REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

THE PRESIDENCY

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY HER EXCELLENCY DR. NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,

AT THE SOUTH AFRICA–NAMIBIA BUSINESS FORUM

MIDRAND, SOUTH AFRICA

17 JULY 2026

Theme: *"Driving Regional Industrialisation, Investment and Sustainable Growth Through Strategic South Africa-Namibia Partnerships"*

Your Excellency Mr. Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa;

Honourable Parks Tau, Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition of the Republic of South Africa;

Honourable Ambassador Selma Ashipala-Musavyi, Minister of International Relations and Trade, Republic of Namibia;

Members of the Executive Councils;

Business Leaders from Namibia and South Africa;

Representatives of Chambers of Commerce and Industry;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Your Excellency, Comrade President,

It is with a deeper sense of responsibility that I am here to address this distinguished Business Forum, especially because it is taking place as part of the Namibia-South Africa Bi-National Commission, a testament to the growing collaboration between our two governments and our private sectors.

Allow me, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Namibia, to express our sincere appreciation to the Government

and people of the sisterly Republic of South Africa for the traditional, warm hospitality extended to the Namibian delegation.

Namibia and South Africa share a relationship built on shared history, common values, and an unwavering commitment to our region's development. Our peoples are connected by geography, history, culture, and commerce.

These enduring ties provide a strong foundation on which we continue to build an even stronger economic partnership. Today, as we gather with leaders from government and the private sector, we reaffirm our collective commitment to transforming our political and diplomatic relations into greater economic cooperation that delivers tangible benefits to our people.

Comrade President,

South Africa remains Namibia's largest trading partner and a significant source of investment. Likewise, Namibia

continues to be an important economic partner and market for South Africa in the Southern African region. Our trade relationship has developed steadily over many decades.

South Africa supplies Namibia with a broad range of manufactured goods, machinery, petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, vehicles, chemicals, food products, and industrial equipment. In turn, Namibia exports minerals, fish, livestock products, agricultural commodities, and other products to South Africa.

This relationship is significant, but it also reveals an important reality. Much of our trade continues to follow traditional patterns, with raw materials exported and higher-value manufactured products imported.

If we are to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth, we must progressively shift toward greater industrialization, value addition, and regional manufacturing.

This is precisely the essence of the African Continental Free Trade Area. It provides Africa with an unprecedented

opportunity to build integrated regional value chains, increase intra-African trade, stimulate industrial production, and create meaningful employment for millions of Africans. Therefore, our responsibility as governments is to ensure that this opportunity translates into practical outcomes for businesses and citizens alike.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namibia is implementing an ambitious economic transformation program to position our country as a competitive investment destination and a strategic gateway to Southern Africa.

We continue to strengthen our logistics infrastructure through the Port of Walvis Bay and the Walvis Bay Corridors, which provide efficient access to regional and international markets.

Our economy offers significant investment opportunities across a number of strategic sectors, including:

Seven Priority Areas of the 8th Administration;

1. **Agriculture**
2. **Sport**
3. **Youth Empowerment**
4. **Quality Education and Training**
5. **Creative Industries**
6. **Quality Health and Social Welfare**
7. **Land, Housing and Sanitation**

Supported by the critical economic enablers

1. **Agriculture**
2. **Mining**
3. **Energy**
4. **Oil and Gas**

5. Tourism
6. Water
7. Fisheries
8. Transport and Logistics

These sectors present enormous opportunities for collaboration between Namibian and South African businesses.

South African companies possess significant expertise in manufacturing, financial services, engineering, mining technologies, telecommunications, automotive production, logistics, and industrial development.

On the other hand, Namibian enterprises offer partnership opportunities through access to natural resources, strategic infrastructure, investment incentives, and emerging industries. Together, we can develop regional value chains that increase local production, strengthen industrial competitiveness, and reduce dependence on imported manufactured goods from outside the African continent.

Comrade President,

Namibia's recent oil and gas discoveries, together with our world-class renewable energy potential and our ambitious Green Hydrogen Program, offer opportunities for strategic partnerships

with South African investors, technology providers, and financial institutions.

Thus, there is room for collaboration across electricity generation, power transmission, battery mineral value chains, and the development of clean energy industries that support Africa's transition to a low-carbon economy.

This partnership has the potential not only to strengthen our two economies but also to contribute significantly to regional energy security.

In agriculture, climate-smart agriculture, livestock production, agro-processing, seed technologies, irrigation systems, and food security initiatives all present opportunities for enhanced collaboration. By investing together in agricultural value chains, we can improve food security, increase exports, and create sustainable employment across our rural communities.

Similarly, our tourism sectors have considerable scope for cooperation through multi-destination tourism packages that showcase the rich natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of Southern Africa.

Your Excellency,

Namibia's strategic location on the Atlantic coast complements South Africa's sophisticated industrial base and transport infrastructure. By strengthening transport corridors, customs cooperation, digital trade facilitation, and cross-border logistics, we can significantly reduce the cost of doing business and improve regional connectivity

and competitiveness. Developing seamless regional supply chains will enhance the competitiveness of Southern African businesses in continental and global markets.

Your Excellency,
Governments have an important responsibility to create an enabling environment where businesses can thrive. Investors require policy certainty, transparent regulatory systems, efficient institutions, reliable infrastructure, and sound governance.

Namibia remains fully committed to maintaining a stable, rules-based, and investor-friendly environment that promotes investment, protects property rights, and supports sustainable economic growth.

The private sector must seize the opportunities created by regional integration. Our businesses must become more innovative,

competitive, and ambitious. They must invest in technology, skills development, research, and industrial capacity. They must also embrace partnerships that strengthen regional value chains and unlock new markets under the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Comrade President,

Economic cooperation must ultimately improve the lives of our people. Its success should be measured not only by trade statistics or investment figures but also by the number of decent jobs created, the enterprises established, the industries developed, and the opportunities provided for women, youth, and small businesses.

We therefore, encourage investment that promotes skills transfer, technology development, entrepreneurship, and local value addition. Such investments will ensure that economic growth contributes directly to poverty reduction and shared prosperity.

Today's Business Forum provides an important platform for building new partnerships and strengthening existing

ones. Let us move beyond dialogue toward concrete business agreements, joint ventures, expanded trade, technology exchange, development of regional manufacturing capacity, and investment

in sectors that advance industrialization and economic diversification, this will create lasting value for both our countries.

The future of Southern Africa depends on stronger regional cooperation, greater industrial competitiveness, and a shared commitment to sustainable development.

Together, Namibia and South Africa have the capacity to demonstrate what meaningful regional integration can achieve. As we work toward the aspirations of Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area, let us continue to build resilient, inclusive economies driven by African innovation, investment, and enterprise.

I remain confident that today's discussions and engagements will further strengthen the strategic economic partnership between Namibia and South Africa and contribute to greater prosperity for our peoples.

With these remarks, I wish you a productive and successful Business Forum. Let this engage create tangible opportunities that will give positive results.

I thank you.