



Official Announcement
Honourable Benitha Imbamba
Chairperson of ERONGO REGIONAL COUNCIL:
ON 8 AUGUST 2024

**OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT, STATEMENT BY
CHAIRPERSON OF THE ERONGO REGIONAL COUNCIL AT
THE 344th ORDINARY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING OF
2024, HELD ON THE 8 AUGUST 2024 AT THE ERONGO
REGIONAL COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT 10H00.**

Honourable Governor; Honourable Councillors; Chief Regional Officer; All Management Cadres; Distinguish guests; Members of the media; Members of the public; Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning to you all.

I would like to welcome you all my Honourable Members, the senior administrative team and everyone present here today. Thank you for honouring us with your presence, in fulfilment of the Regional Council Act (1992).

Permit me, Honourable Members, to pay tribute to our late Head of State, Dr Hage G Geingob, who would have celebrated his 83rd birthday last Saturday. As our Government remembered him over the weekend and the honour they bestowed on him by renaming the Hosea Kutako Airport road to Hage Geingob Freeway, we have an obligation to continue to celebrate his values that are reshaping our lives. He is gone but not forgotten. Today, we will cherish his memory. Let's rise for a minute of silence [PAUSE].

Rest in Eternal Peace our Hero.

Dear honourable members, in the same vein, let's remember all those who have sacrificed their lives for this motherland, as we commemorate the Heroes Day during August, to be held in the town of Omuthiya in the Oshikoto Region. We salute all our fallen stalwarts.

Honourable Regional Councillors

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Erongo Region continues to thrive in its pursuit of excellence. Just the other day, you permitted the CRO and I to escort the Honourable Governor to the United Kingdom where he was invited to receive an award. This is a bold step for our region and a testimony to our collective efforts of hard work. The award completes the set of many other accolades that we have enjoyed over the last six months – this time, there is an element of good governance to it.

Please join me once again, in congratulating Honourable Neville Andre Itope for having been recognised as the Best African Governor of the Year 2024, an award conferred to him by the African Business Leadership Magazine. Honourable Governor (in absentia), we recognise and appreciate your tireless efforts in the regional development. You are putting the Erongo Region as the best Region of choice.

Honourable Councillors

Ladies and Gentlemen

Whilst on this mission, the Honourable Governor, the Chief Regional Officer and I, held stakeholder engagements with various business entities, in our quest to promote investments in the region. The first meeting involved our presentation to the delegation of the overall event (African Leadership Magazine), attended by the Prime Minister and Head of State of the Bahamas, the second event involved the delegation of businessmen from Azerbaijan and the third was an amalgamated business forum organised by the Namibian High Commission to the United Kingdom, with the support of the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB) and the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade, whose Minister, Hon Lucia Iipumbu was in attendance. The Regional Council contributed through promotional statements and the development of business presentations that were projected to the audience during the visit. Going forward, we will hear from the rightful government structures on how the outcomes of this visit will trickle down with benefits to the region of excellence.

On another note, the last month saw a series of activities in our region. I would like to single out the Logos Hope, as among those amazing occurrences of note. The vessel docked on the shores of Walvis Bay Port where it was stationed from 5 to 21 July 2024. The Logos Hope is the world's largest floating book fair – I'm happy to report that it attracted not only thousands of Namibians but audiences from other neighbouring countries in the sub-region.

Honourable Councillors

To supplement these occurrences, as the Chairperson of this August House, I have represented the Council at various platforms during the period under review:

- I attended the official opening of the Logos Hope vessel visit to Walvis Bay and contributed to a one-day volunteering service. This contributed to our visibility as a regional council.
- I attended the Disaster Risk Management meeting with Deputy Prime Minister, Hon John Mutorwa. We used his presence here to flag other important matters that concern our populace in the region, among these included the need to fast-track the roads linking Henties Bay to Uis, Khorixas and Kamanjab, known as the western corridor. We got a commitment from the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the pending response about the national transport information system (Natis) in Uis.

We also emphasised the importance of regional feeder roads that need to be upgraded to bitumen low seal volume (tarred road). As Chairperson, with the support of the regional administrative head, we will pursue these discussions to ensure that we reap the desired benefits, essential for the development of our region.

- During the period under review, members of the management committee, and our MPs, including myself, attended the official opening ceremony of Swakopmund International Trade Expo (Swaitex). Our head of state, His Excellency Dr Nangolo Mbumba and the visiting Botswana President, His Excellency Dr Mogwetsi Masisi graced the event and were in our region for three days. The Erongo Regional Council showcased its prowess and increased its visibility for the duration of the expo, through a store that was managed by the administration.
- As part of steering development in the Region. I participated in the Regional Development Coordinating Committee meeting held during the period under review. The forum provided a platform for introspection of our efforts in improving the livelihoods of our people. This RDCC meeting took place in Swakopmund.
- I was also invited by the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development to participate in the Regional and Local Economic Development workshop that took place in Otjiwarongo.

Dear colleagues, as we slowly get closer to the end of our mandate, it is imperative that we continue to take stock of what we have achieved over the years. I'm making it a point that each mission I undertake should benefit and respond to the mandate of the Regional Council and most importantly our strategic plan objectives.

Honourable Councillors

The budget for the 2024/2025 Financial Year will be presented today, and it is my plea to all of us that we plan and execute our prescribed activities with urgency while applying due diligence. This comes with a great deal of accountability. I further urge the technocrats to fast-track executing the tasks at hand, and if any challenges are experienced, please seek our guidance so that we don't deny or delay service delivery to our people. Our motto "***Plan together; develop together***" should not only be a mere slogan but a reality. Let's hold hands and pull in one direction – the real spirit of Harambee. We are here to render assistance in all forms. Teamwork is of the essence, there is no need for us to operate in silos!

As I wrap my statement, I would like to remind you dear honourable members of the other activities that still stand in our way. Tomorrow, the 9th of August 2024, there will be a commemoration of International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples here in Swakopmund. We are all invited to attend and I implore that we do so. As we hold ourselves accountable and in the spirit of acquainting ourselves with the regional development initiatives, the Office of the Chief Regional Officer is organising maiden and formal visits to the Cleanergy Green Hydrogen site in Walvis Bay and the Green Hydrogen Village in Uis. These are opportunities we cannot afford to miss, as we familiarise ourselves with these innovative platforms, and most importantly how they will contribute to the economic growth of the region and how they can be our relief in terms of job creation. On Sunday, we will travel to Uis (to the Green Hydrogen Village) where these visitations will commence, upon our return on Tuesday/Wednesday, we will all be ushered into the State of the Region Address to which I have already invited Hon Governor to deliver and share our successes, plans and challenges to the region. This is expected to take place on Thursday, 15 August. I encourage all of us to attend. Equally, we will all be expected to attend a national event, Heroes Day on the 26th of August. Finally, the political leaders and senior administrative team retreat will be held during the first week of September. This is an important activity that will help us reform,

remodel our approach to accountability, mend relations and strengthen our resolve to steer development in the region.

Dear honourable members, there is so much that we can do to improve service delivery. It is our duty to make sure that we rally behind the senior administrative team in their pursuit of excellence as I stated earlier, we need to advise as gatekeepers – when they win, we have all won. Again, I repeat, let's keep our UNITY – because divided we fall.

May the good Lord bless us all as we discuss ways how to serve His people. Ours should be a discussion that builds the community we serve, than the competition of ideas or how eloquent we express ourselves. With this spirit, our disagreements will successfully culminate into agreements.

Thank you very much for listening.