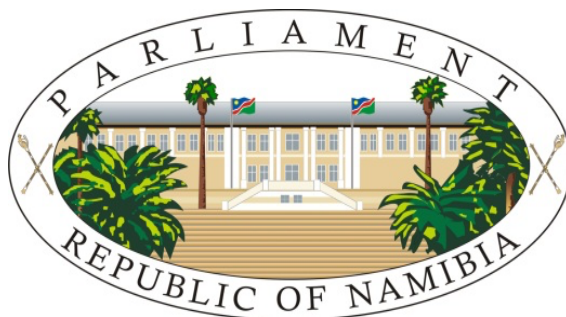




NATIONAL COUNCIL

JUNIOR NATIONAL COUNCIL

Honorable Emma Tangi Muteka

Vote of thanks

Monday, 31 August 2026

Master of Ceremonies, Ms. Pamela Mate;

The Right Honourable Dr. Elijah Tjitunga Ngurare, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia;

Honourable Lukas Sinimbo Muha, MP, Chairperson of the National Council;

Ms Toshiko Takahashi, Deputy Country Representative for UNICEF Namibia;

Your Excellency Zhao Weiping, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China;

Honourable Members of the Junior National Council;

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning.

It is an honour and a privilege to stand before the vibrant, brilliant and courageous young minds who have taken part in the 1st Session of the 4th Junior National Council. As we come to the close of this opening session, I believe we can all agree that this has been much more than an introduction to parliamentary procedure. It has been an opportunity to bring young Namibians into this Chamber, to give them a platform to speak, to question, to deliberate and to be heard. Under the theme, "Towards Universal Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Every Namibian Child," this programme places important issues at the centre of our discussions and reminds us that the decisions we make today will shape the Namibia we inherit tomorrow. More importantly, it reminds us that when young people are given the opportunity, they do not simply participate; they contribute, they challenge and they lead.

Allow me to express our sincere appreciation to the Right Honourable Dr. Elijah Tjitunga Ngurare, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, for honouring us with his presence and delivering the keynote address; to Honourable Lukas Sinimbo Muha, MP, Chairperson of the National Council, for his leadership and support; to Dr. Samuel Kweku Ocran and UNICEF for

their continued commitment to empowering young people; and to His Excellency Zhao Weiping, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Namibia, and the Chinese Embassy for their valued support and for gracing us with their presence. To the National Council staff, organisers, facilitators and everyone who worked behind the scenes, we sincerely thank you for making this opening session possible. We also extend our appreciation to all our guest speakers and contributors who have shared their knowledge, experience and guidance with our Junior MPs and helped set the foundation for the programme ahead.

And now, to our Junior MPs, the heart of this entire programme: thank you. Thank you for showing up, for being ready to speak up, ask difficult questions, challenge ideas and represent young people from across Namibia. Today, you have taken your first step into this Chamber, and in just a moment, you will have the opportunity to make your voices heard through debate. I encourage each and every one of you to use this opportunity fully. Speak with confidence, listen with respect, question boldly and, most importantly, do not be afraid to bring new ideas to the table. This is your space, your opportunity and your moment to show us what young Namibians are capable of.

We often hear the phrase, "The youth are the leaders of tomorrow." I want us to retire that phrase. You are not the leaders of tomorrow. You are the leaders of today. Leadership does not begin when you receive a title. It begins when you decide to use your voice, take responsibility and stand for something bigger than yourself. So, as you prepare to begin your debates, I want you to remember that your voice matters. You are not here simply to speak for the sake of speaking. You are here to represent the hopes, concerns and experiences of young people across Namibia. Do not only tell us what is wrong. Challenge yourselves to ask, "What can we do about it?"

And because you are the Generation TikTok, let us talk about that for a moment. You know what is trending before some of us have even had our first cup of coffee. You know the latest sound, the latest meme, the latest challenge and somehow, you can turn almost anything into content. You say, "IYKYK," "no cap," "that's giving," "main character energy" and, of course, "we listen and we don't judge." You probably know how to make a video go viral before some of us even know where to press the record button! And honestly, you can make a 30-second video reach thousands of people, while some of us can sit through a three-hour meeting and still be asking, "So, what exactly are we discussing?" Your generation has something incredibly powerful: a platform. You can advertise a business, sell your products, promote your talent, build a brand, become a content creator, educate thousands of people, advocate for a cause, create employment opportunities and even turn an idea that started in your bedroom into a real business. Social media is not only for entertainment; it can be a classroom, a marketplace, a newsroom and a platform for change.

But remember this: followers are not the same as leadership, and going viral is not the same as making an impact. If you are going to be influential, influence someone positively. If you are going to be a creator, create solutions. If you are going to use your platform, use it to educate, inspire, build businesses, promote your communities and speak about issues that truly matter. And if you are going to have that "main character energy," make sure the story you are writing is

bigger than yourself. Your generation has the power to shape conversations, change perceptions and influence decisions, but with that power comes responsibility. Use your voice wisely.

So, Junior MPs, do not just clock it on social media. Clock it in real life. Clock it when a child does not have access to clean water. Clock it when a girl misses school because of inadequate sanitation. Clock it when young people are excluded from decisions that affect their future. Clock it when a learner faces barriers to education. Clock it when a young person is struggling silently and nobody notices. But do not stop at identifying the problem. Bring the solution. Namibia does not need a generation that only tells us what is wrong. We need a generation brave enough to say, “Here is the problem, and here is what we are going to do about it.”

Never allow anyone to make you feel that because you are young, your voice is small. Your age is not your weakness; it is your advantage. You have the creativity, the technology, the energy and the courage to challenge what previous generations may have accepted as normal. But with that opportunity comes responsibility. You will need critical thinking, integrity, resilience and the courage to know the difference between what is trending and what truly matters. Not everything that gets a million views deserves your attention, and not everything that deserves your attention will get a million views.

As you prepare to enter the debates, remember the young person you came here to represent. Remember the child without clean water. Remember the learner facing barriers to education. Remember the young person who feels unheard. You are here because their voices deserve to be heard, and your responsibility is to make sure those voices are represented with courage, honesty and purpose. Do not underestimate what can happen when young people decide not only to speak, but to act.

As Nelson Mandela once reminded us, “Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation.” Junior MPs, this is your generation. You have the opportunity to shape the Namibia you want to see. Do not wait until you are older. Do not wait for a title. Do not wait for permission. Start where you are, use what you have and make a difference.

And now, as you are about to begin your debates, I leave you with this challenge: make leadership the trend, make service the trend, make integrity the trend, make solving problems the trend, and most importantly, make caring about Namibia the trend. Junior MPs, this is your moment. Own it. Make it count. And whatever you do, wherever you go, do not just clock it. Clock the problem, clock the opportunity, clock your responsibility, and then do something about it. **CLOCK IT! CLOCK IT!**

I thank you.