

NAMIBIA BUSINESS REVIEW

Where Business meets ideas

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Mungunda exits SSC after decade, leaves over N\$6b investments

• TIRI MASAWI

OUTGOING Social Security Commission (SSC) executive officer Milka Mungunda says she is leaving the institution in a far stronger financial position than she found it a decade ago, with investments growing from about N\$1.9 billion to between N\$6 billion and N\$9 billion.

Mungunda, who will leave office at the end of July after serving for ten years, says the commission transformed its investment strategy, strengthened its finances and embraced digitalisation during her tenure.

"As I'm leaving now, I'm leaving the institution better. I am leaving the institution with between N\$6 and N\$9 billion," she said in a video interview played at International Social Security Association (ISSA) Annual Stakeholders' Forum held at Midgard Country Lodge last week.

FROM N\$1.9 BILLION TO BILLIONS

One of the biggest changes under Mungunda's leadership was moving the commission away from keeping most of its investments in cash.

"When I joined Social Security, our investments were mostly in cash.

CONTINUE ON PAGE 2



> Milka Mungunda

"When I joined Social Security, it was a very troubled institution. The staff were demoralised and things were not working. There was a lot of media attention"

BoN says cash is still legal as Windhoek parking stops accepting cash



> Calle Schlettwein

"Digital systems should not replace cash abruptly"

• TIRI MASAWI

THE Bank of Namibia (BoN) says cash is still legal tender and must be accepted as a means of payment, even as Windhoek's parking system has stopped accepting cash.

This comes after former finance minister Calle Schlettwein said a municipal parking agent in Windhoek allegedly

refused his cash payment.

Schlettwein said on social media last month that he was "surprised" when his cash was rejected, adding that his understanding is that Namibia dollar notes and coins cannot be refused as payment under the Bank of Namibia Act.

In comments given to **Namibia Business Review** this week, the Bank of Namibia said cash

issued by the central bank and not withdrawn from circulation remains legal tender under the Bank of Namibia Act, 2020.

"As legal tender, cash remains a valid and recognised means of payment," said Naufiku Hamunime, BoN's deputy director for corporate communications and Sustainability.

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That is how we used to invest. We changed the investment policy, we introduced offshore investments, and I think that was probably one of the best things we have done. We started almost with N\$1.92 billion," she said.

She said reviewing the investment policy allowed the commission to invest in asset classes that had previously not been considered.

"The change, amendment and review of the investment policy was very important. It assisted us to invest in asset classes which were normally not considered," she said.

She believes those changes laid the foundation for the commission's financial growth.

FIXING THE FINANCES FIRST

Mungunda said repairing SSC's finances became her first priority after joining the commission.

She recalled that then-chairperson Johannes !Gawaxab told her the institution's financial statements had been in the red for several years.

"The chairman at the time, Johannes !Gawaxab, told me that the finances had been in the red for the past couple of years. He said that was my biggest challenge. I joined in July and was told that before the end of that financial year, I had to make sure we worked on it. And yes, we managed," she said.

The commission ended that financial year with its finances no longer in deficit and obtained an unqualified audit opinion.

"That was the first encouragement and the first achievement," she said.

TAKING SOCIAL SECURITY ONLINE

Besides strengthening the balance sheet, Mungunda says modernising the commission became another major priority.

"I have always been telling my team that in Africa we are 30 years behind, and we cannot afford not to be part of the development," she said.

She credited the commission's information technology team for driving the digital transformation.

"They have really helped us. We are now digitalising. We have introduced paperless systems. It's still not the end. I believe my successor will take it further so that Social Security becomes a paperless institution," she said.

The digital systems have made it easier for clients to access services without visiting SSC offices.

"Wherever you are, you can always access our services. You can register, you can do payments and you can do everything on our apps," she said.

LEADING THROUGH TURBULENCE

Looking back, Mungunda said she inherited an institution facing serious internal and external challenges.

"When I joined Social Security, it was a very troubled institution. The staff were demoralised and things were not working. There was a lot of media attention," she said.

Using her background as a psychologist, she said she focused on building teamwork instead of imposing authority.

"I did not come to Social Security as somebody who was going to enforce my rules.

I came to form a team, a team to take Social Security to the next level," she said.

She said she worked closely with employees, ministers and the board to rebuild the institution.

"We worked collectively towards taking Social Security to another level. It wasn't always easy, but it was part of the journey," she said.

CONTROVERSY

Despite the financial turnaround, Mungunda's tenure was marked by several controversies.

Among the most notable was the failed N\$150 million investment in the now-defunct SME Bank, where she also served as a board member.

Last year, The Issue newspaper also reported an alleged breach involving an offshore investment portfolio worth between N\$693 million and N\$720 million.

According to the reports, the South African asset manager Retirement Investments and Savings for Everyone (RISE) invested some of the funds in unlisted private credit instruments, allegedly contrary to the commission's investment policy.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Several key reforms also remain incomplete. During Mungunda's tenure, the National Pension Fund (NPF) and National Medical Benefit Fund (NMBF) were not fully operationalised despite being statutory obligations.

Plans to transfer the N\$3.9 billion Public Service Medical Aid Scheme (PSEMAS) to SSC is also yet to materialise.

Her departure comes as President Ntumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah has directed SSC to fast-track the implementation of the National Medical Benefit Fund by using

the commission's existing infrastructure to support a centralised health financing system.

Even so, Mungunda believes the commission is better positioned financially and operationally than when she arrived.

A LEADER PRAISED ON HER WAY OUT

Justice and labour minister Fillemon Wise Immanuel said Mungunda is leaving behind a stronger institution.

Speaking at the International Social Security Association (ISSA) Annual Stakeholders' Forum held at Midgard, he praised her decade-long leadership.

"You are leaving behind a strong, modern institution that is truly poised for future growth.

By any measure, you have been a transformational leader, through and through. Your successors will have a strong foundation to build on for success," he said.

GLOBAL STAGE

Beyond SSC, Mungunda also served two terms as Vice President of the International Social Security Association (ISSA), representing Africa.

She described the role as one of the highlights of her career.

"Social protection is not a privilege. It is a human right," she said.

She said the position allowed her to represent Namibia and the African continent internationally.

She also noted that she was the first African woman to serve as an ISSA vice president, an achievement she said she will always cherish.

SUCCESSOR

As she prepares to step down, Mungunda says she is confident SSC is on a stronger footing.

Her final message to staff is to continue supporting the institution and its next leader. "It is not about the individual. It's about the country and it's about the people whom we are serving," she said. **NBR**

WINDHOEK PARKING STOPS EXPECTING CASH: FROM PAGE 1

The bank said it supports digital payment systems but stressed they must not exclude cash users during the transition.

The Bank... welcomes the adoption of alternative payment methods. Accordingly, both cash and alternative payment methods should be offered concurrently, with limited disruption, until broad adoption is achieved," said Hamunime.

When asked by the **Namibia Business Review** about the growing shift toward cashless payment systems in public services such as municipal parking and transport, the Bank of Namibia said the transition must be gradual and inclusive.

Hamunime said digital systems should not replace cash abruptly.

She said the move towards a cash-lite economy should ensure that "digital systems complement cash rather than replacing it."

The Bank of Namibia said it supports the modernisation of the payment system and the use of digital payment solutions that improve convenience, efficiency and security.

It said this is in line with the National

Payment System Vision and Strategy 2026-2030, which aims to build a more innovative, interoperable and inclusive payment landscape.

At the same time, Hamunime said cash remains important and is still legally recognised under the Bank of Namibia Act, 2020.

The bank said that while digital payments have benefits, the transition must be done in a way that does not exclude any users.

"Digital payment options should therefore complement, rather than immediately replace, cash to ensure no segment of society is unnecessarily disadvantaged," she said.

The City of Windhoek confirmed that its parking contractor, KeyPlot Investment (KPI), is gradually phasing out cash payments and introducing a parking card system.

City of Windhoek spokesperson Harold Akwenye earlier this year said the parking system is not directly run by the city but by Key Plot Investments.

He said safety concerns have also played a role in the decision.

"There have been incidents where the people collecting cash were robbed," he said. **NBR**



IPC urges Nandi-Ndaitwah to push for fairer China trade deals



• STAFF WRITER

THE Independent Patriots for Change (IPC) has urged President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah to use her week-long working visit to China to renegotiate the country's trade relationship with Beijing.

IPC said the current arrangement benefits China more than Namibia.

Nandi-Ndaitwah is in China for what the Presidency has described as a historic visit, during which she is expected to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping and discuss cooperation in areas including nuclear power generation, agriculture and technology transfer.

In a statement released on Sunday, IPC shadow minister for international relations and trade Rodney Cloete said Namibia should use the visit to secure better terms that promote local value addition instead of continuing to export raw minerals.

"The government has spoken about value addition since Independence. The lithium still leaves unprocessed, uranium still leaves as yellowcake. The rhetoric has not changed because the incentives have not changed," Cloete said.

'TRADE FIGURES HIDE THE REAL PICTURE'

The opposition party acknowledged that trade between Namibia and China reached a record N\$40.64 billion in 2025 and has continued to grow this year.

Bilateral trade increased by 35.72%

year-on-year, generating N\$14.79 billion during the first four months of 2026.

However, Cloete argued that the headline figures conceal an imbalanced trading relationship.

"We do not dispute the figures. We dispute what they mean for ordinary Namibians. The composition of that N\$40 billion tells a story the headline deliberately obscures. Namibia exports uranium, lithium, marble, and increasingly beef and fish to China.

China exports manufactured goods, machinery, electronics, and vehicles to Namibia," he said.

According to Cloete, Namibia should move away from what he described as an aid-based relationship and instead use its mineral wealth to negotiate agreements that create greater economic value at home.

"This is the oldest pattern in economic history, one country digs, another country builds. When Namibia ships raw uranium to China and buys back manufactured nuclear components, the value captured in Namibia is the wage of the miner," he said. He added: "A trade surplus built on raw mineral extraction is not prosperity, it is the accounting illusion of a country selling its inheritance by the kilogram."

QUESTIONS OVER DEVELOPMENT AID

Cloete also questioned the significance of China's development assistance compared to the value of Namibia's exports.

He said China signed a N\$486 million development cooperation grant with Namibia in June 2026 for schools, clinics and boreholes, while Namibia exported about N\$22 billion worth of goods to China in 2025, mostly minerals.

"Considering the arithmetic of generosity, in June 2026, China signed a development cooperation grant of N\$486 million for schools, clinics, and boreholes. In 2025, Namibia exported approximately N\$22 billion worth of goods to China, overwhelmingly minerals.

The grant represents 2.2 percent of what China purchased from Namibia in a single year. This is not aid, it is a rounding error on a resource extraction relationship dressed in diplomatic language.



> Rodney Cloete

We do not say this to be ungrateful for schools and clinics," he said.

PRESIDENCY DEFENDS VISIT

The Presidency has defended the visit, saying it reflects the longstanding relationship between the two countries and is aimed at strengthening cooperation.

Presidential spokesperson Jonas Mbambo said the visit demonstrates the "enduring friendship and comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership" between Namibia and China.

He said the relationship is founded on "the principles of mutual respect, solidarity, equality, and a shared commitment to sustainable development and shared prosperity." According to Mbambo, Nandi-Ndaitwah is scheduled to hold high-level bilateral talks with President Xi Jinping, the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, senior leaders of the Communist Party of China, as well as provincial and municipal leaders in Guangdong Province, Shenzhen, Sichuan Province and Beijing.

"The visit is expected to further strengthen bilateral relations, deepen economic and development cooperation, and advance collaboration in areas of mutual interest," Mbambo said. He added that the engagements are intended to deliver tangible benefits to the people of both Namibia and China.

The visit is expected to focus on expanding trade and investment while exploring cooperation in energy, agriculture and technology. **NBR**

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I leave SSC a better institution – Mungunda

After serving ten years as the Executive Officer of Social Security, Milka Mungunda (MM) will this month wind down her tenure. During her leadership, the commission's assets grew from about N\$1.9 billion to between N\$6 billion and N\$9 billion.



> Milka Mungunda

Namibia Business Review (NBR) sat down with Mungunda (MM) to reflect on her time at the helm of the commission.

NBR: Let's start on a lighter note. Some say you have taken the Social Security Commission as your home, and that employees have been like your children. How do you look back on your relationship with employees on a personal level?

MM: Okay, thank you so much.

One thing I have realised is that when I joined Social Security, it was a very troubled institution. The staff were demoralised. Things were not working well. This was understandable because of all the media attention at the time.

My background as a psychologist had to kick in. I had to think about how best to deal with the situation.

Sometimes, as managers and leaders, we confuse autocracy with leadership. In this modern world, you do not need to force people to achieve results. You must work as a team.

I also think my personality as a first-born helped. You always try to bring people together. So I did not come to Social Security to enforce my rules. I came to build a team.

A team that would take Social Security to the next level. I had a good relationship with staff, ministers, and the board. We worked collectively. It was not always easy, but it was part of the journey, and I enjoyed it.

NBR: Do you believe your background as a psychologist helped to mend the institution when the media scrutiny was high?

MM: Yes, I think it helped to a certain extent. There was a lot of onslaught on Social Security, and also on me personally.

But I never took it personally. I saw it as part of the job. I stayed focused on my goals. I think that is one of the best things one can do. You must not be distracted.

The institution has gone through major transformation in leadership.

NBR: What would you say were the most significant achievements during your tenure?

MM: When I joined, the chairman at the time, Mr Johannes !Gawaxab, told me the financials were in the red. That was the biggest challenge.

I joined in July and was told to fix it before the end of the financial year.

We managed. By the end of that year, the financials were no longer in the red.

We achieved an unqualified audit opinion. That was a major encouragement and achievement for me.

NBR: Did you receive flowers?

MM: I wish I could have received flowers. But we were so busy that we even forgot about flowers.

Another major achievement was in investments.

When I joined, most investments were in cash. We changed the investment policy. We introduced offshore investments.

We started with about N\$1.92 billion. As I leave, the institution stands at between N\$6 billion and N\$9 billion.

That change was very important. It allowed us to invest in asset classes that were not previously considered.

Another key area is digitalisation. We have come a long way.

Technology-wise, I always told my team that Africa is about 30 years behind. We cannot afford to be left out.

We have a strong IT team. They have helped us a lot. We have introduced paperless systems.

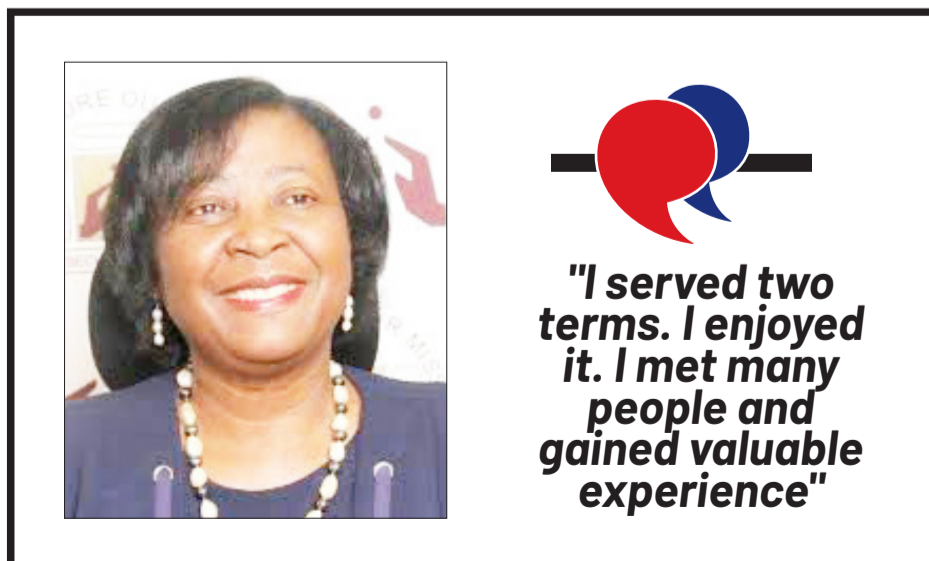
It is still ongoing. My successor will continue with it. The goal is a fully paperless institution.

Before, people had to travel long distances to access services.

NBR: How do you look back on technological improvements under your leadership?

MM: It means people can now access services from wherever they are. No one should be excluded.

We have embraced technology. You can access services while driving, through our apps.



You can register, make payments, and access services digitally.

NBR: As you prepare to leave, what legacy do you want to be remembered for?

MM: I think we should not work just to leave a legacy. We should work to make life easier for people.

For me, it was about improving social protection and reducing pressure on government funding.

If that is what remains, then that would describe my legacy.

I also served as Vice President of the International Social Security Association (ISSA), representing Africa and Namibia.

I served two terms. I enjoyed it. I met many people and gained valuable experience.

Social protection is not a privilege. It is a human right.

We also won an award during that period.

I was the first woman from Africa to

serve as Vice President. I appreciated the support from ISSA and its members. It helped put Namibia on the map.

NBR: For ten years, you have been balancing work and family. How did you manage that?

MM: It was not easy. But my children are grown up now. My youngest is working.

That made it easier. I also have grandchildren who sometimes complain that I do not give them enough attention.

It was not always easy to balance.

But I had a strong support system from my family.

That helped me a lot.

NBR: Where will we see you after 31 July?

MM: I will be at home. I will not wake up too early.

No deadlines. No union matters. No signatures.

I will just relax and enjoy myself.

NBR: One last message to your staff?

MM: I have wonderful staff. They are committed people.

Of course, there are a few who are not as committed, but that is normal in any institution.

We are fortunate to have staff who understand that they serve vulnerable people.

Without them, Social Security would not be successful.

They must continue working hard. They must support whoever comes after me, as they supported me.

It is not about individuals.

It is about the country and the people we serve. **NBR**

Namibia courts China for green hydrogen, oil and mineral investments



> **Minister of International Relations and Trade Selma Ashipala-Msavyi**

• STAFF WRITER

NAMIBIA has invited China to invest in its clean energy, oil and mineral sectors as President Ntumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah begins a week-long state visit aimed at strengthening 35 years of diplomatic ties.

Speaking at the Namibia-China Business Forum in Shanghai on Monday, Minister of International Relations and Trade Selma Ashipala-Msavyi said Namibia is positioning itself as a leader in green hydrogen and renewable energy.

"The world is looking for green hydrogen, and Namibia is looking at the sun. We have the highest levels of solar radiation and some of the strongest winds on the planet," she said.

She said Namibia's flagship Tsau // Khaeb Green Hydrogen Project is already attracting major investment.

"Our flagship Tsau //Khaeb Green Hydrogen Project is not a pipe dream; it is a

reality that is attracting billions of dollars in investment," she said.

Ashipala-Msavyi said Namibia wants to move beyond raw energy exports and develop new industries.

"We aim to not just export energy, we are planning and developing to export a new paradigm of clean manufacturing, including green ammonia, sustainable aviation fuel, and green steel," she said.

She also pointed to recent offshore oil and gas discoveries in the Orange Basin.

"Furthermore, recent offshore oil and gas discoveries in the Orange Basin have positioned Namibia as the next frontier for hydrocarbon exploration," she said.

She invited Chinese companies to take part in the sector.

"We invite Chinese energy majors and service companies to join us in this journey," she said.

According to her, Namibia is well placed in a changing global economy.

"I submit to you that Namibia is not only safe and strategic, but also a friendly and profitable location for your investments," she said.

She described the country as a logistics and energy hub with stable governance.

"We are not just a country; we are a logistical spine. We are an energy hub. We are a mineral resource hub," she said.

She added that Namibia offers access to a wider regional market through the Port of Walvis Bay.

"When you invest in Namibia, you are



not investing in a market of over 3 million people. You are investing in a market of over 300 million consumers across the SADC region," she said.

She said Namibia also holds key mineral resources needed for global industries.

"We are moving beyond the 'extract and ship' model. We invite our Chinese partners to establish beneficiation and processing plants at the source," she said.

"Let us process our lithium into battery precursors. Let us smelt our copper into wire. Let us create value where the ore is mined," she said.

She added that Namibia has simplified its investment environment.

"We do not have exchange controls that restrict the repatriation of profits," she said. "We have moved away from red tape and established a one-stop shop for most administrative steps."

She also highlighted regional infrastructure plans.

"We are currently developing the Kavango-Zambezi Transboundary Corridor," she said. "We invite Chinese infrastructure firms to partner with us in building roads, bridges, and power interconnectors that enhance sub-regional economic integration." **NBR**

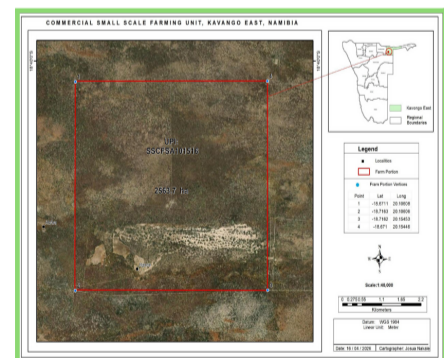
NOTICE FOR THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING

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 Shamybu 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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Government cuts sports funding, IPC blasts decision

• STAFF WRITER

THE Independent Patriots for Change (IPC) has condemned the Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture's decision to suspend all financial support to national sport bodies and umbrella organisations.

IPC's shadow minister for international relations and trade, Rodney Cloete, said the decision must be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

The ministry last week informed the Namibia Sport Commission of the suspension in a formal letter addressed to its chairperson, Turkey Ndashilva.

The ministry said it is currently facing financial strain.

"The Ministry is currently undergoing financial strain, due to the recent financial constraints," the letter stated.

It added that it is "in no position to consider any requests for financial support from the sport bodies / sport umbrella bodies".



> **Rodney Cloete**

The ministry requested the Namibia Sport Commission to communicate the decision to all sport bodies and umbrella organisations.

On transport support, the ministry said it will only consider requests if sport bod-

ies agree to cover driver-related expenses.

"The ministry profoundly apologises for this state of affairs, but unfortunately has to request you to ensure its immediate implementation," the letter read.

Cloete criticised the decision and said it reflects misplaced priorities.

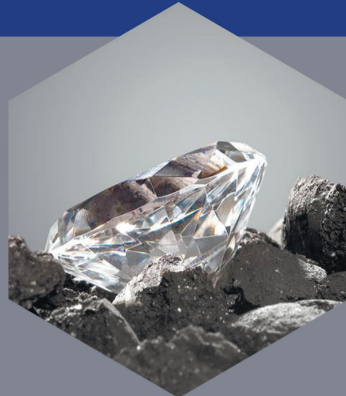
He pointed to youth unemployment, which he said stands at 44%.

"For thousands of young Namibians, sport is not a hobby. It is a lifeline, a discipline, and a viable pathway out of poverty," Cloete said.

He also questioned the timing of the decision, pointing to the 2026 Public Enterprises Games in Rundu.

The event reportedly involved more than 4,000 employed parastatal workers taking part in state-funded recreation.

"By cutting this funding, the Swapo-led government is effectively shutting the door on our youth while keeping the buffet open for state-owned enterprise executives," Cloete said. **NBR**



Namibia's foreign reserves rise to **N\$55.4 billion**

• STAFF WRITER

NAMIBIA'S foreign reserves climbed to N\$55.4 billion at the end of May, mainly due to higher receipts from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), according to economic figures released by the Bank of Namibia last week.

The central bank also reported that the country's current account deficit narrowed in the first quarter of 2026, while the economy continued to grow, supported by stronger performance in the services sector.

"On the external sector front, Namibia's current account deficit narrowed during the first quarter of 2026, reflecting lower services payments and reduced net investment income outflows," said Kazembire Zemburuka, the Bank of Namibia's director of strategic communications and international relations.

The current account deficit fell to N\$9.9 billion in the first quarter of 2026 from N\$10.6 billion in the previous quarter and N\$13.4 billion in the same period last year.

"As a percentage of quarterly GDP, the current account deficit declined to 14.0 percent in the first quarter of 2026, from 14.8 percent in the preceding quarter and 20.3 percent in the corresponding quarter of 2025," Zemburuka said.

The Bank of Namibia said the country's external balance sheet remained in a net asset position at the end of March, although it weakened compared to the previous quarter.

International reserves also increased by 0.4% quarter-on-quarter to N\$51.8 billion at the end of March 2026, before rising further to N\$55.4

billion by the end of May.

However, the central bank said the Real Effective Exchange Rate appreciated by 3.8% over the year, suggesting that Namibian products became less competitive in international markets.

On the domestic front, the economy recorded its 18th consecutive quarter of growth since the second quarter of 2021.

"In nominal terms, the size of the Namibian economy was estimated at N\$70.9 billion, an expansion of N\$4.7 billion compared to the N\$66.2 billion recorded in the corresponding quarter of 2025.

Having maintained positive growth since the second quarter of 2021, the rate of growth picked up to 2.0 percent from 0.1 percent in the final quarter of 2025," Zemburuka said.

The Bank of Namibia said growth was mainly driven by the tertiary sector, including wholesale and retail trade, financial services, health, education and public administration.

Agriculture also performed strongly because of favourable rainfall, while fishing recorded solid growth.

Mining activity, however, weakened.

"The secondary sector remained subdued, reflecting a contraction in manufacturing despite positive growth in construction and electricity generation.

On the demand side, government consumption continued to support economic activity, while investment recovered, driven by increased spending on machinery, transport equipment, and construction.

Although exports increased during the quarter, faster growth in imports resulted in a wider trade deficit," Zemburuka said. **NBR**

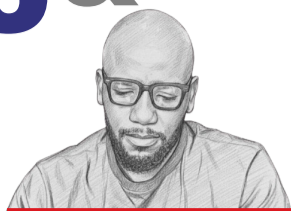


> Kazembire Zemburuka



"International reserves also increased by 0.4% quarter-on-quarter to N\$51.8 billion at the end of March 2026, before rising further to N\$55.4 billion by the end of May"





EDITORIAL

Suspending sports funding threatens Namibia's future

LAST week's directive from the Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture to temporarily suspend financial support for all national sports codes is a devastating blow.

The ministry has cited deep financial constraints. The decision effectively closes the financial tap for sports bodies and umbrella organisations across Namibia.

While presented as a necessary fiscal step in difficult economic times, it is a short-sighted measure. It strips resources from a sector that is not just a pastime. Sports are a key driver of youth opportunity and national pride.

First and foremost, the government overlooks the role sports can play in economic growth and job creation.

The sports sector is an economic ecosystem, not a financial burden. When the state funds athletic programmes, tournaments, and national leagues, that capital generates wider commercial activity.

A well-funded sports sector boosts local consumption around matches and events. It stimulates hospitality and tourism through travelling teams. It also supports broadcasting and media rights revenue, and increases demand for sports apparel and equipment.

Starving this ecosystem disrupts these linkages. It turns short-term budget savings into longer-term losses for the broader economy.

Crucially, the sector is a major source of employment for young people. Namibia's youth unemployment crisis is severe. For many young people, sport is not only recreation, but a possible career path.

A functioning sports system creates jobs for athletes, coaches, scouts, trainers, referees, and physiotherapists. Beyond the field, it supports work in sports journalism, event management, marketing, ticketing, and digital content creation.

Cutting funding limits these opportunities. It blocks young people from building sustainable careers and deepens economic vulnerability.

The impact also extends to international competition. Success at events such as the Olympic Games depends on long-term investment, not short-term funding cycles.

High-performance sport requires training camps, sports science support, and exposure to international competition. Without consistent funding, athletes are deprived of these essentials.

This inevitably weakens competitiveness and reduces Namibia's presence on the global sporting stage.

While the ministry has indicated that transport requests may still be considered, this comes with the condition that federations cover driver expenses. For many, this is unrealistic.

Most sports federations already operate with minimal resources and limited administrative capacity. Adding further logistical costs while core funding is suspended is not practical. It reflects a gap between policy decisions and on-the-ground realities.

Going forward, the government must re-evaluate its spending priorities and treat sport as a strategic socio-economic investment, not a luxury.

It should work with the Namibia Sports Commission and private sector partners to develop a sustainable funding model.

If the current path continues, Namibia risks losing a generation of sporting talent, weakening youth employment pathways, and diminishing its presence in international sport.



"It blocks young people from building sustainable careers and deepens economic vulnerability"

Namibia's businesses march on their stomach



• DIRK VAN SCHALKWYK

WHEN people think about mining or Namibia's emerging oil and gas industry, they usually picture drilling rigs, heavy machinery, and billion-dollar investments. Rarely do they think about the kitchen. Yet every successful operation depends on people. And people perform at their best when they are properly fed.

Napoleon Bonaparte famously said, "An army marches on its stomach." Centuries later, those words still ring true.

Replace an army with a mining operation or an offshore crew, and the principle remains the same.

Before production targets are met, before equipment starts moving, and before critical decisions are made, someone has to prepare the first meal of the day.

Industrial catering is often viewed as a support service; it is part of the operation itself. Mining sites and offshore facilities never stop operating. Employees work long shifts in physically demanding environments.

They need energy, focus and endurance.

A nutritious meal is not simply an employee benefit. It helps workers stay alert, reduces fatigue and supports safer decision-making throughout the shift.

Good catering is also about understanding the people behind the operation.

A miner has different nutritional requirements from an office employee, but they both need food.

An offshore crew member working through the night needs meals that provide sustained energy without affecting concentration.

Every menu should reflect the work being done, the environment, and the workforce's wellbeing.

Food also plays an important role beyond nutrition.

For many employees, remote areas, especially in Namibia's vastness, become a second home for weeks at a time.

A good meal brings people together. It creates a routine after a long day and offers a sense of comfort far from family.

These moments build morale, strengthen teams, and contribute to employee wellness in ways that are often overlooked.

As Namibia's oil and gas industry gathers momentum, expectations around support services will continue to grow.

International operators are looking for partners who can deliver consistency every day, often in remote and challenging environments.

They need service providers who understand that every detail contributes to operational success.

At Welwitschia Services Group, this philosophy has been shaped over nearly three decades of supporting Namibia's mining industry. Today, the Group prepares approximately 3.7 million meals each year while providing catering, cleaning, and facilities management services across remote operations nationwide.

That experience provides a strong foundation as Namibia's energy sector enters a new chapter.

Delivering thousands of meals every day also comes with a responsibility to operate sustainably.

Careful menu planning, responsible portion control, and reducing food waste are not only good business practices; they support a more sustainable future.

Sourcing ingredients locally, wherever possible, also strengthens Namibian farmers, suppliers, and small businesses, ensuring that the benefits of industrial growth extend well beyond the mine gate or offshore vessel.

These efforts support global priorities, including SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.

As Head Chef Albert Mahiya explains, "Every meal we prepare has a purpose. We are not just cooking food; we are fueling people and the economy."

When employees eat well, they work better, stay safer, and return home healthier.

That responsibility is something our team takes great pride in every single day."

As our industries evolve, conversations will continue to focus on technology, infrastructure, and investment.

Those are all essential. But behind every successful operation is a workforce that must be cared for, every single day.

Sometimes, the simplest things have the greatest impact.

After all, an army marches on its stomach. So do Namibia's mines and businesses.

***Dirk van Schalkwyk is the Executive Director of Welwitschia Catering and Cleaning Services (Pty) Ltd**

What is the World Cup prize money?

• KATHARINE SHARPE

THE prize money available at the 2026 World Cup is a record-breaking \$871m (N\$15.678bn).

Fifa initially announced the total pot would be \$727m (N\$13.086bn), which was already a 50% increase on the funds distributed at the 2022 tournament in Qatar.

In pounds, the original figure was £662m (N\$15.226bn), later revised from £552m (N\$12.696bn) after the increase approved in April.

The prize money is split into performance-based rewards and non-performance-based financial support.

So how are the rewards broken down?

PERFORMANCE-BASED PRIZES

The further teams progress in the tournament, the more they are rewarded financially.

Fifa will award teams finishing in each position as follows:

- Winners: \$51m (N\$918m)**
- Runners-up: \$34m (N\$612m)**
- 3rd place: \$30m (N\$540m)**
- 4th place: \$28m (N\$504m)**
- 5th-8th place: \$20m (N\$360m)**
- 9th-16th place: \$16m (N\$288m)**
- 17th-32nd place: \$12m (N\$216m)**
- 33rd-48th place: \$10m (N\$180m)**



These payouts will form \$703m (N\$12.654bn) of the \$871m (N\$15.678bn) prize pot. The remaining \$168m (N\$3.024bn) will be paid out among teams regardless of performance.

NON-PERFORMANCE-BASED PRIZES

The remaining money will be spread evenly across all participating teams in the form of:

Preparation money: \$2.5m (N\$45m) per nation

Additional team contributions: over \$16m (N\$288m)

This means each team is guaranteed at least \$12.5m (N\$225m) for taking part in the tournament when combined with the minimum \$10m (N\$180m) qualification fee. Preparation money helps cover costs such as training camps and travel before the tournament.

Fifa describes "additional team contributions" as subsidies for team delegation costs and increased ticket allocations, aimed at reducing financial disparities between nations. **-BBCsport**

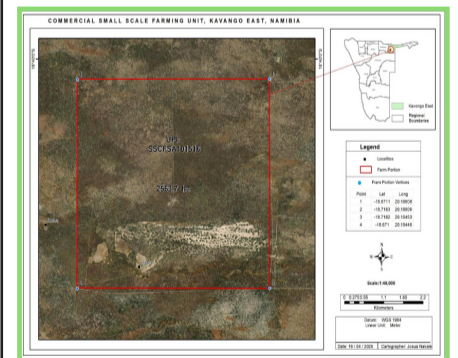
NOTICE FOR THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING

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 it's 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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