

NAMIBIA BUSINESS REVIEW

Where Business meets ideas

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RCC defends performance despite criticism over N\$4b Chinese deal

• TIRI MASAWI

Roads Contractor Company (RCC) interim chief executive officer Dasius Nelumbu has defended the company's performance after claims that local contractors were sidelined through a 2018 partnership with a Chinese company on projects worth about N\$4 billion.

Nelumbu told *Namibia Business Review* last week that the institution has undergone major internal reforms over the past 18 months, including improvements in governance, project delivery and financial systems.

His response follows a recent heated exchange in Parliament between Works and Transport Minister Veikko Nekundi and Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters (NEFF) member of Parliament Ipumbu Kalimbo over RCC's foreign contracting model.

Nekundi and Ipumbu's debate stems from the company's decision taken in 2018 to partner with Chinese firm Nantong Sanjian on projects worth N\$4 billion.

"It is unfortunate that by default, the public only sees the little remaining stains on 'work in progress' of cleaning and bringing RCC to where it should be"



> Dasius Nelumbu

In April the Construction Industries Federation of Namibia (CIF) warned that the Roads Contractor Company model sidelines Namibian contractors.

Nelumbu said critics often overlook the scale of restructuring inside RCC.

"It is unfortunate that by default, the public only sees the little remaining stains on 'work in progress' of cleaning and bringing RCC to where it should be," he said. He added: "I have been RCC interim CEO for a little over 18 months now, and without a shadow of doubt, a number of strategic results are very evident."

He pointed to what he described as improvements in audits, reporting and compliance.

"RCC produced the annual reports and submitted some to the shareholder," Nelumbu said, adding that the company now has updated audits after a 10-year backlog.

Nelumbu was not in charge when the N\$4 billion partnership was concluded.

CONTINUE ON PAGE 2



> Victoria Sibeya

Sibeya lands Namcor MD job after Cabinet approval

• TIRI MASAWI

NATIONAL Petroleum Corporation of Namibia (Namcor) executive Victoria Sibeya has been approved by the Cabinet to become the company's next managing director, ending years of leadership uncertainty at the state-owned oil company.

Sibeya currently serves as Namcor's executive for upstream exploration.

Her appointment as managing director,

which comes with a monthly basic salary of N\$230 000 is effective 1 July.

The appointment is expected to be announced officially by government spokesperson and information and communication technology minister Emma Theofelus and the Namcor board.

Secretary to Cabinet Emilia Mkusa yesterday confirmed to *Namibia Business Review* that Sibeya had received Cabinet's endorsement.

"I can confirm that the issue was discussed in Cabinet and yes, she was endorsed to take over, but that is as much as I can give you. If you want more, speak to the minister of information and communication technology," Mkusa said.

Sibeya referred the questions to Namcor spokesperson Utara Hoveka.

"I confirm receipt of your query about the appointment of a managing director at Namcor."

CONTINUE ON PAGE 2

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> Minister of works and transport Veikko Nekundi

"I, however, cannot disown what happened during that time," he said.

He explained that the main purpose of partnering with foreign companies is to leverage their capacity and help RCC acquire productive assets through such arrangements.

However, he noted that not all partnerships have delivered on both fronts.

"We have observed that some partnerships could only deliver the product, meaning the constructed road, but could not deliver on the capacity-building part. There are many reasons for this," he said.

He added that partnerships concluded

during his tenure have produced more visible results. "What I can assure you as of today is that the strategic partnerships which came into being during my tenure have visible results. The new equipment is there for you to see. For me, this is visible and practical capacity building, not just words," he said.

RCC MODEL

The company's foreign partnership model came under criticism in Parliament this month, where member of parliament lipumbu Kalimbo accused RCC of enabling what he called "economic sabotage."

Kalimbo cited the 2018 RCC partnership with Nantong Sanjian, claiming that "N\$2 billion of the N\$4.1 billion in tenders went to this Chinese company," arguing that Namibians were left with limited benefits.

He said state-owned enterprises were "facilitators of a neo-colonial economic order" and called for stronger local control of infrastructure projects.

Kalimbo also called for a forensic audit of RCC foreign partnerships since 2015, including disclosure of how funds were spent.

"Honourable member, surely you cannot expect a 10 year period forensic audit to be conducted in 6 months," he said, adding that such audits must be justified and are costly. Responding in Parliament, Minister Veikko Nekundi rejected claims that government policy was undermining Namibian interests.

"Honourable lipumbu of Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters, be assured the leadership of the Swapo party and her led government will never betray this country," he said.

He also defended RCC's operational structure, saying local participation is already embedded in current projects.

Nekundi told Parliament that RCC's grading units are fully subcontracted to Namibian-owned enterprises, while all Bitumen Maintenance Units are executed directly by RCC.

On capital projects, he said all involve Namibian-registered firms and over 90 SMEs.

PROJECTS

Nelumbu said several delayed projects have been revived or completed, including the Sandverhaar Railway project, which



lipumbu Kalimbo

he said is now "98% complete," and the Engoyi-Omuntele road, which has been handed over.

He said RCC is now active across all regions of Namibia, with ongoing road construction in Kamanjab-Khorixas, Omuntele-Onanke, Oshakati-Ompundja, and Uushake-Okankolo. "We are now in all regions," he said. RCC says it directly employs 295 people and supports more than 1 000 indirect jobs.

Nelumbu said the company has also expanded its machinery fleet.

"We have leveraged our projects to bring in 38 brand new equipment and a crusher," he said.

He added that SME participation remains central to RCC's model, with 15% to 30% local subcontracting per project.

"Give it the next 4 to 5 years, we would not be partnering with anyone because by then we will be fully capacitated," he said.

NBR

* READ the entire interview on page 4.

SIBEYA LANDS NAMCOR FROM PAGE 1



"Namcor has had several acting managing directors over the past three years"



> Shiwana Ndeunyema (April 2023 to January 2024)



> Lionel Matthews (Nine days)



> Ebson Uanguta (January 2024 to March 2025)



> Maureen Hinda-Mbuende (August 2025 to February 2026)



> Mtundeni Ndafyaalako (March 2026)

That process is led by the board of directors and the line minister (of industries, mines and energy). Be rest assured that the board will pronounce itself on the outcome of the process once it is finalised," Hoveka said.

The recruitment process was completed in March, after the board finalised interviews and submitted its recommended candidate to the line ministry.

Industries, mines and energy Minister Modestus Amutse said last week that the process had been concluded and was

awaiting final approval.

"The interviews were concluded and the final short list was chosen.

The board has submitted the final name of the leading and other candidates to my office. We will soon have this issue approved by the Cabinet," Amutse said.

TRANSITION

Sibeya previously served as acting managing director from April to August 2025, leading the company during a key transition period.

She will replace former managing director Immanuel Mulunga, who led Namcor for nine years before being dismissed. Mulunga is now facing corruption-related charges together with other former executives.

The case involves 71 criminal counts, including fraud, racketeering and corruption, linked to allegations involving more than N\$480 million.

END OF REVOLVING LEADERSHIP

Namcor has had several acting managing

directors over the past three years.

Shiwana Ndeunyema served from April 2023 to January 2024.

Lionel Matthews, former Nedbank Namibia managing director, followed but quit after nine days.

Bank of Namibia Governor Ebson Uanguta served from January 2024 to March 2025. Maureen Hinda-Mbuende led the company from August 2025 to February 2026. Mtundeni Ndafyaalako has been acting managing director since March 2026. **NBR**

600 000 Namibians still live in shacks as housing crisis deepens

• TIRI MASAWI

NEARLY 600 000 Namibians are still living in informal settlements, highlighting the country's growing housing crisis despite efforts to speed up land servicing and housing delivery.

The figures are contained in a report prepared by the Economic Task Force and presented to President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah. The committee was appointed to find lasting solutions to Namibia's housing and land challenges.

According to the report, around 2 million Namibians live in urban areas, with about 600 000 of them living in informal settlements, many without proper housing, electricity and access to clean water in their homes.

This was revealed during media stakeholders' engagement for the Namibia Public-Private Forum held last week in Windhoek.

Economic advisory committee member Fanuel Manda said the country's housing crisis is driven by legal obstacles and the failure to build enough houses and service enough land to meet demand.

He said Namibia needs a broader approach that focuses on providing affordable housing for low- and middle-income earners while ensuring that serviced land is made available faster.

"When it comes to sanitation itself we are operating about 70% and water provision we are operating at about 90 per cent which is good. On housing we are still struggling and that is where we need to come up with a public private sector solution," Manda said.

Speaking at the same event Director-General of the National Planning Commission Kaire Mbuende said the Economic advisory committee had identified key areas that need attention to improve the economy and address challenges



> Kaire Mbuende



affecting Namibians. These include attracting more foreign direct investment, introducing an immigration bill to make it easier for high-end investors to enter the country, and finding practical solutions to the housing shortage.

"One of the most encouraging outcomes of the inaugural Forum was the spirit in which the discussions took place. The government listened with keen interest to the concerns and aspirations of the private sector. Equally, there was a desire by the private sector to engage constructively and to contribute solutions to national challenges," Mbuende said.

He said solving Namibia's economic challenges will require close cooperation between government and the private sector.

"One of the concerns frequently raised by both Government and the private sector over the years has been that consultations often produce excellent recommendations without follow up. It was for this reason that Her Excellency the President emphasized that the Namibia Public-Private Forum must distinguish itself not by the quality of the discussions alone, but by the quality of the outcomes that emerge from those discussions," he said.

Khomas region governor Samuel Nujoma acknowledged that the country continues to struggle to provide enough housing and serviced land for those in need.



> Samuel Nujoma

"On housing and land delivery, I was tasked with the coordination of the Implementation Plan for the Upgrading and Formalisation of Informal Settlements in the Khomas Region by the Office of the Prime Minister," Nujoma said.

He said his office is working with the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform, and the Khomas Regional Council. He added that the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development has pledged N\$750 million towards the housing programme.

However, he said delays in coordination between the ministry and the City of Windhoek are slowing implementation.

"The City of Windhoek has completed layout designs for 11,226 proposed erven across 18 townships, with a combined CAPEX of N\$296.4 million earmarked for

land servicing and housing delivery in the 2026/27 Financial Year, targeting Cimbebasia, Otjomuise, Rocky Crest, Havana, Goreangab and Okahandja Park," he said.

Nujoma said the City has also built 194 communal toilets and 227 communal water points, increasing sanitation coverage by 16% and water-point coverage by 22%.

He added that the Khomas Regional Council has invested N\$3 million in drilling and rehabilitating boreholes and installing water pumps across 11 rural settlements.

"The City's Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Master Plan, approved in 2025, requires N\$11.72 billion over a twenty-year implementation period, with the upgrade of the Gammams Wastewater Treatment Plant and an additional Direct Potable Reclamation Plant already secured through grant and loan financing," he said.

Nujoma said building activity in the region is also increasing.

"Regional building plan approvals grew by 47% year-on-year, reaching a value of N\$2.89 billion in 2024/25, creating opportunities for Khomas residents, local contractors and suppliers.

Under the Mass Housing Development Programme, 304 housing units are being constructed in Windhoek, with housing delivery also supported through the Build Together Programme and the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia," he said.

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RCC CEO responds to questions on performance, partnerships and jobs



> Dasius Nelumbu

THE Roads Contractor Company (RCC) has recently come under public attention over its role in delivering road infrastructure in Namibia, its partnerships with foreign companies, and its ability to operate on a financially sustainable basis. Works and Transport Minister Veikko Nekundi has said that RCC, which has received significant government support over the years, must now show stronger commercial perfor-

mance and improve project delivery.

Questions have also been raised about whether RCC's contracting model creates enough opportunities for local contractors and job creation, particularly when working with foreign firms on major projects.

Namibia Business Review spoke to **RCC Chief Executive Officer Dasius Nelumbu** to get his responses on these issues.

NBR: Can you briefly outline the current operational status of RCC and its overall performance at present?

Nelumbu: It is unfortunate that by default, public only see the little remaining stains on "work in progress" of cleaning and bringing RCC to where it should be, I have been RCC Interim CEO for a little over 18 months now, and without a shadow of doubt, a number of strategic results are very evident. Below is a snapshot of what we collectively (Myself, My Management and Staff and My Board) have achieved collectively in the last 18 months.

It is in the public interest to take stock of what we have done thus far, we have leveraged our projects to bring in 38 brand new equipment and a crusher, new equipment means un-interrupted production.

Go to Omuntele, Ompundja, Kamanjab or to UIS, our new equipment are there for public to see.

Be mindful that there are groups of people who are not happy to see the raise of RCC as it would eventually become a formidable construction industry player, this is not good news to some, this is why they are on a mission to create chaos at RCC, disturb good progress and using some of our old employees to sabotage work.

And in some cases using state institutions like ACC to fight their battles, this I can speak on it publicly and openly because RCC have been there and in chaos before my arrival they will have to kill first, otherwise I will continue to turn this chaos into order, to tell you, I been receiving death threats, it is disturbing, RCC was being used as a conduit for work, and we are putting a stop to that. Now that we want RCC to do work on its own, only a few support these initiatives, our shareholder is in full support of RCC and its new strategies and Our Board is in full support and we will match forward to deliver.

NBR: What major infrastructure projects is RCC currently undertaking, and in which regions of the country?

Nelumbu: The RCC projects are as listed above and we are now in all Regions.

NBR: How many Namibians are currently employed directly and indirectly through RCC projects?

Nelumbu: RCC alone employs 295 and counting a we implement new projects, and over 1000 if we count all those indirectly employed at RCC projects.

NBR: What proportion of RCC work is currently executed by local contractors versus foreign partners?

Nelumbu: At each of our projects, our policy which is being implemented is that 15%-30% must be sub-contracted

to local SMEs, thus typically, at any given project where a foreign company is the main sub-contractor, 70% of work would be for the main sub-contractor and about 30% for locals.

We must appreciate the rationale behind this which is to support locals through local training programs on site while leveraging the capacity of the foreign company, give it the next 4 to 5 years, we would not be partnering with anyone because by then we will be fully capacitated.

NBR: How does RCC decide when to partner with foreign companies, and what criteria are used in such decisions?

Nelumbu: We advertise and evaluate using criteria's which are also advertised, some of such requirement include being able to provide full work guarantee, which is 10% of contract value, this means also guarantying the work of the SMEs, this in in addition to provided construction required cash flow for 4 to 6 months or more un-interrupted while waiting on client to pay.

NBR: In relation to past partnerships, including the 2018 arrangement with Nantong Sanjian, what was the strategic objective of such collaborations?

Nelumbu: I was not there at the time, however, I can not disown what happened during that time, hence I can answer to say that, the main intend to partner with any foreign company is to leverage their capacity and help RCC to acquire productive assets through those partnership, we have observed that some partnership could only deliver the product (constructed road) but could not deliver on the capacity building part, there are many reasons to this, what I can assure you as of today is that the strategic partnerships which came into being during my tenure have visible results, the new equipment are there for you to see and for me this is visible and practical capacity building, not just words.

NBR: How does RCC ensure that these partnerships contribute to skills transfer and local capacity building?

Nelumbu: Refer to question 6 for capacity building, and on skill transfer, we

have implement a deliberate onsite training to ensure skill transfer.

NBR: There have been public concerns that a significant portion of the contract value in some projects has gone to foreign companies. How do you respond to these claims?

Nelumbu: One should be able to quantify significant, I disagree to this because, we have 6 capital project of which we are doing 4 on our own without foreign help, yes we may need help here and there when our capacity is stretched, equally, we have over 31 blading contracts which is in totality being executed by our local construction companies, we are doing OK in ensuring that the locals participates through us.

NBR: What measures are in place to ensure transparency, fairness, and maximum local participation in RCC procurement and subcontracting?

Nelumbu: As a measure, we advertise and fairly evaluate the submitted bids, in addition, we have a policy which calls for 15%-30% local participation and we are doing good thus far in this aspect. Yes, there are challenges ranging from lack of finances, know how, experience and having the right equipment for the job on the part of our SMEs, however, I believe no one was born with anything or any skill and experience, we teach them on the job and that remain our philosophy, we encourage those that have nothing to apply for SME work and we hold their hand and bring them to a notable SME, each formidable contractor you see today also started with nothing and was equally given an opportunity.

NBR: What is RCC's long-term strategy to become financially self-sustaining while still fulfilling its public infrastructure mandate?

Nelumbu: The Board and Management of RCC have developed a sustainable ISBP, in which long term strategy are detailed, you have to note that if you do not have productive assets, you can never detach yourself from depending on others to provide you with such, also, road construction production inputs control is key to sustainability, these are properly defined in our ISBP and we are advancing on some of our strategies to ensure realization is visible and touchable to by the set date.

In addition, as a company, we cannot continue to rely on treasury to provide project funding, because that would translate into delayed development as state alone cannot sufficiently fund all projects.

Thus we would go into other avenues to find projects and project funders to bring forward development. **NBR**

ASPECT / PROJECT	STATUS BEFORE	STATUS NOW
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE		
1. Audited AFS	10 years outstanding audits.	Up to date audits. <i>Legacy issues affected the financial records including source documents hence a disclaimer opinion is issued throughout. We are working on obtaining a clean audit going forward.</i>
2. Annual Report	As a result of outstanding audits, RCC did not have Annual Reports for the last 10 years ending 2023.	RCC produced the Annual Reports and submitted same to the shareholder.
3. Good Standings	RCC did not have good standing for NAMRA, SSC and did not have Employment Equity Certificate.	The company now has NAMRA, SSC Good standing and Employment Equity Certificate.
4. Company Budgets	Company operated without approved budget.	Yearly budgets are prepared and approved by the Board.
5. ISBP and BP	No ISBP and Business Plan.	RCC now has an active ISBP and BP.
CURRENT PROJECTS		
1. Sandverhaar Railway project	Project was not commenced and was 9 months behind.	Project is now 98% complete.
2. MR76 – Henties – Uis	RCC did not participate in actual construction works.	Re-negotiation of participation took place, RCC is now doing 16km of the road works.
3. Engoyi – Omuntele (16km)	Project was severely behind schedule and was about to be cancelled. Reported on by newspapers when given 21 days to correct or risk cancellation.	Project completed and handed over to the public. The Omuntele community is happy to be driving on an RCC completed road from Engoyi to Omuntele.
4. GU – Blading contracts (31 GUs)	GU Contractors earned above 95% of blading rates.	Rates re-negotiated to 70% sub-contractor and 30% RCC. This brought in 25% more in profit from the blading contracts.
5. BMU road maintenance	5 BMU contracts could not be commenced.	5 BMU contracts are now operational and being fully operated by RCC.
NEW PROJECTS		
1. Kamanjab – Khorixas (32km Bitumen standard)	Newly allocated.	Construction ongoing for the 32km stretch. We have negotiated to construct 32 km of the 105 km without any sub-contract except for the local SMEs.
2. Omuntele – Onanke (25.5km)	Newly allocated.	Construction ongoing for the 25.5km stretch.
3. Oshakati – Ompundja (16km LVSR)	Newly allocated.	Construction is ongoing for the 16km stretch.
4. Uushake – Okankolo (55km LVSR)	Newly allocated.	We are busy establishing site. Designs were not ready initially but are ready now.
5. Mbeyo – Erago (20.3km Gravel Road betterment)	Newly allocated.	Site establishment commenced; work will begin soon. The site was recently safely cleared of bombs (de-mining).

Namibian financial sector under threat from Brazilian drug syndicates

• STAFF WRITER

THE Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) says drug trafficking linked to a cocaine route running between Brazil and South Africa is putting pressure on Namibia's financial system and national security.

In its 2025 financial year report released on Friday, the FIC says criminal networks are not only moving drugs through the region but are also using Namibia's financial channels to hide and move illegal proceeds.

The report warns that Namibian nationals are being recruited as drug couriers, with young women often among the most vulnerable targets.

"Syndicates continue to use multi-leg travel routes, informal support networks, and informal financial channels to move drugs and launder proceeds," the report said.

The FIC said traffickers rely on several warning signs to avoid detection, including unclear travel purposes, missing accommodation or return details, and last-minute or one-way flight bookings.

Other red flags include nervous or unusual travel behaviour, unexplained cash deposits or payments, and trips funded by third parties, which may be linked to drug syndicates operating across the three countries.



Beyond drug trafficking, the report says fraud and Ponzi schemes remain the most common financial crimes in Namibia, accounting for about 30% of cases.

These are followed by tax offences (13%), theft (10%), drug-related offences (9%), and corruption (6%). Other crimes recorded include terrorism, murder, poaching, counterfeit piracy, robbery and bribery.

The FIC said it issued 20 account restriction orders during the year, worth about N\$61 million, compared to 15 or-

ders worth N\$155 million in the previous period.

"These interventions demonstrate the practical value of collaboration between the FIC, the private sector in responding to suspected financial crime. By enabling the temporary restriction of accounts linked to suspicious transactions, the FIC created an opportunity for further enquiry, preservation of suspected proceeds of crime, and timely follow-up by the relevant investigating authorities," the report said.

The centre said it supported 87 police investigations, which led to the identification of 55 victims and 58 suspects linked to sophisticated financial crimes.

It also shared eight intelligence reports with the Anti-Corruption Commission, mainly involving allegations of abuse of office for personal gain. The FIC said its intelligence helped tax authorities raise N\$11 million in assessments, while N\$29 million was collected from earlier cases.

"Intelligence shared by the FIC supported tax assessments totalling N\$11 million during the reporting period, while N\$29 million was collected arising from assessments conducted in previous years. In addition, 19 criminal cases were opened involving suspected tax-related offences as predicate offences," the FIC said.

Asset recovery remained a key focus, with intelligence leading to 10 preservation orders worth N\$9 million and 12 forfeiture orders worth N\$26 million during 2025. **NBR**

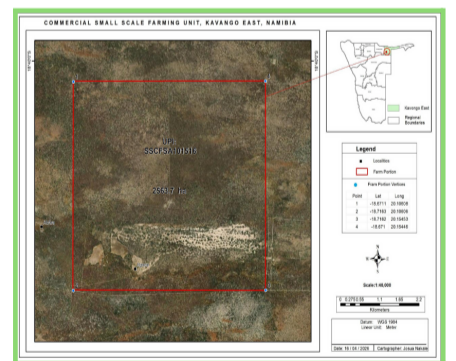
NOTICE FOR THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING

Notice is hereby placed to inform all potentially Interested and Affected Parties (I & APs) that an application for Environmental Clearance Certificate will be made to the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, in line with the provisions of Environmental Management Act 7 of 2007 and its Regulations of 2012.

Project Location: Small Scale Farming Unit: 1516, Mutwe Wambahe Village, Mashare Constituency, Kavango – East Region.

Project Description: The project involves conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the selective logging at the Small-Scale Farming Unit: 1516 at Mutwe Wambahe Village, within the Mashare Constituency under the Shambyu Traditional Authority, Kavango - East Region.

Proponent: Mr. Poroto Augustinus



All Interested and Affected Parties (I & APs) are invited to register, request background information document and submit inputs on or before 24 July 2026. A public consultation meeting is scheduled to take place on the 10th July 2026 at Mutwe Wambahe Village, Kavango – East Region @ 14h00.

For any inquiries please contact;
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Regional operation stops N\$479 million tobacco smuggling ring



• TIRI MASAWI

SOUTHERN African Customs Union (SACU) leaders have welcomed joint regional operations that led to the seizure of illicit tobacco products worth N\$479 million, describing the crackdown as a major step in fighting cross-border smuggling.

The leaders of Namibia, South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini met over the weekend, where they discussed ways to strengthen cooperation against illicit trade, particularly the smuggling of tobacco products.

According to the South African Revenue Service (SARS), the region lost an estimated N\$40 billion (US\$2.4 billion) in tobacco excise revenue between 2020 and 2025 because of the illegal trade.

In a communiqué issued after the ninth SACU Summit, the Heads of State and Government committed themselves to working more closely to

tackle the growing impact of illicit trade on the regional economy.

The summit was attended by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Namibian President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Botswana President and new SACU chairperson Duma Boko, Eswatini's King Mswati III and Lesotho Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane.

"The Summit further welcomed the commencement of regional initiatives on the approach to be adopted by SACU for identifying and packaging hard and soft infrastructure development projects; the development of the regional framework for trade digitalisation and digital transformation; and the streamlining of the administration of Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (SPS), Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), and Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs)," the communiqué said.

The leaders also welcomed the continued implementation of the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO)

Programme, saying it has helped curb illicit trade by creating a network of trusted traders monitored through a risk management system.

They further expressed satisfaction with ongoing work to develop seamless, non-stop border trading within the Common Customs Area.

South Africa remains the biggest contributor to SACU, transferring about N\$50 billion each year to Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini.

The summit also voiced concern over growing protectionism, unilateral policies and ongoing global conflicts, saying these developments continue to affect SACU member states.

"The economic ramifications of these developments include disruptions in supply chains, elevated energy and food prices, and a subdued global growth outlook. Notwithstanding this, the Summit noted the increase in South-South cooperation which mitigates against the negative spillover effects of the current

developments," the communiqué said.

The leaders reaffirmed that industrialisation, export growth and investment promotion remain central to SACU's long-term development.

They noted progress in developing regional value chains, attracting investment and promoting cross-border industrial cooperation.

The summit also highlighted work in the automotive sector, including plans for battery value chains, component manufacturing and green mineral beneficiation.

The leaders urged SACU ministers to speed up the implementation of cross-border industrial projects to strengthen the regional economy.

On the African Continental Free Trade Area, the summit welcomed progress in implementing tariff liberalisation commitments and called on member states to make full use of the agreement to improve resilience and reduce the impact of global supply chain disruptions. **NBR**



"They further expressed satisfaction with ongoing work to develop seamless, non-stop border trading within the Common Customs Area"





EDITORIAL

Housing crisis is deeply worrisome

NAMIBIA'S urban centers are rapidly approaching a breaking point, facing a structural crisis that directly threatens our national macroeconomic stability and long-term social cohesion.

The foundational constitutional promise of human dignity, economic inclusion, and social justice is severely compromised by our chronic inability to provide decent, formal housing for our urban dwellers.

What town planners and policymakers once comfortably described as a manageable municipal backlog has now officially mutated into an acute humanitarian and developmental emergency demanding immediate, radical intervention.

The scale of this domestic crisis is deeply worrying.

Approximately 600,000 Namibians, nearly a quarter of our entire national population, currently reside in neglected informal settlements, sheltering in temporary shacks constructed from corrugated iron sheets and discarded scrap materials.

These sprawling areas are no longer merely temporary transit camps for rural migrants; they have become the permanent, multi-generational realities for hundreds of thousands of Namibian families.

The most damning indictment of this structural failure is the near-total absence of basic sanitation infrastructure.

Human dignity is fundamentally stripped away when entire urban communities completely lack access to hygienic flush toilets, clean running water, and structured municipal waste management.

This deep spatial inequality breeds severe public health hazards, turning informal settlements into volatile epicenters for preventable waterborne outbreaks like hepatitis E and cholera, while permanently trapping vulnerable families in a vicious cycle of structural poverty. This localized urban crisis is further compounded by an incredibly bleak regional backdrop.

Across the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the urban housing situation is equally dire and unsustainable. Rapid, unmanaged urbanization has completely outpaced municipal infrastructure development from Luanda to Lusaka.

SADC economies universally grapple with skyrocketing urban land prices, highly restrictive formal housing finance markets, and inadequate capital budgets. Informal settlements are expanding exponentially across the entire subcontinent, making sub-standard, insecure housing a defining structural characteristic

of Southern Africa's contemporary urban landscape rather than an isolated anomaly.

In Namibia, the root causes of this market failure are deeply systemic. Decades of highly restrictive municipal regulations, sluggish land servicing processes, and speculative real estate pricing have pushed formal housing far out of reach for low-and middle-income earners.

The domestic commercial banking sector remains highly risk-averse, offering mortgage products tailored almost exclusively to the top 10% of formal wage earners. Consequently, the vast majority of our productive urban workers – including teachers, police officers, and medical nurses – are structurally barred from property ownership, forced instead into the informal periphery.

To avert a total collapse of our urban social fabric, Namibia must urgently pivot from reactionary policy-making to radical, market-disrupting solutions.

The central government must aggressively accelerate serviced land delivery. Municipalities must immediately abandon bureaucratic, colonial-era town planning regulations that delay land proclamation. By deploying simplified, fast-tracked surveying and land registry systems, local authorities can supply serviced plots at a fraction of current costs.

Namibia must heavily capitalize community-driven housing models. Non-governmental organizations like the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN) have proven that incremental, community-led construction is exceptionally cost-effective. The state should dramatically increase its direct fiscal allocations to such initiatives, treating them as primary delivery vehicles. Third, we must introduce innovative financial engineering. The Ministry of Urban and Rural Development must partner with local financial institutions to establish specialized micro-housing finance funds.

These funds should provide low-interest, non-collateralized loans for incremental building. Furthermore, public-private partnerships (PPPs) must include minimum quotas for affordable units, capping profit margins on state-allocated land to stop luxury speculation.

Providing a decent home is an absolute economic imperative. Secure land tenure gives citizens a tangible asset, unlocking capital and driving local economic growth. If Namibia continues to tolerate a reality where 600,000 citizens live in squalor, we are actively financing our own future instability. The time for rhetoric has passed; we need structural execution.



The Rangelands are Under Pressure

• ERASTUS NGARUKA

RANGELAND is defined as an area of land with natural forage materials that are utilized by livestock and wild animals. Its productivity depends on rainfall and utilization.

Rangeland plants require favorable environmental conditions and adequate protection for their establishment, distribution, and resilience in agroecosystems or on livestock farming lands. In grazing areas, the most important attributes to consider when assessing rangeland productivity are grass vigor, density, species composition and abundance or richness, among other factors.

These attributes indicate the resilience of grass growth after dormancy and grazing, the grass yield per unit area, the different grass species, and their dominance.

These are indicators of grazing value in different rangelands, and are influenced by climatic conditions and utilization, varying in spatial and temporal scales.

Rangeland is the main and cheapest source of food for livestock. Moreover, humans derive very useful resources from it.

These include medicinal plants, edible plant products, household materials such as timber, poles, droppers, and thatching grass, among others. Therefore, rangeland resources support all forms of life.

To this end, there is competition for rangeland resources between animals and humans.

This has placed many rangelands under pressure to the extent that their productive potential is compromised, thus degrading them.

In Namibia, rangeland degradation is conspicuous at different scales in varying landscapes, and takes the form of deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, and bush encroachment.

The increasing human population, developmental activities, climate change, as well as the demand for livestock and their products continue to put pressure on rangelands.

Deforestation activities are rampant, especially in rural or farming areas, due

to construction, mining activities (minerals, sand), timber harvesting, and land clearing for crop production purposes, among others.

These activities result in the removal of valuable plants, local extinction of native plants, and loss of biodiversity.

Furthermore, deforestation together with overgrazing leads to desertification, where soils become bare and exposed to extreme desert-like conditions such as high temperatures where only a few or no plant species can survive.

Bare or exposed soils lose their stability due to the absence of plants to protect them against erosion activities and trampling.

Wind and water erosion remove the topsoil, seeds, and organic matter.

In addition, erosion results in surface capping, water run-off, excessive evaporation, and soil dehydration.

Livestock production in many parts of Namibia has become a costly enterprise, and this is due to degraded rangelands.

Rangeland degradation has compromised farm productivity and income as farmers tend to spend a significant share of their earnings and effort on rangeland rehabilitation and livestock feeding.

This in turn depletes their financial resources, threatening their ability to sustain production and livelihoods.

To ensure sustainable livestock production, farmers need to embark on sustainable rangeland rehabilitation and utilization efforts or regenerative farming practices.

These include conservative grazing regimes, controlling bush encroachment and soil erosion, rebuilding soil organic matter, rangeland re-vegetation, and water conservation, among others.

In conclusion, any change in the rangeland condition

will change a farmer's livelihood in the same way.

*** Erastus Ngaruka is the Technical Advisor Livestock and Rangeland**



CRAN tells MTC to explain 'fast data depletion' complaints

• STAFF WRITER

THE Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) has called on Mobile Telecommunications Limited (MTC) to launch a nationwide awareness campaign following growing complaints from customers who say their mobile data is finishing too quickly.

The issue, commonly referred to as "data depletion," has sparked concern among users who believe their data is being used up faster than expected. It relates to perceptions of unexplained or rapid data consumption, as well as concerns about billing transparency and how data usage is tracked.

CRAN and MTC met this month to discuss these complaints and ways to improve transparency, customer experience, and service quality.

CRAN chief executive officer Emilia Nghikembua in a statement released on Monday said the complaints cannot be ignored because they affect public trust in the sector. "CRAN has a duty to ensure transparency and fairness in the delivery of services.

At the same time, lasting solutions require open dialogue and collaboration between operators, regulators, and consumers.

Only through joint engagement can we address these challenges effectively and safeguard the rights of all Namibians in the digital era.

This was the underpinning value of the engagement with MTC," she said.

As part of the discussions, CRAN and MTC agreed on a set of measures aimed at improving how customers understand and experience mobile data services.

One of the key outcomes is a technical testing and verification initiative that will involve customers who have experienced data depletion or billing concerns.

Under the plan, CRAN will oversee how the testing is carried out, including the methodology and sampling, while MTC will provide technical support and detailed customer usage data to help verify complaints.

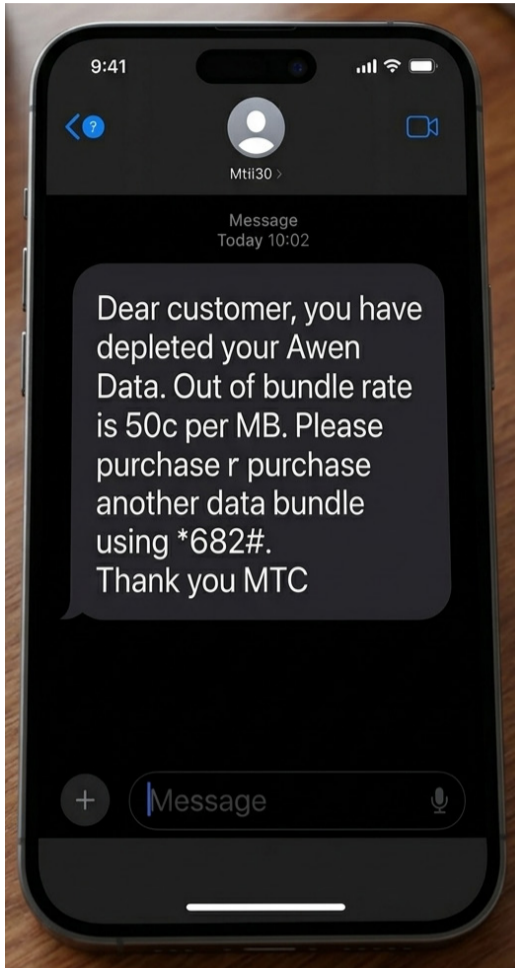
The results will be used to identify patterns, resolve complaints, and guide future decisions on consumer protection and service improvements.

CRAN said the initiative is also meant to improve public understanding of how mobile data works.

"The engagement also established the need for sustained consumer education to enhance public understanding of telecommunications services, data usage, digital consumption trends, and the factors influencing service performance. Such education is essential to enable consumers to make informed decisions in the use of their devices and digital services," CRAN said.

Following the meeting, MTC has been instructed to roll out a national consumer education campaign focused on data usage and billing.

CRAN said the campaign must be based on evidence from the technical testing exercise and should cover how data is



Emilia Nghikembua



"CRAN has a duty to ensure transparency and fairness in the delivery of services"

consumed across different apps, platforms, services, and devices.

The regulator added that the campaign must be carried out openly and clearly to build public trust and avoid any perception that concerns are being ignored.

CRAN also said both institutions recognise the need to better understand how customers use digital services in an increasingly connected environment, in order to improve communication and regulatory responses going forward. **NBR**

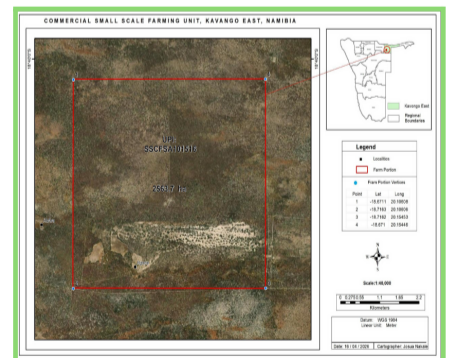
NOTICE FOR THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING

Notice is hereby placed to inform all potentially Interested and Affected Parties (I & APs) that an application for Environmental Clearance Certificate will be made to the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, in line with the provisions of Environmental Management Act 7 of 2007 and its Regulations of 2012.

Project Location: Small Scale Farming Unit: 1516, Mutwe Wambahe Village, Mashare Constituency, Kavango – East Region.

Project Description: The project involves conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the selective logging at the Small-Scale Farming Unit: 1516 at Mutwe Wambahe Village, within the Mashare Constituency under the Shambyu Traditional Authority, Kavango - East Region.

Proponent: Mr. Poroto Augustinus



All Interested and Affected Parties (I & APs) are invited to register, request background information document and submit inputs on or before 24 July 2026. A public consultation meeting is scheduled to take place on the 10th July 2026 at Mutwe Wambahe Village, Kavango – East Region @ 14h00.

For any inquiries please contact;
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 Tel: +264 81 6680633
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