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NAMIBIA BUSINESS REVIEW

Where Business meets ideas

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Europe's green hydrogen hopes suffer fresh set back in Namibia

P.3

Oshana's N\$4.7m land-use plan to unlock investment

P.6

TVET must feed Namibia's emerging industries, says Nandi-Ndaitwah

P.8

Green hydrogen: Where is my chance?



• TIRI MASAWI

For 17-year-old Ndamona Shikwambi, the Africa Green Energy Summit held last week was more than a gathering of policymakers, investors and industry experts.

It was a chance to find out whether Namibia's green energy boom could open a door to the future she wants.

The aspiring electronic engineer, who completed Grade 12 last year, attended the summit in Swakopmund hoping to learn more about opportunities in the growing

"I finished my Grade 12 last year. I would like to be an electronic engineer. I have read a lot about the green hydrogen industries but I am not sure how to benefit. I hear there are opportunities for scholarships locally and abroad"

green energy industry.

"I finished my Grade 12 last year. I would like to be an electronic engineer. I have read a lot about the green hydrogen industries but I am not sure how to benefit. I hear there are opportunities for scholarships locally and abroad. I want to go abroad," she told **Namibia Business Review**.

But behind her ambition is a challenge faced by many young Namibians.

CONTINUE ON PAGE 2

Street vendors are not a nuisance - Swapo



> Ephraim Nekongo

• STAFF WRITER

The Swapo Party Youth League (SPYL) is calling on local authorities to stop treating street vendors as a nuisance and instead integrate them into the formal economy.

In a statement issued on 11 September, SPYL secretary Ephraim Nekongo said informal traders play an important role in supporting households and driving economic activity, particularly at a time of high unemployment and rising living costs.

"Street vendors and informal traders must therefore not be viewed as a nuisance to urban development, but as economic actors and entrepreneurs," Nekongo said.

CONTINUE ON PAGE 2



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Her parents, who live in the high-density Mondesa area of Swakopmund, cannot afford to finance her dream of studying abroad. That is why the promises made at the summit matter to her.

More than 600 delegates attended the summit last week to discuss how Namibia and Africa can benefit from the growing green industries.

Speaker after speaker spoke about billions of dollars in investment, new industries and the potential for jobs and economic growth. For Shikwambi, however, the big question was much simpler: where does she fit into all of this?

"We always talk about working in the green hydrogen industries with my friends, but today I was listening to a lot of people talking. I am not sure how I will benefit," Shikwambi said. She said attending the summit was a first step.

"This is my first time on such a platform but I think I need to attend more and meet a lot of people so I learn about the potential scholarships," she said.

Her story unfolded against the backdrop of a city that presented two very different realities. Swakopmund hosted international delegates in a setting known for its hospitality, fine dining and scenery.

At the same time, in Mondesa, Shikwambi and her parents face the financial reality of trying to fund her education.

For her, the green transition is not simply about large projects, investment figures or industrialisation.

It is about whether those opportunities can reach young people like her.

STREET VENDORS:
FROM PAGE 1

He said informal trading contributes to local economic development, employment creation and household income while keeping money circulating within communities.

The youth league wants municipalities and town councils to develop properly serviced trading areas where vendors can operate legally while remaining close to customers.

It said these areas should provide shelter, clean water, sanitation, waste management, electricity, storage, security and safe pedestrian access.

SPYL also wants local authorities to simplify vendor registration and permit systems and introduce digital registration and payment platforms.

Nekongo said such systems could make licensing easier while giving municipalities better information about the informal economy.

The organisation is also calling for stronger links between local authorities, government institutions, financial institutions and development agencies to help informal traders access entrepreneurship training, financial literacy, microfinance and digital payment systems.

It said young people should particularly be supported to move from survivalist businesses to sustainable enterprises capable of creating jobs.

Social entrepreneur, business columnist, and founder and director of SMEs Compete, Danny Meyer, told Namibia Business Review on Monday that local authorities should allocate more resources to local economic development (LED) officers and staff.

"Local authorities should see the wisdom of allocating resources for LED officers and staff to expand and intensify the support programmes," Meyer said.

He said the programmes should aim to help informal businesses "migrate or graduate to become formally registered businesses".

Meyer said the support should also "empower and position MSMEs for growth".

"In summary, the Youth League's plea should be given the serious consideration it deserves," he said.

The call comes as *Namibia Business Review* earlier this year tracked down the hardships faced by street vendors in Windhoek.

At 06:00, Fransina Titus, 42, leaves her home in Goreangab and heads to the streets of Windhoek.

She works until 18:00, standing for hours and watching the road, hoping customers will stop and buy water, sweets or snacks from her.

"I was motivated by poverty," Titus said. Since October 2025, selling sweets, wa-

'INCLUDE OUR YOUTH'

That concern was also raised by Erongo Regional Governor Natalia IGoagoses.

She wants Namibia's green transition to create tangible opportunities for young people, including jobs, scholarships and infrastructure investment.

Her message to those driving the green transition is simple: do not leave young people behind. "I want such gatherings to include our young people. I would love to see the San and Ovahimba youths involved in these discussions. I want to see our young people learning and understanding these issues. We want to see jobs and opportunities for our young people in this green transition," IGoagoses said. She said Namibia's plans to become an industrial hub and a major green energy player would mean little if the transition did not create economic opportunities for the people.

"Look around you, and if you don't see them, make sure that whatever you are benefiting from this conversation, you definitely share it. I want to see the Himba tent coming and sitting next to you. I want to see that San tent come and sit next to you," she said.

She said Erongo was already part of Africa's green industrial future.

The region has solar and wind resources, mineral resources, the Port of Walvis Bay, logistics infrastructure and emerging investment in green hydrogen and related infrastructure.

BILLIONS ON THE TABLE

The potential opportunities are backed by billions of dollars in planned investment.

Over the past five years, the European Union and its member states, operating

ter and snacks has been Titus' only source of income.

She earns between N\$500 and N\$600 a week, money she says is hard-earned but not enough to meet her needs.

Her biggest challenge is enforcement. "The City Police sometimes chase us away because we are not allowed to sell on roads," Titus said.

She said customers often complain that goods sold by street traders are expensive, but few understand the reality behind survival.

Designated trading areas are also not an easy option.

"Designated selling areas are already full and expensive," she said.

Another street hawker, Jacob Enok, starts his day even earlier.

At 05:30, he is already on the streets selling snacks and drinks.

He returns home at about 16:30.

He has followed this routine since 2020. "My children motivate me," Enok said.

Street trading is how he supports his family. He earns about N\$500 a week, which he says barely sustains his household.

Like Titus, enforcement remains his biggest struggle.

"We are chased away by the City Police. I plead with people to support me and buy my things so I am able to earn a living," he said.

POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Rinaani Musutua of the Basic Income Grant Coalition of Namibia said the growth of street trading is linked to Namibia's broader socio-economic problems.

She pointed to Namibia's 50% unemployment rate, which she described as the highest in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

She said the lack of formal employment is "forcing individuals to engage in street vending at unsolicited locations as a desperate means of survival".

Musutua described this as "survival anxiety".

She proposed a Universal Basic Income Grant of N\$500 per person per month for Namibians aged 0 to 59, saying it could help subsidise basic necessities and reduce the pressure on households.

She also pointed to Namibia's mineral wealth and fishing grounds.

"Despite being a rich nation... many Namibians remain in abject poverty," Musutua said.

She argued that the country could afford such a grant by leveraging its natural resources.

Musutua also criticised the enforcement

collectively as Team Europe under the EU's Global Gateway Strategy, have committed €1.3 billion, about N\$25 billion, in loans and grants to support Namibia's transition to a sustainable, low-carbon economy.

The funding is intended to help unlock an estimated €20 billion, about N\$400 billion, in private-sector investment.

The funding includes support for green hydrogen and ammonia production, renewable energy infrastructure, grid digitalisation, value addition and technical assistance. But the size of the investment does not automatically answer the question asked by Shikwambi.

Namibia's National Planning Commission Director General Kaire Mbuende said the country wants investments that can change people's lives while protecting the environment. "Green industrialisation can help us achieve these targets. NDP6 identifies green hydrogen as a source of sustainable growth and employment, with targets including 1.3 million tonnes of green ammonia per year, 2 million tonnes of direct-reduced iron, 143 Gigawatt-hour (GWh) of green baseload electricity, 30,000 green hydrogen-related jobs, and 30 percent local content and participation by 2030," Mbuende said.

"These are not simply production targets," he said.

He said projects such as Hylron Oshive-la and the Daures Green Hydrogen Village show how green hydrogen could support low-carbon iron production, agriculture, fertiliser production, skills development and rural enterprise.

FROM IDEAS TO INVESTMENT

Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board Acting Chief Executive

of trading regulations, saying City Police sometimes use excessive force against traders trying to feed their families.

She said vendors should be given time to leave unauthorised areas instead of facing immediate arrest.

She said government policies must reflect people's realities and ensure that every citizen has "something to eat at the end of the day".

As long as poverty, inequality and unemployment remain high, Musutua said, street vending would remain part of Namibian life.

REGULATIONS

City of Windhoek spokesperson Harold Akwenye earlier this year told Namibia Business Review that informal and roadside trading reflects broader economic pressures, including unemployment and urban migration.

He said the City manages street trading through its municipal police, economic development and planning divisions, guided by existing by-laws and council-approved frameworks.

Akwenye said enforcement focuses on public safety, traffic flow and sanitation.

"Where traders operate in restricted or unsafe areas, officials first engage through education and compliance notices, with enforcement applied where non-compliance persists, especially in high-risk areas such as road reserves and busy intersections," he said.

On fines, Akwenye said penalties are issued under municipal by-laws and vary depending on the offence, repeat violations and location.

He said fines are intended as deterrents rather than punitive measures and are applied with due process.

The City, he said, recognises informal trading as an important survival mechanism and is working on longer-term solutions.

"These include identifying and formalising trading areas, integrating traders into local economic development planning, reviewing trading frameworks and exploring partnerships that allow traders to transition into more secure and regulated environments," Akwenye said.

'PEOPLE STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE'

Labour researcher and social justice activist Herbert Jauch said the increase in street trading is directly linked to unemployment.

"The increase is not surprising, people struggle to survive," Jauch said.

He said people without income, unemployment insurance or a basic income plan

Officer Julia Muetudhana said the benefits of the green transition would only become meaningful if they were connected to investment, technology, infrastructure, skills, markets and execution.

"Resources alone cannot create development.

Investment, technology, partnerships and execution are what convert opportunity into true economic value," she said. Muetudhana said too many projects remained at the concept stage because they were not sufficiently prepared to attract investment.

She said there was often a gap between a good project idea and a bankable investment proposition.

That gap can include incomplete feasibility studies, limited market analysis, unclear revenue models, weak project governance and a lack of an appropriate financing strategy, she said.

The European Union's Director of International Partnerships, Erica Gerretsen, said Africa had an opportunity to move away from exporting raw materials and instead create value locally.

"This means working alongside African partners and leaders to create this value locally, to strengthen skills, and to build mutually beneficial partnerships and value chains grounded in shared interests, in shared responsibility, and eventually in shared prosperity," Gerretsen said.

For Shikwambi, those promises will only become real when they translate into an opportunity she can reach.

For now, she is attending the conversations, asking questions and looking for a scholarship that could take her closer to becoming an electronic engineer. ***NBR**

are forced to do whatever they can to survive.

"Street traders face restrictions on where they are allowed to operate and often feel pushed into certain areas," he said. Jauch said authorities should sit down with trader representatives to discuss and negotiate possible solutions.

He said this could help create a city that is more accommodating to informal traders.

FROM INFORMAL TRADE TO SMEs

SPYL said local authorities should move away from an enforcement-centred approach towards the integration, formalisation and modernisation of informal trading.

It said vendors operating in prohibited areas should, where possible, be given alternative trading spaces and sufficient notice before being removed.

"Confiscation and destruction of goods should never become the default method of regulating informal economic activity," Nekongo said.

The youth league said goods such as food and clothing often represent the limited business capital of informal traders.

"Destroying those goods can mean destroying an entire household's source of income," Nekongo said.

SPYL is also proposing permanent consultative forums involving municipalities, vendors' representatives, youth organisations and other stakeholders.

The forums would discuss trading spaces, sanitation, licensing, safety, infrastructure and compliance.

The organisation said Namibia's urban development should create a pathway for informal businesses to grow into sustainable micro, small and medium enterprises.

"The objective should not be to remove informal traders from our towns, but to organise, support and progressively modernise informal trading," Nekongo said.

He said the approach would support employment creation, municipal revenue, entrepreneurship and broader economic development.

The SWAPO Party Election Manifesto 2025-2030 and the Sixth National Development Plan, which prioritise economic growth, employment creation, youth empowerment and small business development.

"We must regulate without destroying livelihoods, modernise without excluding our people, and build towns and cities in which every hardworking Namibian has an opportunity to participate in the economy," Nekongo said. ***NBR**

Europe's green hydrogen hopes suffer fresh set back in Namibia

• OLIVIER VAN BEEMEN

THE European Union has bet heavily on Namibia as the future of green hydrogen to help meet its climate goals. Yet a senior official now says major exports are unlikely, at a time when the African country is turning its attention to oil.

With plenty of fanfare and N\$21 billion (€1 billion) in promised funding, the European Union has backed Namibia to become a key supplier of green hydrogen and help drive the bloc's energy transition.

But the southern African nation is "unlikely" to export the clean fuel to Europe on a large scale, a government official told Follow the Money last month.

"The market has not developed as we had anticipated," Joseph Mukendwa, acting head of the state-run Namibia Green Hydrogen Programme, said in a video call.

"Without a long-term offtake agreement, it is difficult to get a bankable project off the ground."

No senior Namibian official is known to have spoken so candidly about the country's slim prospects of becoming a major exporter of green hydrogen.

The admission is likely to worry the EU, which has put forward a substantial package of loans and grants to develop green hydrogen projects in the African nation.

Green hydrogen imports from Namibia and other countries with abundant sun and wind – such as Australia, Chile, and Saudi Arabia – are meant to play a central role in Europe's transition to a low-carbon economy.

The interview with Mukendwa follows a trip by FTM to Namibia last September for the Global African Hydrogen Summit. Foreign project developers as well as Namibian activists and a local mayor all cast doubt on the country's green hydrogen ambitions.

FADING HOPES

Green hydrogen has generated much hype in the EU, with Germany and the Netherlands helping make it a central pillar of the European Green Deal in 2019.

Among its most prominent supporters is the Port of Rotterdam Authority, which hopes to make the Dutch city a major European hub for hydrogen imports and distribution.

"Hydrogen is the new oil," the authority's then-CEO Allard Castelein said back in 2021.

Key to Namibia's export ambitions is Hyphen, a flagship project that plans to harness wind and solar power to produce large quantities of green hydrogen for Europe.

Since 2021, the Port of Rotterdam has partnered with the Namibian Ports Authority (Namport) to develop a new port near the project's proposed site in the coastal town of Lüderitz.



> Joseph Mukendwa

Namibia's Ministry of Mining and Energy estimated in 2022 that the sector would create 280,000 jobs by 2030 and up to 600,000 by 2040 – in a country of just three million people.

And just last year, the European Commission said that the industry could attract €20 billion in private investment.

Reality has fallen far short of those projections. A handful of pilot projects have created only around 800 jobs overall, and major private investment has not materialised.

German energy company RWE – Hyphen's most important potential European customer – quit last year, citing weak demand for hydrogen and ammonia in Europe. Hyphen did not respond to FTM's questions.

'DRILL, BABY, DRILL'

As Namibia's hydrogen sector stagnates, its oil and gas industry is gathering pace.

Substantial oil reserves have been discovered off the country's coast, which also holds significant gas reserves. Preparations are in full swing, and French energy giant TotalEnergies is set to make a final investment decision on the Venus oil field this year.

With offshore oil discoveries estimated to contain around six billion barrels, Namibia could become one of Africa's major oil producers over the coming decade.

Speaking at the Namibia International Energy Conference in the capital Windhoek in April, President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah said the fossil fuel sector could bring "structural transformation, inclusive growth and sustained prosperity for all Namibians".

"We are on the cusp of a new energy era," she added – referring not to hydrogen, but to oil and gas.

Also addressing the conference, NJ Ayuk – chair of the fossil fuel lobby group Africa Energy Chamber – had a blunt message for Namibia.

"Produce every drop of hydrocarbon you can find and better the life of your people, and I urge the industry to do one thing and one thing only: Drill, baby, drill," he said.

BOON FOR BOTH SECTORS?

A large share of European funding in Namibia is earmarked for the construction of infrastructure intended to support the green hydrogen industry, including port expansions, railway lines, roads, and energy networks.

The European Investment Bank is making N\$10 billion (€500 million) available for this purpose.

However, the Namibian government's growing interest in oil and gas raises a question: could European investment in Namibia also ultimately serve the fossil fuel industry?

A European Commission spokesperson told FTM that "EU support in Namibia is not targeted at fossil fuels or fossil fuel infrastructure".

But they declined to answer a question about the possibility of the oil and gas industry also reaping the benefits.

We cannot be naive and say that the oil and gas industry is unlikely to benefit,"

Mukendwa of the Namibia Green Hydrogen Programme said during the interview. However, he stressed that he saw no competition between the country's sustainable energy and fossil fuel ambitions, and said he wanted to see both sectors benefit.

"We are unapologetic about the fact that we are going to push for the oil and gas sector. We're also going to push for green industrialisation," Mukendwa added.

"One of the key questions is: how do we develop infrastructure that supports Namibia's broader development ambitions?"

Kaire Mbuende, director of the National Planning Commission (NPC), which reports directly to the president, echoed that view. He told FTM that infrastructure developed with European support for green industrialisation could be used by other sectors.

According to the NPC, roads, ports, water systems, and transport networks are supposed to support broad economic growth.

DOWN BUT NOT OUT?

Invest International, a Dutch development finance institution that has disbursed €40 million for Namibia's hydrogen sector, expressed regret over the country's focus on oil and gas.

"We would, of course, have preferred to see things differently," said Itske Lulof, its head of energy and climate.

"Our approach is to keep both developments [green hydrogen and fossil fuels] as separate as possible.

We are fully committed to the development and the effective implementation of the green hydrogen market and focus on green investments."

Despite acknowledging delays to hydrogen projects in Namibia and beyond, the Port of Rotterdam Authority said it saw no reason to end its partnership.

Hydrogen remains "an important part of the energy transition", a spokesperson said.

The Dutch authority has no involvement in oil and gas-related activities at the port of Lüderitz, they added.

Ultimately, for all the setbacks and obstacles, the Namibian government has not formally abandoned its green hydrogen ambitions. Mbuende of the NPC pointed to "significant progress" on several projects intended to produce green hydrogen for domestic use rather than export. The EU also insists that "the sector's positive prospects remain intact".

But the Commission is no longer willing to make firm predictions about the timing or scale of future exports to Europe.

"Any reliable estimate of export volumes, domestic use, and timelines would still be premature," a spokesperson said.

***The original of this story was first published by the Climate Economy.**

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PM wants government to prioritise young people for jobs



> Prime Minister Elijah Ngurare

• STAFF WRITER

PRIME Minister Elijah Ngurare says the government's human resources personnel must pay special at-

tention to the employment of young people and the retention of key skills. Speaking at the Human Resources Conference last week, Ngurare said

government service delivery should be hinged on efficiency, competence and the digitisation of services for timely delivery.

"The public service operates in an increasingly competitive environment for skills.

Let us make it the employer of choice; attracting and retaining talented professionals in an environment that encourages growth and innovation.

"This requires a strong culture of performance: clear expectations, measurable objectives and regular feedback, not simply an annual administrative exercise," Ngurare said.

He said employees who perform well must be recognised, while persistent underperformers must be addressed fairly and decisively.

Ngurare called on managers within the public service to take responsibility for creating conditions in which employees can succeed.

"Particular attention must be given to young people and emerging leaders.

We need pathways through which tal-

ented Namibians can enter the public service, develop professionally and assume leadership responsibility.

"We need human resource policies that promote fairness, merit, inclusivity and equal opportunity, so that our institutions reflect the diversity of our nation while maintaining the highest standards of competence," he said.

Ngurare said the civil service must cultivate a culture of hard work and an understanding that employees' work contributes to the broader national development agenda.

"As many of you are aware, government through the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) has been driving a major push toward digital transformation and modernisation in the public service under the Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6). In April 2026, we held innovation in the public service workshop," he said.

Ngurare said the government had also introduced DIGINAM to revolutionise digital security, streamline identity systems and eliminate bureaucratic delays and physical queues.

"Further, through the OPM, ministries like the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) are automating internal procedures, such as local media card applications. Through the Public Sector Innovation Policy, the OPM actively collaborates with innovation ecosystems and development partners," he said.

He said Namibia must reduce its consumption of technological infrastructure from other continents while building local capacity through its institutions of higher learning and information technology companies.

"Public service application forms are still difficult to get, especially in rural areas. We must digitise job application forms. In this age, we cannot afford to see people joining long queues to make copies, and send their applications manually. And worse still, they pile up in your offices.

"Remember that behind every application form that piles up in your office, there is a human being desperately looking for a job," he said.

Ngurare said the country's growing population requires the public service to continuously improve its service delivery to cater for a more challenging environment.

"At independence, Namibians were only 1.5 million. Today, we are 3.1 million. That explains how huge your responsibility is. The dynamics at independence were tense including public service.

There was no UNAM, NUST, IUM et al. In 1990, new government of the SWAPO Party, in the interest of National Reconciliation, ensured that harmony was created. At the time, our skill set as a country was limited," he said.

He said the current civil service, which has grown to 110,000, is driven by Namibians, signalling progress in the country's skills development since independence.

"However, we cannot be oblivious to the challenges of unemployment especially amongst the young graduates.

Therefore, recently we took a decision to appoint more nurses, more teachers and other fields.

The public service is the biggest employer and we want the private sector to turn the tide," he said. ***NBR**



BID INVITATION

NamWater is inviting registered and reputable firms to submit bids for the following procurement.

Reference Number	Description	Non-Compulsory Pre-Bid meeting	Restriction: Section (29)(1)(b)	Non-refundable Document Levy	Last day for clarification request	Closing Date
G/ONB/NW-007/2027	Supply and Delivery of a New 6x6 Truck-Mounted Hydraulic Drilling Rig and 6x6 Truck-Mounted Drilling Compressor to NamWater	N/A	This bid is reserved for Namibian registered entities as per section 29 (1)(b) of the Public Procurement Act 15 of 2015 as amended.	N\$ 600.00	28 September 2026	06 October 2026 at 11h00
G/ONB/NW-008/2027	Supply and Delivery of New 6x6 Flatbed Truck-Mounted with Hydraulic Crane Behind Cab, 6x6 15 000l Water Tanker Truck, 6x6 Pump Test Unit Truck and 5000l Diesel Tank Trailer to Namwater	N/A	This bid is reserved for Namibian registered entities as per section 29 (1)(b) of the Public Procurement Act 15 of 2015 as amended.	N\$300.00	28 September 2026	06 October 2026 at 11h00

Bidding documents will be available as of **04 September 2026**. Free bidding documents can be downloaded from www.namwater.com.na.

All prospective bidders who wish to do business with NamWater will be subject to the Public Procurement Act No 15 of 2015 as amended, Public Procurement Regulations 2017 and other directives issued under it.

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Amutse wants more local value from green projects

• STAFF WRITER

INDUSTRIES, Mines and Energy Minister Modestus Amutse has called for a new approach to green finance that creates jobs, supports local businesses and keeps more value in Namibia.

Speaking at the Second International Conference on Finance and Sustainable Business at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) on Wednesday, Amutse said green finance must go beyond funding projects labelled as environmentally friendly.

"For us, rethinking green finance cannot mean placing a green label on conventional finance. It must change what we finance, how risk is shared, who participates and what productive capacity remains in Namibia," he said.

Amutse said sustainable businesses must be commercially viable, environmentally responsible and socially inclusive.

"If too many people remain outside employment, ownership, finance and basic services, the economy is not sustainable simply because some of its projects are green," he said. He said Namibia's development targets under the Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6) would require significant investment from both government and the private sector.

NDP6 targets economic growth of at least 7% by 2030 and an employment rate of 75%.

It also seeks to increase manufacturing's contribution to gross domestic product from 10.6% to 18%, while increasing processed mineral exports from 46.6% to 57%.

The plan further targets an increase in installed electricity capacity from 734 megawatts to 1,153MW and electricity access from about 59% to 70%.

"Every one of those development targets is also a financing question," Amutse said.

"Who will finance the power station, transmission line, processing plant, technical college, emerging enterprise and household connection? At what cost, over what period, in which currency, and with which risks?"

He said government could not finance all the required development alone, while private investors would not take on risks they could not understand or manage.

"Green-finance innovation must bridge those realities," he said.

LOCAL VALUE

Amutse said Namibia had strong potential in renewable energy, critical minerals and petroleum.

He said the country's solar and wind resources, uranium, critical minerals and the emerging Orange Basin petroleum industry could create opportunities for industrial development.

"Resource endowment opens the door. Institutions, finance and national capability determine whether opportunity walks through it," he said.

Amutse said Namibia's green economy ambitions should focus on industrial development.

"We want renewable power to support mines, factories, farms and small busi-



> Industries, Mines and Energy Minister Modestus Amutse

nesses; green hydrogen to enable products such as green iron and fertiliser; and new industries to create Namibian skills and suppliers," he said.

He said green finance must be designed around the different risks faced by businesses and projects.

"Early studies and first-of-a-kind technologies require grants, project-preparation support and patient capital," he said.

"Large infrastructure requires long-tenor concessional and blended finance, guarantees and credible offtake. Local enterprises require affordable working capital and instruments in the currency in which they earn."

OIL AND ENERGY TRANSITION

Amutse also addressed the relationship between Namibia's emerging petroleum industry and its energy transition.

He said the two should not automatically be viewed as opposites.

"We do not see petroleum development and the energy transition as automatic opposites," he said.

"A just transition must be just in our context: we are still expanding electricity access, creating industries, reducing

poverty and building productive capacity." Amutse said Namibia should use any future petroleum revenues to build long-term national capacity.

"If petroleum production becomes commercially viable, a finite resource must be converted into lasting assets: skills, institutions, infrastructure, reliable electricity, water security, renewable energy and a diversified economy," he said.

"If oil gives us only exports and public revenue, we will have developed a field. If it builds Namibian capability and widens economic opportunity, then the resource will have helped to develop Namibia."

FINANCE FOR ORDINARY NAMBIANS

Amutse said Namibia's financing system must also cater for people who cannot access conventional credit.

He pointed to the Solar Revolving Fund in his ministry, which provides subsidised loans for solar technologies.

He said the model worked best for people with regular incomes, bank accounts and credit records.

"But what of the rural household without formal income, the unemployed

young person, or the informal enterprise that cannot satisfy conventional credit tests?" he asked.

"The fund is not a failure; our financing architecture is incomplete."

He said Namibia needed targeted capital subsidies, pay-as-you-go models, guarantees for underserved borrowers and financing models for mini-grids.

"A just transition cannot end where creditworthiness ends," Amutse said.

CRITICAL MINERALS

Amutse said Namibia's critical minerals should create more value inside the country instead of simply being exported as raw materials.

"The more important question is how those minerals create greater value above the ground - in Namibian factories, skills, infrastructure, businesses and households," he said.

He said recent engagements in China had shown that mineral beneficiation required more than mining.

"Lithium beneficiation is not a mining project alone. It requires electricity, water, process heat, laboratories, logistics and specialised skills," Amutse said.

He called for closer coordination between mining, energy, water, industrial policy and finance before investment decisions are made.

"We should not simply diversify where the world gets its critical minerals. We should also diversify where the world creates value from them," he said.

Amutse challenged NUST and researchers to develop practical solutions that can move from academic research to investment and development.

"Government needs research that can travel from a paper to a policy, from a policy to a bankable project, and from a project to measurable development," he said.

He urged the conference to develop practical financing models and partnerships that could be taken forward by government and industry. "We must move from discussion to design, from design to finance, and from finance to measurable development outcomes," he said. ***NBR**





Oshana's **N\$4.7m** land-use plan to unlock investment

• STAFF WRITER

THE Oshana Integrated Regional Land Use Plan (IRLUP) is expected to guide land allocation, development projects and investment in the region over the next 10 years.

The plan was officially handed over to the Oshana Regional Council on Friday by Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform Inge Zaamwani.

The plan was developed at a cost of N\$4.76 million and is intended to help manage competing demands for land as the region's population and economic centres continue to grow.

Zaamwani said the plan must now become the main reference for development decisions in Oshana.

"This is the Oshana Region's Plan. You helped develop it, and you are now entrusted with its implementation," she said.

"It must serve as the basis for future land-use allocations and development decisions in the region. It identifies, among other matters, where towns may expand and where land should be reserved for agriculture, conservation and other uses."

According to Zaamwani, the region's population increased from 201,363 to 230,801, according to the 2023 Population and Housing Census.

She said the growth, together with the expansion of economic centres such as Oshakati and Ondangwa, was putting pressure on limited land and natural resources.

"Industrialisation, construction and infrastructure development require land and raw materials such as gravel, sand and clay. These needs must be managed responsibly and in accordance with a clear, sustainable land-use framework," she said.

Zaamwani said the plan would also help protect agricultural land, manage urban expansion, conserve ecosystems and deal with waste from households and economic activities.

She warned against developments that could interfere with the Cuvelai system.

"We cannot permit developments that obstruct water flow within the Cuvelai system when the Plan seeks to protect the region's ecology and sustain biodiversity downstream," she said.

Zaamwani also raised concerns about land being allocated close to roads, rivers, watercourses, wildlife corridors, schools and other public amenities.

She urged traditional authorities, the Communal Land Board and other institutions involved in land allocation to com-



ply with the relevant laws and policies.

"Most land in the Oshana Region is communal land under the custodianship of our traditional authorities. I therefore appeal to the traditional authorities and the Communal Land Board to ensure that land allocations conform to the Oshana IRLUP and that communal grazing areas and other commonage are protected," she said.

Zaamwani said illegal fencing remained a concern, particularly in the Uuvudhiya area. She said the plan should help identify and remove illegal fences, unlock investment potential in communal areas and promote the social and economic advancement of communities.

The plan is the eighth IRLUP developed in Namibia, following those for //Kharas, Hardap, Kavango West, Kavango East, Z

Seven of these plans have already been handed over to their respective regional councils.

Oshikoto is expected to be the next region to have its plan finalised.

PLAN COSTS N\$4.76M

Petrus-Canicius Nangolo, acting executive director in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform,

said the Oshana plan cost N\$4,759,240 to develop.

He said the cost included consultancy fees as well as the hosting and catering of participatory planning workshops.

Nangolo said the development of the plan involved residents, stakeholders, government officials and experts.

"The Oshana IRLUP was developed through a collaborative, bottom-up approach," he said.

"Constituency workshops were convened whereby residents of each constituency and other stakeholders worked alongside the experts and government staff members to map and zone out the current land uses, potential land uses in the region and decided how land should be sustainably used for the present and future generations."

The plan also includes a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database containing maps showing current and potential land uses across the region.

Nangolo said the database would be handed over to the region together with the plan to support implementation and compliance monitoring.

The ministry will also train Oshana Regional Council officials on monitoring, updating the plan and using the GIS da-

tabase.

"This will be done to ensure that staff members are capacitated with modern GIS tools, and how to conduct monitoring and identify potential land grabbing, unauthorised land allocation amongst others," Nangolo said.

IMPLEMENTATION

Oshana Governor Hofni lipinge said the region had been waiting for the plan and would prioritise its implementation.

Oshana is Namibia's smallest region by geographical area, covering about 8,647 square kilometres, but has a population of 230,801.

lipinge said the plan came at a time when the region was facing growing demand for land and competing land uses.

"As such, the IRLUP will guide the land allocation and ensuring the land is utilised for the best use and benefit of the inhabitants," he said.

He said the region's flat landscape and floodplains made proper land-use planning particularly important.

lipinge also proposed that Lake Oponona be expanded to harvest and store water.

"Comrade Minister, Lake Oponona can be improved in becoming a water catchment/dam to harvest much needed water which can complement the available water sources," he said.

"If Lake Oponona is expanded to harvest much needed water, this region can supply water to neighbouring regions especially Oshikoto."

lipinge said the regional council and other stakeholders would align development activities with the plan.

"Starting already today, Honourable Minister, I would like to state that all stakeholders in land allocation will be sensitised about the importance of Integrated Regional Land Use Plan (IRLUP) and its use," he said.

"I believe that full implementation of the integrated land use zones will greatly contribute to the socio-economic development of Oshana region."

He said the plan would serve as a vehicle for sustainable development and that responsible units would monitor compliance.

"On behalf of the residents of Oshana region and indeed on my own behalf, with honour and humility we accept the Integrated Regional Land Use Plan (IRLUP) and we shall stand together in utilising the outlined land use zones for the development of our Region Oshana," lipinge said. ***NBR**





EDITORIAL

Namibia's youth deserve more than clean promises

NAMIBIA has positioned itself at the vanguard of the global green industrialisation movement.

From the sprawling wind and solar potential of the Namib Desert to the high-stakes corridors of international climate summits, our leaders have boldly pitched the nation as Africa's future renewable energy hub.

The numbers floating around boardroom tables are surprising – hundreds of billions of Namibia dollars in investment potential, ambitious draft legal frameworks, and macro-economic projections stretching to 2030 and beyond.

Yet, for the average young Namibian standing on a street corner in Windhoek, Walvis Bay, or Rundu, these grand declarations remain as elusive as a desert mirage. It is time to be brutally honest. The era of boardroom talk, glossy PowerPoint presentations, and ceremonial ribbon-cutting must end, the era of tangible, ground-level reality must begin.

We cannot talk about a "green transition" without addressing the bleeding wound of our domestic social reality.

Namibia is currently grappling with an astronomical, deeply destabilising unemployment rate that stands at a staggering 51.4% nationally. Even more horrifying is our youth unemployment statistic, which peaks at a catastrophic 84% for youth aged 15 to 19.

This is not just a statistical blemish; it is a ticking socioeconomic time bomb. To expect a generation surviving on less than two US dollars a day to celebrate "clean energy" molecules destined for European markets, while 70% of our own local population lacks basic electricity, is the height of elite disconnect.

If the green transition is to achieve true legitimacy, it must be fundamentally reimagined not as an environmental luxury, but as an aggressive industrialization policy. For over a century, Namibia's economic tragedy has been the colonial model of resource extraction: digging up our diamonds, uranium, and lithium, and shipping them out as raw materials, effectively exporting Namibian jobs to foreign shores.

The green economy offers a historical pivot point to break this cycle. The government must aggressively leverage emerging green power to mandate local value addition and processing.

We should not merely export green hydrogen, we must utilize it locally to manufacture green steel, refine minerals domestically, and establish robust secondary industries.

The Ministry of International Relations and Trade stated target under the Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6) to elevate manufacturing to 18% of GDP by 2030 can only be achieved if we stop the reckless exportation of raw natural resources. Crucially, this transition requires the immediate, domestic creation of sustainable infrastructure. This means green development zones, localized water desalination plants, and domestic electricity grids that serve Namibians first. Building this infrastructure must double as an immediate jobs engine.

We need to see vocational training centers transformed into factories for clean-tech capability, training thousands of young Namibians as certified solar technicians, hydrogen pipefitters, green construction workers, and environmental engineers. We do not need temporary, low-wage construction gig work; our youth need permanent, dignified, sustainable careers that anchor them into the modern middle class.

International investors are flooding our boardrooms, eager to tap into our world-class solar and wind resources. Our message to them must be uniform, uncompromising, and legally enforced: capital entry is conditional on deep localized value chains.

If an international conglomerate wants to build a multi-billion-dollar green hydrogen plant, they must purchase a mandatory quota of components from Namibian-owned businesses, fund local research hubs, and enforce absolute transparency in their procurement pipelines. The transition cannot just happen in Namibia; it must happen for Namibians.

The youth can no longer survive on the promise of 30,000 jobs by 2030 while starving in the present.

They need to see factories being built, local supply chains moving, and real paychecks hitting their bank accounts. If the green transition fails to lower the 51.4% unemployment mark, it will have failed entirely, regardless of how many tons of clean energy we ship abroad.

The government has talked on global stages; it has proven its diplomatic acumen. Now, the hard, gritty work begins on the home front. Let us take the green transition out of the sanitised boardrooms and plant its roots deeply into the Namibian soil. Our youth are waiting, and their patience has officially run out.



Collaboration is key to greater social impact

• VERIPURA MUUKUA

IN Namibia, the corporate social investment (CSI) narrative has traditionally centred on a single partnership between a corporate and a project implementer. As CSI evolves globally and becomes a strategic imperative within organisations, we see a shift towards not just doing more but doing better. This new approach highlights the importance of the corporate sector forming collaborations both among themselves and with civil society, aiming to contribute strategically to community well-being and socio-economic progress, thereby achieving greater social impact.

The launch of the CSI Mukopano platform in July 2026, along with its inaugural conference on September 3, 2026, marks a pivotal moment for CSI in Namibia. The platform brings together corporate Namibia, civil society and the public sector. This collaboration aims to drive strategic, impact-driven investments that contribute to meaningful change in Namibia. Throughout the conference presentations, the echo in the room was consistent, indicating the desire to break down silos, work less in isolation and become more strategic and united to coordinate initiatives that better benefit the most vulnerable in our communities.

CSI is not a sponsorship

As Tim Ekandjo, Chief Brand, Marketing, Communications, and Sustainability Officer at MTC, emphasised during his presentation on Namibia's pressing social challenges, there is a clear distinction between Corporate Social Investment (CSI) and sponsorships. CSI is not the same as sponsorship, and in CSI, there is no competition.

At the heart of CSI are people and communities: vulnerable families, children, unemployed youth, and others who have hopes for a better future and urgent needs today. A responsible corporate citizen recognises that success is measured not only by profit, but also by its investment footprint and its capacity to create positive, lasting change in the communities where it operates. The Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) framework plays a significant role in this context.

How collaboration breaks silos

With over 10 years of experience in the NGO sector and corporate social investment (CSI), I have worked on both single corporate-NGO partnerships and multi-stakeholder collaborations. I have observed that the latter approach often yields greater success: collective financial contributions reach more beneficiaries, while diverse expertise, experience and perspectives strengthen strategic alignment. I have also seen companies that traditionally compete on their products and services come together to address social issues collectively, because it is not about the brand, but about people, impact and "CSI that changes lives." This is why I believe collaboration with like-minded organisations breaks silos and achieves greater impact.

CSI takes shape through strategy

Companies typically depend on non-profit organisations and NGOs to identify social issues and propose potential solutions. From these propos-

als, they select and support initiatives that align with their CSI focus areas. This approach is understandable and often effective, especially given the capacity constraints within companies, where CSI is frequently managed by a single person juggling multiple responsibilities.

As organisations around the world recognise CSI as a crucial part of their strategic framework, it is worth considering a hybrid approach. What if companies not only welcomed project requests but also proactively identified community needs and targeted their support accordingly? This would enable corporates to remain responsive to proposals, while building a more deliberate, need-based strategy.

Once a strategy is in place, those in the CSI role can collaborate more closely with partner projects and gain a better understanding of their priorities. This strategic approach enables companies to set specific objectives, such as reaching a set number of learners (X) by a designated year (Y), and to select the most appropriate implementation partners to achieve these targets.

The saying "failing to plan is planning to fail" applies equally to CSI. For any corporate entity, a clear strategy and plan are essential for identifying community needs, aligning resources and delivering lasting impact. In some cases, this may require dedicated CSI roles.

Aligning with national priorities

Part of a CSI strategy involves determining the overall aims and objectives to be achieved through CSI initiatives, the community challenges to address, and the areas to support. At the Mukopano conference, a regional overview was presented, highlighting both unique local challenges and strong national patterns that require coordinated action. When developing a CSI strategy and partnering with implementing partners, it is crucial to seek input and collaborate with government offices to ensure that the right support goes where it is needed most.

Joining forces

Coming together at the CSI table reflects the promise of the Mukopano platform: to move beyond working in isolation and to build partnerships that amplify resources, ideas and impact. Shared commitment can lead to more sustainable, far-reaching outcomes for communities.

By uniting our strengths and expertise, we can address complex challenges more effectively and create a greater ripple effect across our communities. Collaboration encourages innovation, values every contribution and advances our shared goals for socio-economic development.

Veripura Muukua is Head of the Capricorn Foundation, the corporate social investment (CSI) arm of Capricorn Group. She has more than 10 years' experience in CSI, stakeholder engagement and project management across the corporate and NGO sectors. She is responsible for shaping and implementing the Foundation's strategic direction through partnerships and initiatives that drive sustainable social and economic impact across Namibia.

TVET must feed Namibia's emerging industries, says Nandi-Ndaitwah

"Our success depends heavily on a skilled workforce that is innovative, adaptable, and globally competitive"

• STAFF WRITER

PRESIDENT Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah has called for regular skills audits and labour market analyses to ensure Namibia's workforce meets the needs of emerging industries.

Speaking at the official send-off of Team Namibia to the WorldSkills Competition in Shanghai on Monday, Nandi-Ndaitwah said technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is central to Namibia's economic development.

She said Namibia is building an inclusive and resilient economy while developing sectors such as green hydrogen, oil and gas, renewable energy, advanced manufacturing and digital technology.

"Our success depends heavily on a

skilled workforce that is innovative, adaptable, and globally competitive," she said.

Nandi-Ndaitwah said TVET institutions must equip Namibians with practical skills and technical expertise that match the changing needs of the labour market.

"Our efforts guarantee that TVET remains responsive and relevant, preparing our people for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead," she said.

She called on institutions responsible for human resource development to conduct regular skills audits and labour market analyses.

"I implore relevant institutions responsible for human resource development in the country to conduct regular skills au-

ditions and labour market analyses to anticipate and address skills gaps," she said.

She said this would help ensure that Namibia's workforce is aligned with national and global demands under Vision 2030.

The president said TVET should not be viewed as a backup plan, but as an important part of Namibia's economic transformation.

"To our competitors, your participation in WorldSkills Shanghai 2026 is proof that TVET is not a backup plan, but rather an important key to our economic transformation," she said.

Seventeen Namibian competitors are representing the country at the 48th WorldSkills Competition in Shanghai,

China. Nandi-Ndaitwah said technical skills can "open doors, build industries, create jobs, drive innovation, and transform a nation".

She also urged the competitors to learn from international participants and bring back knowledge that could benefit Namibia.

"Learn from global best practices, network with your international peers, and bring back knowledge that will propel our nation forward," she said.

She further urged the competitors to participate in knowledge-sharing and skills transfer programmes when they return so that their international exposure can benefit young Namibians across the country. ***NBR**

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