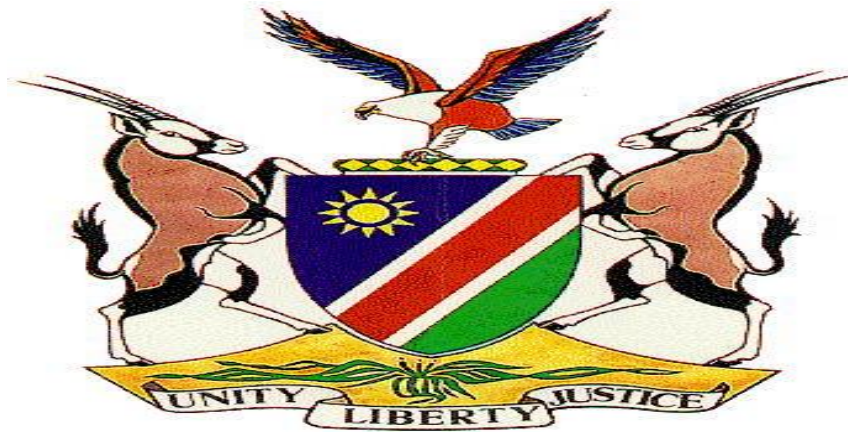


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



OFFICE OF THE ERONGO GOVERNOR

SPEECH

BY

HONORABLE NEVILLE ANDRE

GOVERNOR OF THE ERONGO REGION

ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTH STATE OF THE REGION ADDRESS 2024

15TH AUGUST 2024

09H00

SWAKOPMUND MUNICIPAL CHAMBERS

Honourable Benitha Imbamba, Chairperson of the Erongo Regional Council;
Honourable Regional Councillors;
My family; my dear wife Mrs Iyaloo Andre, my aunt Mrs Suama Itope-Kalulu, my cousin Naftal Negongo
Her Worship, Honourable Dina Namubes, Mayor of Swakopmund;
Your Worships, the Mayors and Councillors of other Towns in the Erongo Region;
Mr Mupenzi Ntelamo, Chief Regional Officer and colleagues from the ERC;
Regional Heads of OMA's in the Erongo Region;
Commissioner Nicholas Kapirika Kupembona, Regional Commander of the Namibian Police
CEO's from all Local Authorities in the Region;
Service Chiefs;
Captains of Industry;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen and all invited guests.

Introduction

Four years ago when I delivered my first State of Region Address, I was overwhelmed and filled with nostalgia, as it was just during the infancy stage of my tenure as a Governor. It was at the time when we were faced with the uphill battle to fight the economic headwinds, compounded by the drought of seven years, as well as the dreaded Covid 19 pandemic which ravaged our homes and our society. The pandemic robbed families of loved ones and took away breadwinners from accessing an income, displacing families who were in lockdown in other parts of the country, depriving our children of face-to-face teaching (in classes) while exerting immense pressure on our health facilities and our front line workers.

But in the true spirit of resilience, we firmly stood together in the face of adversity, where young and old, uniformed and civilians, youth and school children, public and private sector, confronted this unknown enemy with vigour. We remained resilient and stood by each other in unison.

This year has been declared by our late President Dr Hage Geingob, may his soul rest in peace as the "Year of Expectations". True to this theme, we woke up on the 04th of February to the news of the untimely departure of our larger-than-life President. A moment true to his character, was when we observed the hand-over of guard through a peaceful transition of authority, an experience that earned Namibia an unforgettable accolade from the international community.

It is this smooth transition that led to the inauguration of our fourth President, His Excellency Dr Nangolo Mbumba. Conversely, His Excellency the late Dr Geingob, a true revolutionary leader, my mentor and role model, the father figure who gave me this huge responsibility, to him I say thank you. This year is also very special as it marked the 30th Anniversary of the Reintegration of Walvis Bay into Namibia. This momentous event stands as a testament to our nation's resolve and the power of unity and diplomacy in achieving lasting progress. The reintegration of Walvis Bay, officially completed on 1st March 1994, was a significant milestone not just for the Erongo Region but for the entire nation of Namibia. This coastal town, rich in strategic importance and economic potential, was long under foreign control, creating a sense of incompleteness in our national identity. The peaceful transfer of Walvis Bay to Namibia's sovereignty symbolized the culmination of our struggle for territorial integrity and self-determination. Today as we look back to this momentous day, we remember the tenacity and the diplomacy displayed by our current President, His Excellency Dr Mbumba, in his role during that time. On this special day which is his birthday, the Erongo Region extends its heartfelt wishes to the President. We wish him the very best as he steers the Namibian nation forward. Happy Birthday Your Excellency!

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Councillors, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is, therefore, my distinct honour and pleasure in line with Section 11, (d) of the Regional Councils Act, 1992 (no 22) to report and introspect the achievements and initiatives undertaken over the past financial year under five key pillars.

Effective or Good Governance

Contemporary literature reveals that effective governance refers to the process by which decisions are made and implemented in a manner that is transparent, accountable, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the people. Effective governance ensures that institutions function properly, public officials are held accountable, and citizens have a voice in the decision-making process. Ultimately, effective governance fosters trust, stability, and prosperity within a society. I am pleased with the overall state of affairs in regard to service delivery, from the Regional Council to some Local authorities in the Region, where regular meetings are held for structures such as Local Development Committees, Constituency Development Committees as well as the Regional Development Coordinating Committees. I can confidently report that some local authorities held public meetings to give feedback on the activities of their Councils and Plans as well as soliciting input from the communities on the planned activities.

However, during the reporting period, we have also witnessed some disturbing phenomena in some Local Authorities in the Region, where the very tenants of good Governance were breached, this affected service delivery and trust from the citizens, where indicators of poor service delivery were evident.

Accountability and Transparency

The Namibian Government has prioritized transparency, ensuring that all governmental activities and expenditures are openly communicated to the public. Regular public consultations and comprehensive reports have been made available to keep our citizens informed and engaged in regional and local governance. As a result, we hosted and participated in the following consultations during the reporting period, Public Consultation on the Consumer Credit Bill (CCB), the nationwide stakeholder consultative meetings on the Persons with Disabilities Bill and the National Policy on Disability. Public Hearings on Youth Unemployment, Public Hearings on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, ICT Stakeholders Consultative Breakfast Briefing, Extensive NDP6 Consultations, and the recent Delimitation Commission Consultations, just to mention a few. At the Regional level, through the Erongo Regional Council and Local Authorities, statutory meetings were held, as a reciprocal method of obtaining input and providing feedback to the citizens across the constituencies, villages, farms and towns.

Improved Service Delivery

The Erongo Regional Council and some Local Authorities, have streamlined processes across various departments, reducing waiting times for services rendered while improving efficiency. The introduction of a digital platform, known as the Government Communication System, has enabled citizens to submit requests and track their status in real-time, fostering a more responsive government. Given the afore-mentioned interventions, I am pleased to report, that the ERC won the first prize, with a score line of 80% amongst all the 14 Regional Councils in terms of the development and implementation of the Customer Service Charter. The Council was also the third runner-up in the whole Public Sector and first place in the Regional Councils as the best innovative exhibitor during the Africa Public Service Day. I urge you not to relent but to continue providing excellent services and exhibit excellence at such National Platforms.

Strengthening Regional Anti-Corruption Mechanisms

Pursuant to provisions under Specific Objective 6.2.1. of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan 2021 – 2025, the region has excelled without a cloud of complacency. In terms of Corruption Risks Assessment Training, I am pleased to report that two Corruption Risk Assessment Trainings were successfully conducted with NamRA Customs and Excise (CE), Usakos Town Council and the Municipality of Walvis Bay. Ethics and Integrity trainings were successfully conducted at 12 different institutions. More than 400 participants attended the training and again the Ministry of Health and Social Services, Ministry of Home Affairs, Safety and Security and NamRA, are topping the highest number of trainees with 100, 94 and 64 trainees respectively. Eighteen (18) out of the targeted ten (10) OMA's including Local Authorities, Regional Council and Traditional Authorities were sensitised on Anti-Corruption Awareness activities, whilst more than 1000 public members were also sensitised in the Erongo region during the reporting period. These were delivered through Expos, Media Briefing, National Anti-Corruption Song Competition and many other activities.

The ACC also conducted ANT-CORRUPTION AWARENESS campaigns with various institutions in the Erongo Region, which included Public and Private Sector as well as Parastatals.

Corruption Risk Areas in the Erongo Region

We have identified critical areas that have enticed perpetrators into corrupt practices, these include manipulation in public procurement, land allocation, Subsistence & Travel claims, acquisition of national documents whilst not deserving citizens, liquor licences issued on existing licences, issuance of drivers/learners licences without been tested, the payment of bribes as an inducement to be employed, disputes of awarding land by traditional authorities and contravention of section 35. In response, we have implemented stricter oversight measures and provided extensive training to ensure adherence to ethical standards to mitigate corruption risks. There are currently 41 cases at hand. Two cases were finalised in the court since March 2023. A total number of 16 cases are currently in court, whilst 17 cases are at the Prosecutor General awaiting for a decision.

REGIONAL SECURITY SITUATION

The Region is indeed safe, with no major incidences of destabilisation. On this note, please allow me to provide the crime statistics for the period under review:

The total number of reported cases has increased by 5%. During the period January to July 2023, a total number of 5,070 cases were reported in comparison with January to July 2024, where a total of 5,332 cases were reported - signifying a slight increase of 5%. The Namibian Police Regional Commander's Office has identified the following to be the possible causes of crime in the region, i) the influx of people in search of employment, ii) greed, iii) drugs and alcohol abuse, and iv) unemployment.

Top ten cases of crime, includes housebreaking, robberies, domestic violence cases (Slapping, threats or killing), assault with intent to cause bodily harm, theft out of motor vehicles, theft of cell phones, drugs, reckless or negligent driving, drunk and driving and incidences of fraud.

In our quest to reduce crime, there are planned activities for the new financial year, which includes the upgrading of the existing Police Station in Swakopmund to the value of N\$10 Million. I'm glad to report that the site was handed over to the contractor in July 2024. Additionally, the construction of the Okombahe and Omatjete Police Station, which includes the accommodation part is completed. The outstanding part of phase one which is the sewer connection and underground pipes is budgeted for in phase 2. This phase, which started in August 2024, will include the office block, charge office, and cell blocks, and is expected to be completed in July 2025. The project will only be handed over once it is fully completed.

PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY THE ERONGO REGIONAL COUNCIL DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

Charged with the broader mandate of governing, planning, coordination and implementation of socio-economic development activities in the region, the Erongo Regional Council has continued to dispense and discharge its mandate with astute diligence to service delivery and promotion of value benefits to the citizenry.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES - REGIONAL PLANNING DIVISION

Construction of internal water reticulation at Wlotzkasbaken Settlement in Arandis Constituency, I am pleased to report that this exercise which commenced 2022/23 has now been completed in December 2023. With regard to the Extension of Sewerage Network in Otjimbingwe Settlement (in Karibib Constituency), there is a substantial number of households that are not connected to the existing sewerage system in Otjimbingwe Settlement Area, therefore there is need to expand the sewer system by 500-metre network to accommodate a surplus connection of about 63 households. To this effect, for the period 2023/24, Erongo Regional Council appointed an engineering consulting firm to design and document the 63 households that needed to be connected. This process has been completed and the bid has now been prepared and advertised. **Construction of the 23 kilometre Ozondati - Omatjete water pipeline:** During my State of the Region Address last year, I reported that the Erongo Region Council funded the construction of the 31 kilometres Ozondati – Omatjete water pipeline, to the tune of N\$ 29 million, I am therefore pleased to announce that phase one has been completed. I would like to thank the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform for availing N\$11 million that will conclude the second phase, expected to be completed during this year.

Construction of Low-volume bitumen roads in Okombahe: Road Fund Administration (RFA) allocates funding annually to Regional Councils for road maintenance in settlement areas. This allocation has so far benefited the settlements through re-gravelling and blading where new streets were created. The project's 1st phase has covered 750 metres. The project has since been finalised and the street is ready to be commissioned.

Construction of electrical fence to Erongo Regional Council Coastal office: Erongo Regional Council has experienced numerous theft cases and vandalism to property at some of its offices and has prioritized electrifying four offices namely; Walvis Bay Rural and Urban Constituency offices, Swakopmund Constituency Office and Community Health office in Mondesa. The project was implemented successfully.

Construction of Okombahe graveyard: This project was initially planned for construction in 2022/2023 -2023/2024 financial year, but due to the fulfilment of the Environmental Act, all the newly established grave site requires an Environmental Clearance Certificate. Therefore, an Environmentalist firm was

appointed to carry out the exercise of which the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was only obtained on 14 September 2023.

Thus the project implementation commenced in November 2023. Completion is expected in August 2024 owing to delays in the project.

TOWN AND REGIONAL PLANNING, TOWNSHIP PROCLAMATIONS

Successful communities are not built overnight and do not happen by chance. They are the result of a clear vision and careful planning. It is a process that demands a clear understanding of what is required today and what is expected in the future and a balanced approach that meets the needs of the people and the objectives for national development.

Otjimbingwe Settlement

A new Township was also created for Otjimbingwe, to be known as Otjimbingwe Extension 1. The township establishment process started in 2017 with Council Approval obtained in 2019. Unfortunately, the Township Establishment application could not be submitted to the Urban and Regional Planning Board due to an outstanding Proclamation Notice of Otjimbingwe Proper. Such notice was requested from the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development on various occasions, the notice was also published in the Government Gazette on 28 April 2023, but contained errors and had to be withdrawn. Our office already obtained an environmental clearance certificate (ECC) for the proposed development, of which renewal has been secured until April 2026. The application awaits the publication of the corrected Proclamation Notice of Otjimbingwe Proper in the Government Gazette. It suffices to mention that the layout of Otjimbingwe Proper will require slight changes to reflect new developments in the plan.

Okombahe Settlement

The proclamation of Okombahe Proper and Extension 1 is still pending. The process of endorsement of Title into the name of Erongo Regional Council, the opening of the Township Registers and publication of the Proclamation Notice in the Government Gazette was resubmitted to the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development and awaits pronouncements from the Surveyor General's Office.

Uis Settlement has a shortage of serviced land for accommodation and business purposes. This is a developmental conundrum which the Erongo Regional Council has to expedite in its ambition to turn the fortunes of the settlement. Tatamutsi, a section of Uis Settlement is in the process of being upgraded to formalise the current set-up. To this end, the consultant was appointed to provide aerial imagery and contours of the area. A flood line study will also be

conducted by the same consultant, to determine the 50 and 100-year flood line of the river passing through the informal settlement.

EXPANSION OF UIS TOWNLAND BOUNDARIES: The project commenced in July 2019 with the appointment of the Planning Consultants to restart the process of expansion of the Townland Boundaries of Uis. All statutory approvals were finalized and the Land Surveyors, with consent from the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform's Directorate of Survey and Mapping, was appointed in March 2022 to survey the proposed Townland Boundary expansion. The proposed diagrams were submitted to the office of the Surveyor General on 10 August 2022 and is still pending approval. On this note, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to announce that the ERC has submitted an application to the Minister of Urban and Rural Development, requesting for the upgrade of Uis to a local authority status.

DECLARATIONS OF SETTLEMENTS: A motion was approved by the Ordinary Council to pursue the declaration of Tubusis as a Settlement. To this end, a feasibility study is planned to determine and assess socioeconomic status and other various factors on the future of Tubusis community.

SALE OF ERVEN IN WLOTZKASBAKEN Settlement: The sale of 20 vacant residential erven in Wlotzkasbaken commenced in the financial year 2020/21. The close bid sale was conducted on 10 September 2021, hereafter the transfer of properties into the respective bidders' names commenced. Due to a number of cancellations and the subsequent allocation to the next bidders, the last registration was concluded during the period under review.

VALUATION ROLLS: Erongo Regional Council is administering Wlotzkasbaken settlement as a Local Authority as per the provision of the Regional Councils Act, Act 22 of 1992. Since the sale of erven to pre-emptive right holders in 2014 and thereafter the sale of an additional 15 residential erven at the close bid sale in 2021, the need for a Valuation Roll for Wlotzkasbaken became evident. In the 23/24 financial year, a Town Planning firm was appointed to compile the Wlotzkasbaken Valuation Roll. The process is ongoing with the Provisional Valuation Roll currently with the Council for approval before advertisement for public comments and the proceedings of the Valuation Court. It is anticipated that the Valuation Roll will be approved within the 2024/25 Financial Year.

FOOD/ CASH FOR WORK (INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT): The Food/Cash for Work Program (FCFWP) attempts to provide short-term jobs while supporting rural infrastructure and services. During the review period, N\$288,461.54 was provided

to the region, benefiting twelve (12) community projects ranging from water pipeline building, water point fencing, gardens, and road clearance. This initiative assisted 49 local communities by creating short-term jobs.

ONE REGION ONE INITIATIVE (OROI): At a cost of N\$ 1,139 998.58, the construction of the 5-kilometre water pipeline from the borehole to the !Nara Centre is now completed in Walvis Bay Rural Constituency. The project implementation has resulted in the creation of eight (8) temporary jobs.

HOUSING, LAND DELIVERY AND SANITATION:

As you may all know that housing is a challenge in the region, various stakeholders have joined forces with government to address this problem. Under the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia, Build Together, and the National Housing Enterprise (to mention but a few), a total of 968 housing units were constructed during the period under review. A total of number of 3,883 erven has been allocated in the urban areas to various Savings groups, such as the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia and Individuals, whilst 240 have been allocated for the flexible land tenure system in Arandis. In our quest to address open defecation and other forms that hinder human dignity, the Government of the Republic of Namibia has undertaken progressive strategies that aim to respond to the sanitation plight by providing rural communities with dry pit toilet units in all regions. The Erongo Regional Council has provided seventy-one (71) dry pit latrines to the three rural constituencies as follows: thirty-six (36) in Daures, twenty-one (21) in Karibib, and fourteen (14) in Walvis Bay Rural, at a total cost of N\$1,313,404.56.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Arandis Town Council

The Arandis Town Council budgeted N\$ 543,154.00 but spent N\$359,404.23, whilst there is still N\$ 183,749.77 00 left. Under this program, 1 KM of bitumen roads were maintained during the period under review. The maintenance includes slurry sealing, pothole and edge repair, as well as installation of road signs.

Henties Bay Municipality

Sewer: The Council has successfully replaced the septic tanks with a gravity sewer system.

SME Park and Taxi Rank: The planning phase (which includes architectural designs, bill of quantities, etc.) was completed by the Council.

Ongoing and Upcoming Projects include; Indoor Fish Farming, a State-of-the-Art Hotel, a Salt Refinery, an Agricultural Plot at Tulongeni Gardens, Slipway and New Airport.

Under Youth empowerment programmes: A partnership with OHORONGO Cement and Woermann was entered into, to produce bricks. This will contribute towards sustainable employment for the youth

Construction of a secondary school started during the 23/24 financial year and it's expected to be concluded before September 2024.

Challenges and Solutions: Aging Water Infrastructure, High Unemployment Rate, Inadequate Health Facilities, and Outdated Drainage/Sewer System. To mitigate some of these challenges, the Henties Bay Municipality plans to engage government, enter into Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), Twinning Partnerships and the installation of water meters in the town.

Karibib Town Council

Employment creation: During period under review, 150 residents were employed through various schemes, such as road construction, sewage and water services, energy project as well as retail.

Infrastructure Development: Upgrading of gravel roads to bitumen standards in Usab Proper, covering a distance of 1 km was completed with funding from the Road Fund Administration.

Twinning agreements. A twinning agreement was signed between Karibib Town Council and Sowa Town in Botswana.

Plans for the new year: Karibib Town Council plans to construct the following; a Sewer reticulation in Usab Informal Settlement, Electrical reticulation in Usab Informal Settlement, Water reticulation Usab Extension 7 & 8. Electrical Services in Usab Extension 7& 8 and services in Karibib Ext.4 and 6.

Omaruru Municipality:

During the reporting period, the Town Council received N\$16 million from MURD for electrification in the informal settlement. The project implementation is at 80% completion;

The MURD supported the town council through the provision of funding for sever infrastructure to the amount of N\$13 million; N\$1,4 million for local economic development agency (LEDA), while N\$1,5 million was sourced internally for the

purchase of a tipper truck. Through funding from RFA, the town council was able to procure a road roller compactor at the cost of N\$1,4 million.

Swakopmund Municipality

The municipality has provided the following services to the DRC informal settlement, water, standpipes, mobile toilets, sanitation centres and street lights..

Furthermore, 67 pre-paid stands in the informal areas were distributed as follows, 22 in Wagdaar, 7 in Airport side, 22 in DRC proper, and 16 in Seaside.

Economic advancement in the fields of urban agriculture, Expos and trade fairs, manufacturing, sme development and local value addition were advanced. In terms of **Business trading Sites and Premises, the** Council invested N\$2 million in the Kavita Art and Craft Market. Additional ablution block, specifically for tourists were installed,16 business stalls were renovated, 62 art & craft informal traders were provided with trading sites.

Business Development through Partnerships: An MOU with the Dome Swakopmund was entered into during the period under review. The council invested N\$ 530 000 towards the establishment of Swakopmund as an entrepreneurial Hub, 10 young entrepreneurs have been trained and graduated through Be Your Own Boss program. **The** Council also invested N\$ 132 000 towards the Elite Athlete Academy under the MOU with MTC Dome.

Capacity Building for MSME Training of 25 MSME on tendering and procurement procedures was conducted.

MSME Trust Fund: The Council resolved to establish an MSME Trust fund which aims to provide financial assistance to the MSME sector in form of seed capital. A total of N\$ 200 000 has been committed toward this initiative. The MSME Trust Fund will mainly target the micro enterprises sector, looking at the unemployed people who have the technical knowledge but are limited by starting up capital to acquire the much-needed equipment, tools and machinery.

Expos and trade fairs: The Municipality of Swakopmund supported other Local Authorities in the region and country at large by attending their trade fairs.

Twinning agreements **were signed with** Oranjemund Town Council, Rundu Town Council, Walvis Bay Municipality, City of Windhoek, and City of Giessen, in Germany.

Namibia Housing Information System (NHIS), was acquired during the reporting period. This system helps to capture and handle land applications into a more effective and transparent National Housing Information system. I encourage other local authorities to emulate the same – as this helps to hasten service delivery.

Swakopmund Municipality & Development Workshop Namibia Memorandum of Understanding Swakopmund Municipality signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Development Workshop of Namibia in an effort to accelerate servicing of allocated erven in Extension 40, 41, 42, of Wagdaar informal settlement

Walvis Bay Municipality

INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (ROADS – A The Municipality of Walvis Bay entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Road Fund Administration (RFA) whereby the RFA will spend N\$ 238 million earmarked to rehabilitate major port roads.

Pothole Repairs: The Municipality appointed four contractors through an Open Advertised Bid for road repair works that consisted primarily of repairing potholes. The work executed during the reporting period amounts to N\$ 11.4 million.

Upgrades of sewage infrastructure: In November of 2023 Council purchased a state-of-the-art Combination Sewer truck for the amount of N\$6 million. At an impressive capacity of 12500 litres, the truck will be used to clean and maintain sewer lines and pump stations.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT: The Youth Entrepreneurship Training Program was initiated to combat youth unemployment by providing essential business skills to local youth aged 16-35.

Walvis Bay Youth Climate Action Fund Council is currently rolling out the Walvis Bay Youth Climate Action Fund, to support youth-led climate action initiatives by youths based in Walvis Bay. The municipality has received close to N\$1 million for disbursement to youth-led climate action initiatives.

The call for applications for youth between the ages of 15 and 25 to submit proposals for projects that advance the fight against climate change, opened in April 2024 and successful projects will be awarded before the end of August 2024.

ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Business Simulation Training. The Ministry of Industrialization and Trade, in conjunction with the German Sparkassen Stiftung, has provided training to 94 entrepreneurs in the Erongo region. The majority of the trainees were young women. The training aimed to provide micro business simulations to the MSMEs to help entrepreneurs learn and manage their businesses successfully. The training focused mainly on financial management aspects such as business planning, forecasting, record keeping, budgeting, and financial statements to enable entrepreneurs to get the know-how of business financial management.

Processing and issuing of MSME certificates: The Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade has issued 693 MSME certificates to registered businesses in the Erongo region. These certificates enable businesses to participate in the public procurement process countrywide (tenders/bids, etc.)

Gemstone Cutting and Polishing Training: 23 Trainees were successfully trained in Gemstone cutting and polishing at our training centre in Karibib. This training is targeting the youth between ages of 18 and 35. The training aims to equip them with skills in the gemstone cutting and polishing industry. This is an annual undertaking of the Ministry and the new intake for 2024/2025 is already in session. Successful trainees are encouraged to start their own businesses but the majority of them are absorbed by diamond-cutting and polishing companies.

I can confidently report that we have started to see the results of this training, with many young women setting up small businesses across the region, to minimise dependency while reducing poverty.

AGRICULTURE

The Erongo region has been severely impacted by yet another drought with less than 100 mm of rain received. This has led to significant challenges for both communities and the environment. Water sources have diminished, placing immense strain on agriculture and livestock, which are vital to local livelihoods. The lack of rainfall has caused crop failures, reduced grazing lands, and threatened food security. Wildlife and natural ecosystems are also suffering, with many species struggling to survive in the harsh, arid conditions.

Efforts to mitigate the impact of drought include support from governmental institutions which has been aiding the affected communities. Despite these efforts, the region continues to face an urgent need for sustainable solutions to adapt and manage the persistent drought conditions.

Given the afore-mentioned, the Namibian Government undertook to support for small-scale farmers through these incentives, ensuring a more resilient agricultural sector. These incentives include, **Small Stock Development and Distribution in Communal Areas (SSDDCAs)**, this is a Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform-led program implemented amongst the rural farmers of Daures, Karibib (Otjimbingwe area) and Walvisbay Rural (Utuseb area) Constituencies, where 20 vulnerable farmers (7 **males and 13 females**) received 20 goats and sheep ewes as breeding flock, under the revolving scheme, that started in April 2023 and 20 rams during the current financial year over 3-year period.

The Ministry's technical staff monitors the beneficiaries, providing technical advice and ensuring that beneficiaries honour the project's contractual agreement. Generally, most beneficiaries are doing well despite the challenges of drought and predators.

The National Horticultural Support Program (NHSP), is another program that aims to address household food security and increased rural income among the farming communities. The National Horticultural Support Program offers farmers horticultural inputs, implements, irrigation materials and tools at subsidised prices. The program has made significant improvements in the livelihoods of rural communities as we observed the number of producers supplying the informal and formal markets in the region's major town centres.

During the period under review, a total of 75 farmers (30 females and 45 males) benefitted from seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, and irrigation material. A total of 401 farmers (204 male & 197 females) were trained in horticultural production throughout the region at various Agricultural Centres. An amount of N\$ 600,000

has been allocated of which all has been spent on the project. This program is decentralized and is administered jointly by the Erongo Regional Council and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform. An amount of amount of N\$700,000.00, has been allocated under the current financial year.

The Poultry Value Chain Development Scheme (PVCDS) is another program aimed to assist small scale poultry producers to join the main economic stream of businesses, address household food security and help to reduce poverty among the rural poor. The project offers various products to the beneficiaries, ranging from supporting the chicks, layers feeds, housing material and equipment.

The program has made significant improvement in the region with small scale poultry producers supplying various outlets with eggs and poultry products in the region. A total of 43 farmers (24 males & 19 females) benefited from the program during the period under review, while a total of 51 farmers (19 males & 32 females) underwent training in various poultry husbandry practices all over the region.

An amount of N\$630,000.00 was allocated during the previous budget. The total expenditure under this project was N\$ 368,000.00, the balance of N\$262,000.00 is still available and will be transferred over to the current financial year, where an amount of N\$ 200,000.00 for the new financial year has been budgeted, bringing the total available budget for the financial year to a total amount of N\$ 462,000.00.

Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture Program (CCAP), aims to assist small-scale crop producers to join the main economic stream of businesses and thus help to address household food security as well as addressing poverty among the rural poor. The main aim of the project is to minimise tillage, and applied mulching and crop rotation to improve the soil health and fertility. A Total of 149 farmers (82 males & 95 females) were trained in various climate-smart agricultural programs. An amount of N\$300,000.00 is available under the current financial year.

The Namibia Agricultural Mechanization and Seed Improvement Project (NAMSIP) is another initiative under the Directorate of Agriculture Production, Extension and Engineering Services (DAPEES), whose goal is to improve household food security and reduce poverty among rural communities.

During the year under review, the following number of equipment has been procured and is available in the region at various Agricultural Development Centres (ADC) for farmers' usage, 10 x Tractors with matching implements, 10 x Trailers, 10 x Mowers, 10x Grass cutters and 10 x Rakes. The walk behind tractors, Hammer mill and various equipment are also available at the ADCs on loan.

The 6th Cabinet decision 2024/25 on drought incentive scheme in Erongo region, entails the following;

- i) Under the Livestock Marketing Incentive undertaken from April 2024 to date, a total of 55 claims were received from 39 Males and 16 Females, representing an amount of N\$387,150.00.
- ii) Fodder and lick subsidy from April 2024 to date, a total of 37 claims received, representing an amount of N\$52,282.36.
- iii) Lease of Grazing and hired Transport from April 2024 to date, only 3 claims received for the lease of grazing and none for hired transport.
- iv) Delivery of subsidies fodder at ADCs from July 2024 to date. A Total of 4400x Cowpea beans, 2500 grass bales, 88 liquid molasses and 200 molasses will be delivered in the region. The consignments are expected to be delivered at various ADCs in due course.

Fisheries

According to the first quarter reports from the Namibian Statistics Agency, during the quarter under review, N\$4.1 billion worth of fish was exported compared to N\$3.2 billion that was recorded in the second quarter of 2022. Products were mainly destined for Spain, accounting for a share of 36.6 per cent (mainly frozen fillet of hake), followed by the Democratic Republic of Congo with a share of 15.4 percent in second place (mainly frozen mackerel) and Zambia with a share of 14.3 percent in the third position (mainly horse mackerel). Furthermore, the total of quota species during the first quarter of 2024 amounted to 97077 metric tons, a decline of 16.7 percent when compared to 116 471 metric tons recorded in the first quarter of 2023. Horse Mackerel recorded the highest landings of 49 592 metric tons, followed by Hake in second place recording 44 630 metric tons. In third place was Monk that recorded 2 119 metric tons. I'm happy to report that the sector employs about 15,500 people.

Mining (Uranium Mining):

The year 2023 brought the international nuclear sector the long and eagerly awaited positive changes, both, in terms of the uranium price development, and concerning an increased positive attitude towards nuclear power in many countries worldwide. For the Namibian uranium industry, this meant that they had eventually arrived at a situation where expansion of existing projects, re-opening of mines, and development of new projects became feasible.

Rossing Uranium, the mine has a nameplate capacity of 4,500 tons of uranium oxide per year and by the year 2023 had supplied a total of 148,537 tons of uranium oxide to the world. Additionally, the mine is done by drilling, blasting, loading, and hauling from the open pit before the uranium-bearing rock is processed to produce uranium oxide. The open pit currently measures 3,5km by 1,5km, and is 420 metres deep.

Production in 2023 amounted to 16,7 million tons, compared to 16,6 in 2022 while the total revenue earned amounted to N\$6,48 billion compared to N\$4,84 billion in 2023. It is imperative to note that the Rossing Uranium contributed approximately 4,5% to the world primary production during 2023, with Namibia now being the third largest primary procurer of uranium oxide globally, after Kazakhstan and Canada.

Supported by the Ministry of Mines and Energy, the licence of the mine has been extended for a further 15 years.

Swakop Uranium, which has the 3rd largest uranium resource in the World, achieved a breakthrough performance in 2023, through improved production planning and execution, plant debottlenecking, resolution of long pending technical challenges and mining and plant equipment reliability improvement. The mining output was 116 million tons, which represents a 13% increase over the historical record of 103 million tons in 2021.

In 2023, Husab also commenced with a N\$ 290 million pilot heap leach project to explore the economic feasibility of processing lower-grade ore, with final results expected by 2025.

Langer Heinrich Uranium (LHU) has returned to commercial production in 2024 and has achieved production drumming. The Mine's restart project represents an investment of more than N\$1.5 billion, of which 39% was spent in the Erongo Region. 32% was spent in other regions in the country, this brings the total national spend to 71%. Over 1000 jobs were created during the restart project,

during which over 2 million hours were worked without any serious injuries or reportable environmental incidents. LHU has also secured a strong uranium offtake portfolio and has a confirmed 17-year Mine life. To date, LHU boasts a workforce of 277 permanent employees, of which 98% are Namibians.

Trekkopje Mine remained under Care and Maintenance in 2023. The Orano Group is monitoring the markets to consider preparations for full-scale operations.

2. EXPLORATION

Exploration companies in the Namibian uranium sector had a successful year, 2023. **Bannerman Mining** conducted a Definitive Feasibility Study which confirmed the strong technical and economic viability of a conventional open pit mining and heap leach processing operation with a throughput of 8 million tons per annum at a capital cost of N\$5,7 billion. Environmental clearance for the proposed mine and associated linear infrastructure is in place and is based on extensive environmental and social impact assessments and management plans.

Ongoing work and the Definitive Feasibility Study for the **Tumas Project** resulted in the Ministry of Mines and Energy issuing Mining License (ML) 237 in 2023. The license is valid for 20 years, expiring in September 2043, and allowing the Reptile to progress towards production, establishing Tumas as the next uranium mine in Namibia.

I'm happy to report that **Elevate Uranium** project is progressing well, towards preparation for commercial product. I have also been informed that the Company plans to increase the number of operating drill rigs to five with rigs working at Koppies.

Zhonghe Resources (Namibia) with its parent company CNNC completed a 20,000 m drilling programme on both the neighbouring Rössing mining license area and Zhonghe's mining license area.

Meanwhile, **Forsys** holds a mining licence for its Valencia uranium deposit, and I'm glad to report that they have conducted their first blasting.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF THE URANIUM MINING SECTOR

The Namibian uranium industry is a catalyst for socio-economic development through the infrastructure it built, the jobs it creates, the supply chains it supports, and the investments in local communities. Some **6,520** people were employed by the industry in 2023. This figure must be seen with the background that every job in the exploration and mining industry on average creates 7 jobs in the supplier industry. With the development of the Etango - and Tumas projects, the figure is set to increase even further. Participants in the Namibian uranium sector spent a total amount of some **N\$ 14 billion** on procurement, of which **N\$ 7.7 billion**, or an average of 55% were spent locally.

Local utilities supplied electricity worth **N\$ 792 million** and water at a cost of **N\$ 625 million** to the industry, which adds to the local expenditure. Exploration expenditure, which ensures the future of the industry, amounted to **N\$ 318.6 million**. The sector contributed **N\$ 52.9 million** to Corporate Social Responsibility Projects in 2023, and this is a noteworthy figure, noting that most companies involved are currently investing in mine development and re-start, as well as exploration, which are all activities that do not make a profit.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: THE MINING SECTOR

Rössing Uranium

Honouring its corporate social responsibilities, Rössing Uranium supported the Rössing Foundation and other community initiatives with an investment of over N\$41 million in 2023 compared to N\$29.4 million during 2022. Of this amount, N\$38 million went to the Rössing Foundation, and about N\$3 million was in-kind and cash contributions to worthy community initiatives.

Some of the key CSI projects and initiatives supported during 2023 include the construction of Nampol Police station in Swakopmund, JP Brandt Primary School in Utuseb (Walvis Bay Rural Constituency) through infrastructure support, vegetable garden, environmental excursion, and protective behaviours programme; the provision of drought relief supplies to the Prime Minister's Office

Swakop Uranium

Swakop Uranium actively engaged in various philanthropic endeavours in 2023, demonstrating a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility. Total CSR expenditure was N\$ 6 million. Some notable contributions and donations include, Contribution to the National Emergency Disaster Fund to support flood victims, renovations of the schools in Swakopmund (valued at N\$800,000), as

well as the support for water distribution in the Daures and Karibib Constituencies. .

Langer Heinrich Uranium

Langer Heinrich Uranium (LHU), supported local and regional sporting events and environmental initiatives in 2023. The support was extended to the Cancer Association of Namibia. This came despite of the company not being in full production

Orano Mining Namibia

During 2023, Orano Mining Namibia supported various community initiatives: Education, Adult Skills Development, Environmental Education, Community partnerships, Road Safety Awareness.

Bannerman Resources

Bannerman in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture identified learners in the Kunene Region (Opuwo) who were provided with school clothing; shoes; and school bags. Bannerman also provided support to various tourism and environmental organisations: The Hospitality Association of Namibia, Namibia Chamber of Environment, Namibian Environment & Wildlife Society, TOSCO's (Tourism Supporting Conservation). Bannerman entered into a three-year agreement with the Mondesa Youth Opportunities, whereby Bannerman will support the organisation to the value of N\$ 1.8 million. Bannerman supported and participated in an elephant-human conflict training initiative in the Kunene Region where 25 conservancy rangers and other conservancy personnel were trained by a specialist from EHRA (Elephant Human Relations Aid). Bannerman also supported their workforce to undertake various upgrading courses.

Reptile Mineral Resources and Exploration

Reptile Mineral Resources and Exploration has a community focus on fostering high-quality education; empowering communities through sport; and promoting a sustainable environment.

Elevate Uranium

Elevate Uranium sponsored Vultures Namibia. Lappet Faced Vultures are an endangered species and Vultures Namibia perform essential work in helping to further understand, track and protect these unique creatures. Elevate's sponsorship contributes to one of the most valuable parts of the protection program, which is satellite tracking.

CHALLENGES IN THE URANIUM SECTOR

Uranium prices have seen positive developments throughout 2023. However, water provision in the Erongo Region remains a great challenge for the industry in Namibia, as the supply is limited and characterised by interruptions. Another serious challenge concerns road safety and road infrastructure.

The condition of the B2 is in no way commensurate with the rapidly developing harbour in Walvis Bay. While road infrastructure projects are well supported in other parts of the country, the B2 with its narrow single lanes remains in a condition that is not appropriate with the traffic this road carries, especially for heavy duty trucks. As the industry operates to a large extent in protected areas, the expiry of the Policy on Exploration and Mining in Protected Areas at the end of 2023 poses another challenge. It is understood that the Policy is currently under revision, and that restrictive new zonation's might have a negative impact on exploration in the future. Taking into account the long-standing support of the industry to conservation measures, it is hoped that sufficient participation of the stakeholders in the revision process will be allowed so that a mutually beneficial outcome can be achieved.

GOLD MINING

NAVACHAB GOLD MINE

In 2023, Navachab Gold Mine, recorded its best production year since its inception in 1989. The mine yielded a record production of 106,741 ounces of gold. This was after a concerted expansion drive which saw the mine expand its mining and processing capacities. The mine continues to ramp up and is targeting 140,000 ounces in 2024 and 150,000 ounces in 2025.

Mining operations: Mining tonnes increased to a total of 24.2 million tonnes for 2023, compared to 1.7 million tonnes in 2019 when the mine converted to owner mining. The purchase of a new mining fleet to the value of over N\$ 650 million and the recruitment of 50 new employees with the requisite best-in-class training on the machines, enabled Navachab to achieve this magnificent feat. In addition, the mine recruited 22 artisans to maintain the fleet in-house and 40 drilling assistants to operate and manage owner drilling.

To expand processing operations, Navachab Gold Mine invested in innovative processing technology, a first in the world in gold processing, the mine invested in high-pressure grinding rolls (HPGR) technology and Swiss Tower Mill (STM) to grind and mill gold-bearing ore for gold extraction. This technology runs at a much lower cost than conventional milling technology and requires less power and water. Ore Processing projects were executed at a cost of nearly N\$1 billion.

With a staff complement of 647 staff and 402 contractors, Navachab Gold Mine has embarked on a cultural transformation initiative which aims to achieve a common “Navachab culture” of operational excellence.

The initiative aptly named One Navachab seeks to re-align individual employee goals with the mine's strategic vision.

Corporate Social Investment (CSI) programmes, Navachab Gold Mine has embarked on a number of projects that ensures broad-based community development. These included the Golden Egg Initiative which identified ambitious and driven potential entrepreneurs from the Karibib, Otjimbingwe and Usakos communities, to participate in a training and mentorship programme, the construction of classrooms at the government-owned Karibib Junior School, construction of a mortuary at Otjimbingwe and the planned construction of a medical centre in Karibib.

I also want to report that the Navachab Gold mine donated funds for the construction of a mortuary unit with an onsite incinerator at the Directorate of Health. Construction has started with expected completion in December 2024.

During 2023, the mine spent over N\$1,7 billion on procuring goods and services from local suppliers. Navachab Gold Mine notes that the support towards local economic development is key to their business strategy as it serves as economic empowerment and business improvement to local business entities, which in turn provide the much-needed sustained employment of locals and contribute to the local economic development.

The Hope and Gorob Project

The Hope and Gorob Project is a copper – gold open pit and underground mine and processing facility to be constructed on-site at the Hope prospect, approximately 120 kilometres east of Walvis Bay. The main objective of the

proposed facility is to produce a high-grade copper and gold pre-concentrate that can bear the cost of transport to the Namib Lead and Zinc Mine (“NLZM”) flotation processing plant located 30km outside of Swakopmund for final concentration and the production of a copper – gold concentrate for export through Walvis Bay and subsequent sale.

The Project will create approximately 270 new jobs directly associated with the Hope and Gorob and Namib Lead and Zinc Mine (NLZM) operations. Mining, processing, rehabilitation, and exploration activities directed from the Hope & Gorob site will employ approximately 186 personnel.

Mineral processing to generate the final concentrate together with Group management and administration will employ a further estimated 87 staff at the Lead & Zinc facility located outside of Swakopmund.

Bezant Company

Bezant will also continue expanding its current exploration programme at Hope & Gorob and fully expects to increase the copper – gold resource and is aiming for a minimum 500,000 tonnes of contained copper and a life of mine exceeding 25 years.

Bezant will continue on-site training related to mining and processing operations principally to give employees opportunities for further advancement. In addition, the Company will launch a new initiative focused on the mineral exploration sub-sector in Namibia by establishing a training programme that will develop Exploration Team Leaders capabilities. The training course will cover sampling, basic mapping, GPS operation and camp construction and management. Bezant works closely with my office to ensure that appropriate socio-economic, health and educational programmes are implemented for the benefit of the community and that liaison activities with community leaders are established and maintained.

In terms of **SCHEDULING**, Bezant has scheduled 4 key phases of the Project to be completed by the end of August 2025 with the commissioning of both plants in September 2025.

ENERGY SECTOR:

With our abundant, world-class renewable energy resources and increasing demand for green hydrogen worldwide, Namibia is quickly emerging as an early entrant in this new market and has ambitions of becoming the leading

exporter of Green Hydrogen in Africa. It is against this background that the Government of Namibia is focusing efforts on achieving large-scale, low-cost Renewable Energy development and designing models for sustainably maximizing fiscal revenue and local development in Renewable Energy investments and green ammonia production. Namibia's world-class solar and wind resources give it a long-term competitive advantage in producing green hydrogen and green ammonia. - Our Government's commitment to green energy is evident in projects focused on green hydrogen, solar, and wind power generation. Over the last couple of months, we have achieved the following in terms of Green Hydrogen:

Daures Green Hydrogen Project

Phase 1 of the Daures Green Hydrogen Village involved the construction of the infrastructure. I am pleased to report that construction activities are progressing on schedule, with several key milestones achieved: **Pilot Phase Production:** Phase 1, which aims to produce 18 tons of hydrogen and 100 tons of green ammonia annually, with operations set to commence in September 2024. All civil works are completed, and all components have been erected, including a 0.88 MW solar array with battery energy storage. The facility includes a campsite and an Eco lodge to accommodate visiting dignitaries and interested stakeholders.

A 1-hectare greenhouse will be commissioned by the end of August and will begin horticultural production shortly thereafter. A training nursery for seedling production and research will start in mid-August this year.

Furthermore, a training and laboratory facility has been constructed on-site, featuring, smaller research turbines and lab-sized electrolyzers. These facilities will enable vocational training students and undergraduates to engage in hands-on learning and experimentation with the integration of wind, solar, battery, and electrolysis technologies within a Namibian context.

The project also includes a 10% community project shareholding portfolio held by the Daure Daman Traditional Authority and Tsiseb Conservancy. The project is 100% Namibian-owned and located in one of the poorest communities in Erongo region. To date, over 201 jobs have been created during the construction phase, with 80 individuals recruited from the local area. More than 23 SMEs have been appointed, with 7 from the Daures Constituency, and 77% of those employed are youth. The village can house and employ up to 48 full-time employees when in full operation.

Research and Workshops:

Research activities are being conducted in collaboration with the University of Namibia and the University of Stuttgart. A workshop was held in Windhoek in March with another scheduled for September 2024. Research topics include socio-economic factors and impacts, applications of hydrogen and its derivatives, system integrations, fertilizers, and anti-corrosion coatings.

I have been informed that efforts are underway to raise financing for the local production of ammonium sulfate fertilizer. Ongoing pre-FEED preparation studies are being conducted with international partners for a 5 Giga Watts hybrid facility. This facility aims to produce over 180,000 tons of hydrogen and 1 million ton of green ammonia per annum. The Daures Green Hydrogen Village represents a significant step in Namibia's renewable energy and sustainable development goals. As regional leadership, we are excited about the positive impact it will have on the regional and national economy.

Cleanergy:

Cleanergy Solutions Namibia is driving the growth of Namibia's hydrogen economy while contributing to the global shift towards clean energy. Cleanergy Solutions Namibia is at the forefront of sustainable energy solutions. At the heart of Cleanergy Solutions Namibia's ground-breaking venture lies a solar park spanning 10 hectares, accompanied by a hydrogen production facility equipped with a 5 Mega Watts electrolyser and 5 Mega Watts battery. This plant established the first hydrogen production facility of its kind in Africa, directly harnessing solar energy from the park to produce hydrogen, which is then made available at a public refuelling station. Additionally, their workshop is responsible for converting the initial fleet of trucks to dual fuel technology, utilising locally produced hydrogen. Central to their mission is the Hydrogen Academy, which plays a vital role in fostering local expertise in hydrogen technology. Through this initiative, they aim to train and educate future professionals in all aspects of hydrogen production and its application. The Cleanergy site includes a solar park, a hydrogen production plant and a Hydrogen Academy. The site in Walvis Bay will be the first production plant of its kind in Africa where hydrogen is produced directly from a solar park and dispensed at a public refuelling station.

TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS SECTOR:

In 2023, the Namibian Ports Authority delivered a positive financial performance, supported by increased imports and exports for the local, regional AND

international markets. They have remained focused on consolidating and solidifying these critical cargo streams to improve long-term sustainability. Total cargo handled increased by 17%, resulting in 7,691,781 tonnes compared to 2022: which was 6,576,370 tonnes. This growth can be attributed to several factors, such as the increased market demand, the allocation of additional fishing quotas and the expansion of mining activities in the region. In addition, the decrease in freight rates has enhanced the viability and affordability of imports. The volume of general cargo handled during the year increased by 23% year-on-year, reaching 5,428,543 tonnes for the year ended 31 March 2023.

TOURISM SECTOR:

The tourism sector has recorded an increase of 76% in the first quarter of the year in terms of bed occupancy rate. This is an indication that Erongo region has outperformed all other regions in terms of tourist arrivals from both regional and international visitors. According to the Hospitality Association of Namibia report in the first quarter, a national occupancy rate of 55% was recorded during year 2023 compared to 33.8% in the year 2022. I am reliable informed that, despite the increase there has been a decrease in terms of tourist's arrivals from South Africa during the months of June and July. However, the region has experienced an increase in international and government conference market from 2023 to 2024. Locally, indicative reports from the industry reveals that the tourist arrivals have recorded 87.4 percent increase in tourism arrivals from 2022 to 2023. The country recorded 863 872 tourists' arrivals in 2023 from 461 027 in 2022. This figure indicated that the tourism sector in the country is recovering well after the devastating impact of Covid-19. The Namibia Tourism Board on the other hand have recorded an increase of 381 new tourism businesses during the period of 2022 to date of which tour operators and self-catering accommodation are the majority. Hence, we are optimistic that tourism in the region and across the country will continue to grow.

As you all know, the Erongo region in particular, the town of Walvis Bay has become the hub of Cruise Ship Tourism and has demonstrated significant growth over the years. It is pleasing to witness the increase in the arrivals of cruise liners between October 2023 and June 2024 compared to the past years. A total number of 29 Cruise liners excluding the LOGOS HOPE docked at the port of Walvis Bay from South Africa. About 36,085 tourists arrived through the port of Walvis Bay and Lüderitz.

Furthermore, the port of Walvis Bay is expected to receive an extra 65 cruise liners during the period, November 2024 to January 2027 that have pre-booked and more are still coming to Namibia which will serve as our comparative advantage to benefit the entire Erongo region. The good news is that the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security have introduced a visa – upon arrival on 18 APRIL 2024 at Walvis Bay Harbour, in order to improve the experience for tourists, particularly those arriving on cruise ships. It's worth to mention that, the region has benefited from the cruise ship as follows: A group of tourists have donated N\$5,000 into the pharmacy account for medication of the Orphanage house in Mondesa.

These tourists are planning to donate an extra amount of money into a food supply account with the purpose of feeding the Mondesa Orphanage house on a daily basis, tour operators, local taxi services, cultural groups from Kuisebmond Secondary School, Mariba, Swakopmund Acapella group and street vendors have as well benefited from the cruise ship arrivals.

AVIATION INDUSTRY

In terms of aviation industry our region is home to the second largest International Airport in the country which, located in Walvis Bay. Our airport has recorded 70% on average of the tourist arrivals to the region including the King of Belgium. The airport has also received the Cargo container with medical supplies and equipment. These have proven that the Walvis Bay International Airport has the capacity to accommodate bigger aircraft.

Despite all the achievements and positive trends recorded in the tourism sector, we have recorded various challenges which are as follows:

- Immigration Officers experience challenges whenever two or more cruise liners arriving and departing the same day, with a high volume of passengers.
- Lack of convention centres with large capacity to host bigger conferences in the region.
- Self-drive tourists are not complying with the road signage which leads to road accidents.
- Lastly, I would like to indicate that the Erongo Regional Tourism Forum in conjunction with key stakeholders is planning to conduct an educational tourism awareness targeting the car rental operators, tour facilitators, law enforcement and the tourism stakeholders at large in order to ensure the safety of our tourists in the region and the country at large.

I further would like to commend the tourism sector for their continued contributions and support to tourism growth as well as for the new quality tourism product developments in the Erongo Region. While challenges remain, the overall outlook for tourism in the Erongo region is optimistic and it is my hope and believe that through collaborative efforts and a commitment to sustainability, we can look forward to a thriving tourism sector that benefits both visitors and the local community within our region.

Social Protection:

During the reporting period, the number of children on the grant system stood at **12277** and a total amount of **N\$4,296,950.00** is paid on a monthly basis to the beneficiaries. While **15456** people are on Old Age grants and a total amount of **N\$21,638,400.00** is paid to the elderly on a monthly basis. Meanwhile, **3738** people are receiving the Disability grants at an amount of **N\$5,233,200.00** per month. This number is cumulative and varies from month to month as new registrations are added on the system as they are being approved. The Government of the Republic of Namibia through the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare also provide dignified burial to our elderly and people with Disabilities, who are beneficiaries of the old age and Disability grants. At a cost of N\$4,500, 366 funeral claims were processed for old age beneficiary amounting to N\$1,647,000.00. Equally, 50 Disability beneficiaries at the cost of N\$225,000.00 were assisted through the same scheme.

The Sub-Division of **Community Development Poverty Eradication** facilitates equitable socio-economic empowerment of women and men and promotes self-reliance, through the provision of income generation activities (IGAs) materials & equipment and skills training, capacity building of Early Childhood Development (ECD) Educators and provision of subsidies to Educators. Currently, the division pays 72 Educators a monthly allowance of N\$1,500.00 and a total amount of **N\$108,500.00**.

Challenges experienced during the period under review: Budgetary constraints to add more Vulnerable children to the grant system, Delays in approving applications on the grant system at the National level, Shortage of social workers in Daures, Omaruru and Arandis constituencies and the surge in cases of Gender Based Violence Incidents.

Directorate of Lands: Acquisition of land for resettlement purposes:

One (1) farmer from Erongo Region was resettled during the period under review. While 31 farms were acquired in Erongo Region since the inception of the resettlement programme comprising of 58 farming units.

559 Customary land Rights have been registered over the four (4) Traditional Authorities in the region. Customary Land Rights certificates were also issued to the Traditional Authorities for handing over to their communities. 4 Rights of Leasehold were registered during period under review. Daures Green Hydrogen Village in Dâure Daman communal area and Sorex Sun Energy (Pty) Ltd were granted Rights of Leasehold for energy production in !Oe-#Gan communal area, while Bosilo Investments cc was granted a Right of Leasehold to operate a service station in Omatjete. Equally, Ongeama was granted a Right of Leasehold for tourism in Zeraeua Traditional Authority.

Education:

During the period under review, the Directorate of Education, Art and Culture recorded a 5% increase in learner enrollment from 53 538 in 2023 to 56 313 in 2024, an increase of 2 775 learners. The number of teachers has increased from 1 996 in 2023 to 2 019 in 2024.

Educational Infrastructure: Last year during my State of the Region address, I reported that the Ministry of Education, arts and Culture contracted August 26 to construct additional classrooms and ablution blocks, I am therefore pleased to report that the Fifty-one classrooms and nine ablution blocks were constructed and completed

During my last address, I also informed this august house about the construction of the primary school in Swakopmund that commenced on the 10th of May 2022 and was due for completion on the 10th of May 2024. However, due to some delays the project is not yet completed.

Renovation and Construction of new hostel blocks at !Oe#gab PS in Tubusis

This project has not been completed yet, it is still ongoing with notable delays.

Regional Roads:

The road network in the Erongo region comprises about 3,516 km, of which 574 km is bitumen road, 1,742.9 km is gravel road, 1,038 km is earth track and 159 is salt road.

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ROAD PROJECTS (ERONGO REGION)

I am pleased to provide the status of road projects implemented by the Government, particularly the **Henties Bay-Uis-Kamanjab road, which is nearly reaching the settlement of Uis. We are very happy that this road, to be known as**

the “Western Corridor”, will connect the Erongo region to the rest of northern Namibia. The overall progress is standing at 70% to Uis.

Swakopmund-Walvis Bay Road, (Behind the Dune 7 and Coastal Road), commonly known as the Hifikepunye Pohamba Highway was commissioned in 2022, with the remaining 9 kilometres of this dual carriage freeway expected to be completed this year.

Under this project, I am pleased to report that this project benefited the region through the subcontracting of 40 local suppliers, 11 SME subcontractors and 332 labourers and operators employed by the project, of which 10% were female.

TR 7/1 Karibib – Usakos, Road Rehabilitation & Upgrading (36km).

The overall progress on site establishment is at 90% and works at 5%. The original construction period is 18 months and it is expected to be completed in May 2025. The contract amount is N\$ 343,6 Million.

REGIONAL ELECTRIFICATION INITIATIVES

During the period under review, Erongo RED has attained some milestones such as the Swakopmund and Sekelduin Bulk Power Upgrade, with a total amount of N\$193.75 million, this project is still in progress.

PHASE 4: Of 44kV Overhead Line from Rossing Mountain T-Off to NamWater Booster 3, costing a total amount of N\$4.53 million, the practical Completion was on 09 June 2023.

As I reported last year, I would like to inform you that the following projects were successfully executed during the period under review;

- Narraville Shack dwellers and the Swakopmund Shack dwellers, 100 houses were electrified.
- Karibib, at the Harambee Informal Settlement a total of 153 houses were electrified.
- Through joint funding between Erongo Red and Swakopmund Municipality a total number of 850 houses were electrified in DRC.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE:

Projects to improve water supply and distribution systems are ongoing. We aim to ensure that all communities have access to clean and safe drinking water, addressing one of the most fundamental needs. Given the aforementioned, my Office established a Water Crisis Committee, consisting of key stakeholders such as the Erongo Regional Council, Rural Water Supply and NAMWATER. I am pleased to report that during our short existence as a committee, we managed to achieve the following; through funding from the Erongo Regional Council, we are currently rehabilitating boreholes in the Daures Constituency and Karibib Constituencies respectively.

We also repaired pipelines and delivered water with tanker trucks to vulnerable communities and schools. The Tanker Trucks, distributed in total water volume of four million seven hundred and eighty-one litres for a period as of April 2023 to date, delivered across the region to the affected Communities, Schools and Clinics.

Boreholes were successfully drilled in constituencies such as Daures and Karibib.

Health Infrastructure:

The Ministry has successfully replaced the broken sewer pumps at Welwitchia old age home. This activity was carried out to the value of **N\$634,939.73** for the procurement, installation and commissioning of submersible sewer pumps.

Staff accommodation in Swakopmund as well as Walvis Bay districts were renovated and completed to the value of **N\$283,644.37**. Meanwhile, signage boards were designed and erected at the following clinics Henties Bay, Uis, Otjimbingwe, Tubusis and Spitzkoppe. This work was done to the value of **N\$ 73,956.50**.

Water tanks were designed and erected at Otjimbingwe as well as Henties Bay clinic to the value of **N\$ 490,885.50**. This exercise is almost complete, with 90% of the work done.

Approval was obtained to build a boundary wall at Narraville Clinic and to undertake minor renovations to the value of **N\$ 319,145.42**. The Coastal clinic pre-cast walls and Kuisebmond Health Centre walls were repaired to the value of **N\$147,961.00** and **N\$205,000** respectively. The Walvis Bay Hospital was identified as one of the Hospitals to receive a field hospital Intensive Care Unit (ICU) through the US Embassy. As a result, a slab was built to accommodate the construction of the slab to the value of **N\$ 448,869.61**. Similarly, the self-contained facility that is fully equipped with modern equipment such as patient

monitors and mobile ventilators with a value of about ten million Namibian dollars was set up.

The Walvis Bay Hospital floors were in need of tiling, as a result, the affected floors were repaired at the cost of **N\$665 503. 00**. Furthermore, the Walvis Bay State Hospital received a donation of medical equipment from a twinning agreement with Zhejiang Provincial Hospital in China. The essential medical equipment donated are ventilators, patient monitors, baby incubators and portable suctions to the value of one Million Namibia Dollars. The Ministry also received a donation from Debmarine Namibia for an endoscopy machine for Swakopmund District Hospital to the value of **N\$ 1.2 million**.

With the effort to strengthen maternal health care in the region, the regional office with support from Lepidico Exploration Mine built a prefabricated emergency delivery room at Otjimbingwe clinic to the value of **N\$507,000** including essential materials.

Priorities for 2024/2025

A new contractor was appointed to complete the 28-bed neonatal intensive Care unit in Swakopmund with a practical completion date of September 2025. Minor renovations are also envisaged for Walvis Bay hospital pharmacy, Expansion of Walvis Bay Dental Clinic as well as the renovation of a facility at Walvis Bay Hospital to be used as a five-bed dialysis unit.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Erongo Region was earmarked to sign twinning agreements with regions/provinces in South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, the process was delayed and will be realised during the first quarter of 2025.

CONCLUSION

Ladies and gentlemen, I have presented to you what we were able to achieve during the period under review. We have made great in-roads in service delivery, infrastructure, social and economic development, and good governance. I also acknowledge that there are shortcomings, however, these are lessons learnt – and what helped us to achieve immensely as a region of excellence.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the private sector and our media partners for their invaluable contributions to bring stability, ambience and

information dissemination on government programmes. Without your support, the residents would not know what and how the region is governed.

As I presented what would be my final state of the region address, I want to use this opportunity to appreciate each and every one of you for building the bricks and connecting the dots to our collaborative success story in our region. Your unwavering support and collaboration, have undoubtedly contributed to me being awarded as the best African Governor of the Year, in 2024. An achievement I owe to your support and contributions. Together, we are building a brighter future for all residents, honouring the legacy of our late President Dr Hage Geingob.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my dear wife, children and family for their support during my tenure as Governor of the region of excellence.

On a lighter note, I'm pleased with the voter registration turnout for the Presidential and National Assembly elections, where we recorded 94%. I sincerely thank you for having registered and I equally would like to encourage all registered residents to exercise their democratic rights to vote in the November elections.

God Bless the people of the Erongo Region, God Bless the Republic of Namibia

I thank you