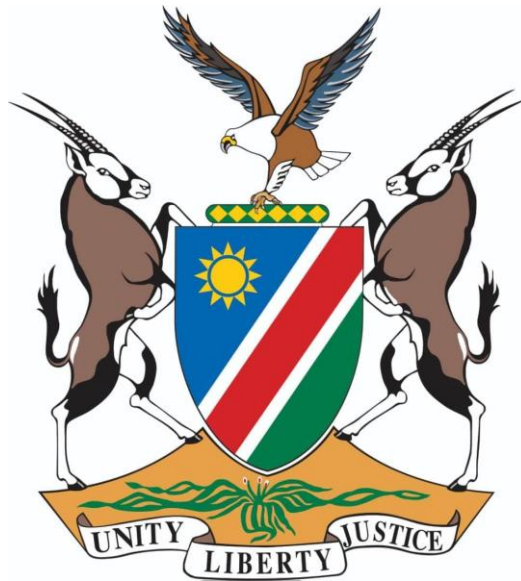


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



THE PRESIDENCY:

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**BY HER EXCELLENCY, LUCIA WITBOOI, VICE
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, ON THE
OCCASION OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 3RD GENERAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF
NAMIBIA (NYCN)**

**19 JUNE 2026 | SWAKOPMUND MULTIPURPOSE
CENTRE**

ERONGO REGION

- **Director of Proceedings;**
- **Honourable Dr. Sanet L. Steenkamp, Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sport, Arts and Culture;**
- **Honourable Nathalia /Goagoses, Governor of the Erongo Region;**
- **Ms. Patience Masua, Interim Executive Chairperson;**
- **Members of the Interim Board;**
- **Mr. Fimanekeni Petrus, Chairperson of the Erongo Regional Youth Forum;**
- **Chairpersons of the Regional Youth Forums;**
- **Delegates of the General Assembly, representing every region and constituency of our Republic;**
- **Distinguished Guests;**
- **Members of the Media;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning,

It is my distinct honour and privilege to address you this morning at this auspicious occasion of the Official

Opening of the 3rd General Assembly of the National Youth Council of Namibia (NYCN), here in Swakopmund, Erongo Region.

Allow me, at the onset, to convey warm greetings from Her Excellency, Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, the President of the Republic of Namibia, who has entrusted me with the honour and responsibility of representing her at this important occasion.

Her Excellency the President, extends her sincere appreciation for the invitation, and wishes the third General Assembly of the National Youth Council of Namibia, success in all its engagements and congratulations in advance, to the new leadership which is going to be elected during this four days gathering.

Director of Proceedings;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The National Youth Council of Namibia (NYCN) is a statutory umbrella body established by the National Youth Council Act (Act No. 3 of 2009) to coordinate youth organisations and champion the development,

empowerment, and well-being of Namibians aged sixteen to thirty-five.

It has a mandate to foster and implement national youth development policies; advisory role to the line Ministry on all youth-related matters; and fostering the spirit of national identity, unity, and patriotism among the Namibian youth. Furthermore, the National Youth Council of Namibia serves as the central platform that unifies and represents various youth-led organisations across our country.

With this important mandate, allow me to mention that your gathering here is very important. You will elect the people who will lead this Council for the next four years, to carry on the mandate of this institution. With your vote, you will be setting the direction of an institution that speaks formally and constitutionally, for the youth of this great nation.

**Director of Ceremonies;
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At this juncture, allow me to reiterate the government's stance on youth and national development. The 8th

Administration, under the able leadership of Her Excellency, Dr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, recognise the youth as catalysts for national development. They are vital drivers of innovation, economic growth, and social change.

To successfully harness the youth dividend, government has focused on targeted initiatives aimed at supporting our youth in skills development and entrepreneurship. The aim is to see more Namibian youth empowered economically and be able to become job creators and entrepreneurs.

The Government is aware that our country has one of the youngest populations globally, with about 71% of our population under the age of thirty-five.

A population this young is either our greatest economic opportunity, or a cost we will carry for decades if we fail to act. Therefore, this gathering is about prudent action and strong and visionary leadership. Let our youth, as future leaders of this nation, understand their role, and make use of the privileges and opportunities this government has established. Let our youth work in unison, and deliberate honestly on issues of national development. Let them understand that the onus is in

their hands to be productive, innovative and advice on any matter that drives our nation towards socio economic development.

We are aware that one of the socio-economic challenge we face as a country is youth unemployment, hovering around 44.4 percent, down from 46.1 percent some years prior. This decline, though it is a small improvement, indicates that we need to do more in order to bring down the rate of youth unemployment in our country.

In order to effect change, Government has set targets in our National Development Plan Six (NDP6), to increase youth employment from 56.6 percent to 70.0 percent by 2030. We also intend to reduce the national youth NEET rate (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) from 42 percent down to 25 percent by 2030. To achieve this, Government will continue executing extensive policy reforms to align skills with market demand and directly boost job creation.

For the youth, government has already introduced interventions such as free higher education, where the state covers 100 percent of registration and tuition fees

at public universities and vocational training centres to remove financial barriers.

In addition, the introduction of a work integrated learning program that ensures that students gain practical, hands-on workplace experience before graduation, to improve employability.

Government has also introduced a National Youth Development Fund, providing financial backing to small and medium enterprises and informal businesses. Furthermore, vocational training centres have been established and upgraded in all 14 regions to prioritise practical trades.

Government is also building a national youth database, so that skills, qualifications and regional employment gaps are visible to the employers and institutions.

On matters of agriculture, where we also urge our youth to participate, our Green Schemes programmes continues to channel investment into the local production of crops for national food security, and it continues to expand. Namibia currently produces sixty percent of the food it consumes domestically.

Government's target, through NDP6, is to raise that figure to eighty percent by 2030.

I am raising these interventions to this gathering, so that in all our deliberations, we will understand what government has done for the youth, and what it continue to do moving forward. Therefore, I call upon our youth across the country, not to be idle, but to participate and make use of these government programmes aimed to improve the livelihood of all our people, especially the youth.

Director of Proceedings;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I now turn to the matter immediately before this assembly: your elections.

This Council is about to choose its leadership for the next four years. I would like to speak to every delegate in this hall, regardless of who you support, regardless of which candidate you came here intending to back. Remember this, an election is only worth holding if both the processes and its outcome command respect. That means voting according to the rules this Assembly has adopted. It means accepting results once they are

announced. It also means extending support to whoever is elected.

Whoever comes out victorious in this vote, let the youth really their support to such an individual. I urge you to maintain unity, peace and harmony during and after the outcome of this General Assembly.

As I conclude, allow me to mention few words to the Interim Board that has carried this institution to this point. We commend the interim Board for the job well done. We thank you for your dedication and for maintaining a stable foundation upon which the new leadership will build on moving forward.

Our country is waiting for a strong, visionary youth-led leadership to champion our nation's developmental agenda not only for the youth, but for the whole country at large. At the end of it all, as youth, let us shun divisions, let us work together towards building a united Namibian youth, which endeavours to achieve sustainable socio-economic development and prosperity for all of us. Let our youth be champions of the spirit of One Namibia, One Nation.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia, I wish this General Assembly a successful and dignified sitting. With these remarks, it is therefore my district honour, to now declare this 3rd General Assembly of the National Youth Council of Namibia Officially Open.

I thank you.