousand and thirty (1030) recruits were successfully trained through programmes implemented in collaboration with the Namibian Defence Force, the Namibian Police Force, the Namibian Correctional Service and the Zambia National Service which has significantly enhanced training quality and strengthened bilateral cooperation.

In line with the provisions of the Act, six hundred (600) recruits were enlisted into the Namibian Defence Force, reflecting the effectiveness of the programme in enhancing employability and contributing to national human resource development.

Furthermore, nine hundred and eighty-seven (987) recruits were deployed to twenty (20) voluntary service projects across the country, while six hundred and twelve (612) youth received technical and vocational training. Sixty-eight (68) students were placed in internship programmes, with thirty-six (36) temporary employment opportunities created through production initiatives.

1.3 An amount of **one hundred and twenty-two million four hundred and seventy-one thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$122,471,000)** is allocated to the National Youth Service for the 2026/2027 financial year, with a target to train one thousand five hundred (1500) youth at both the Henties Bay and Rietfontein training centres.

Cabinet, at its 5th/03.03.26/002 meeting, approved the deployment of NYS recruits to various Offices, Ministries and Agencies (OMAs) and Regional Councils (RCs) to effectively implement and fulfil its voluntary service programme. This deployment is being undertaken for a period of three (3) months, spanning from

1 March 2026 to 31 May 2026, in line with the broader objective of enhancing service delivery and youth participation in national programmes.

Honourable Chairperson, Honorable Members,

During the period under review, the **National Youth Council (NYC)** focused on institutional stabilisation and governance reform. The NYC Interim Board prioritised restoring governance structures after a prolonged period of internal challenges where implemented measures have been put in place to strengthen compliance and accountability.

The Council also implemented programmes under thematic areas such as skills development, entrepreneurship, education support, sport, culture and community engagement which was far-reaching for young people across various constituencies.

1.4 An amount of **twenty-five million three hundred and seventy-six million Namibia Dollars (N\$25,376,000)** is allocated to the National Youth Council. In the 2026/2027 financial year, the Ministry will support the convening of a credible and inclusive General Assembly (GA) to establish a democratically recognised leadership and restore institutional legitimacy.

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Members,

2. I now turn to the Sport Development Programme.

Namibia hosted the African Union Sports Council (AUSC) Region 5 Youth Games in 2025 and finished second on the medal table out of ten (10) participating countries. Namibia has also successfully hosted the ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup and prepare to co-host the ICC Cricket World Cup in 2027. The junior hockey teams (both men and women) qualified for the World Cup, while athletes have excelled in regional and international competitions, including achievements in para-sport as well as the Brave Gladiators who won the COSAFA Women's Championship.

However, the sector continues to face challenges, including high infrastructure development costs, limited technical expertise, land constraints and high costs of transportation to list but a few.

2.1 The Ministry has budgeted **five million Namibia Dollars (N\$5,000,000)** for standing sport development programmes across all fourteen (14) regional sport offices. These programmes focus on mass participation and provide opportunities for communities to engage in sport activities tailored to their needs. These programmes are a mix of recreational sports activities aimed at identifying talent, building social cohesion and unifying regions. Furthermore, mass participation programmes were successfully implemented across constituencies such as Gibeon, Aranos, Sesfontein, Tsumkwe, Otjinene, Epukiro and Aroab, promoting grassroots sport and community cohesion.

2.2 In the 2026/2027 financial year, an amount of **three million Namibia Dollars (N\$3,000,000)** has been allocated for Namibia to participate in the AUSC Region 5 Games which will be taking place in Mozambique, to ensure competitiveness for Team Namibia that will be representing Namibia in various sport codes.

2.3 Government has further allocated **two million Namibia Dollars (N\$2,000,000)** for the Namibia Annual Sport Awards, which recognize and celebrate excellence in sport and serve as a gateway to regional recognition.

2.4 **One million Namibia Dollars (N\$1,000,000)** has been allocated for the procurement of sport equipment for the mass participation sports programmes, which are aligned to the sports codes selected regionally.

2.5 An amount of **two million five hundred thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$2,500,000)** is allocated towards the professionalisation of sport, enabling athletes to pursue sustainable livelihoods.

2.6 We have allocated **two million Namibia Dollars (N\$2 000 000)** to assist with the development of the Sport Development Index aimed to measure the contribution of sport to National Development and support decision making from evidence-based data.

2.7 Further allocations include **four million three hundred thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$4,300,000)** for the Namibia Rugby Union.

2.8 **One million five hundred thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$1,500,000)** for the Namibia Hockey Union.

2.9 **One million five hundred thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$1,500,000)** for bilateral agreements.

2.10 **Six million Namibia Dollars (N\$6,000,000)** for the Namibia School Sport Union (NSSU).

2.11 **Two million nine hundred and nine thousand five hundred Namibia Dollars (N\$2,909,500)** is allocated to the Namibia National Paralympic Committee.

2.12 **Two million nine hundred and nine thousand five hundred Namibia Dollars (N\$2,909,500)** is allocated to the Namibia National Olympic Committee (NNOC).

2.13 The Namibia Sport Commission has the responsibility and mandate to ensure that Federations are performing as per their constitutions and Namibia Sport Act (Act No. 12 of 2003), where **nineteen million one hundred and thirty-one thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$19,131,000)** has been allocated.

2.14 Sport integrity remains a key priority where an amount of **two million Namibia Dollars (N\$2,000,000)** is allocated towards Anti-doping programmes and the establishment of a National Anti-Doping Organisation.

2.15 In addition, **three million Namibia Dollars (N\$3,000,000)** is allocated to the Namibia Boxing Control Board to strengthen regulatory oversight.

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Members,

The Ministry has indicated the allocation of funds to certain federations, however, due to the growing number of registered federations, we remain with the challenge that not all are funded by Government. It remains our intention that all 61 registered sport federations should receive an allocation of resources while we continue to best see how to financially assist all sport federations.

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Members,

Government has made progress in advancing sports infrastructure development. The Ministry has identified sites for the construction of basic sports facilities in all 121 constituencies. For the 2025/2026 FY, 28 sites were prioritized for construction and site verifications were conducted jointly by our Ministry.

2.16 To support implementation, an amount of **one hundred and forty million Namibia Dollars (N\$140,000,000)** was allocated and transferred to 14 ring-fenced

and dedicated bank accounts, in line with the directive of Her Excellency the President, to construct two basic sports facilities per region per annum.

2.17 For the 2026/2027 FY a total of **one hundred and forty million Namibia Dollars (N\$140,000,000)** has been allocated under the development budget for the development of an additional 28 basic sport facilities in all 14 regions. We shall engage regional education directors to prioritize existing sport facilities on school grounds.

2.18 For the 2026/2027 FY an amount of **sixty million Namibia Dollars (N\$60,000,000)** has been allocated for the upgrading of the Independence Stadium. The freezing documents have been approved by both MEIYSAC and the Ministry of Works and Transport. We are preparing to consult Cabinet to best find a sustainable and economically viable solution to the financing of the CAF and World Athletics compliant national stadium.

2.19 An allocation of **twenty-three million six hundred thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$23,600,000)** will support the construction of new sport facilities in Omuthiya, Outapi, Katima Mulilo, Gobabis, Eenhana and Nkurenkuru, which includes the upgrading and rehabilitation of facilities in Oshakati, Rundu, Mariental, Keetmanshoop, Opuwo and Swakopmund. This allocation also supports the construction of the Namibia Sport High-Performance Centre which will be built at the University of Namibia Campus in Windhoek, we once again thank them for the land donated for this purpose. This Centre will position Namibia as a center of excellence in athlete development.

These investments are aligned with NDP6 commitments to develop sports infrastructure.

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Members,

As I draw to a close, I shall respectfully repeat that **Vote 27** must not be seen as a social cost, but as a strategic national investment in the future of our youth. It is an investment in young people acquiring skills, it is an investment in an entrepreneur building a business, it is an investment in an athlete striving for excellence and it is an investment in a nation working towards prosperity.

It is therefore my humble plea to call upon the Honorable Members of this August House to support and approve Vote 27 for the 2026/2027 Financial Year.

I thank you.