



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

BUDGET SPEECH

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MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

VOTE 29

OF THE

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

31 March 2017

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee
Honourable Members of the National Assembly,

It is my distinct honor and privilege to present to this august House Vote 29 of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) for the 2017/18 financial year.

Let me take this opportunity, Hon. Chairperson and Hon. Members, to congratulate the Minister of Finance Comrade Calle Schlettwein and Hon. Tom Alweendo Minister of Economic Planning and Director General of NPC, for their dynamic teams of professionals at the Ministry of Finance for developing a comprehensive Budget for 2017/2018 Financial Year.

Before I present the budget request for the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, allow me to briefly give you a snapshot of the current situation in terms of the implementation of programmes within the industry under my jurisdiction as Minister of ICT.

Our ICT industry has grown in leaps and bounds during the past few years, and as a country we are rated in the ITU's **Measuring Information Society Report 2016** as one of the most dynamic countries in Africa.

Our Mobile Telecommunication (MTC) continues to upgrade its international link capacities on WACS and other sea cables to provide higher bandwidth capacities. The implementation of Long Term Evolution Advanced (LTE - A) was done in order to cover the population with faster data and internet services.

With regards to **TELECOM NAMIBIA**, the company has made progress during the past year in expanding its fibre network footprint despite the negative economic climate.

During this financial year, Telecom Namibia plans to implement a number of programmes including the replacement of obsolete technologies, critical maintenance projects, high speed broadband fibre to the customers, enhancement of its operating and business support tools and 3G/4G mobile roll-out of 60 more base stations. The expansion to the national fibre backbone network to Otjiwa (Talismanus) via Rietfontein and De Hoek from Buitepos will also be carried out during this financial year. Another backbone expansion project is to extend from Eenhana to Okongo while upgrading the TN mobile sites at Omundaungilo and Oshuuli in the Ohangwena region to 3G.

Our national postal service provider NamPost, continues to provide banking facilities to low income people and to the elderly who receive their pension pay-out at the Post Offices throughout the country. NamPost aims to provide banking facilities to the un-bankable and given its reach, NamPost makes banking services available even where commercial banks are not present.

Going forward, NamPost will continue to pursue the expansion of its financial service offering and other services through the post offices for customer convenience to become an even more beneficial presence in the communities, while at the same time serving as catalyst for financial access and inclusion. This approach supports the notion and thinking that “no one must be left out!”

During the period under review, The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRAN) issued broadcast licenses to **5 new Community Radios**. One such license was issued to Kunene Community Radio Station, which recently opened its waves to areas without any radio and also broadcasting in languages commonly spoken in the Kunene Region. Two (2) new licenses were also issued to commercial broadcasters bringing the number of all Radio stations in the country to approximately 40 .

With radio being the main source of news and information especially in remotest areas where other medium of communication may not reach, the increase in radio stations enhances access to information especially for communities in remote and rural areas of Namibia.

I therefore appeal to communities to support community radios and make use of them to air their views and share information on issues affecting them. I further call on commercial radio stations to contribute to social wellbeing of our people by increasing informative and educational programmes that are beneficial to the communities.

CRAN has also issued 4 **additional telecommunications services licenses** to the service providers, bringing the total number of active telecommunications service providers in Namibia to 16.

With regards to the Infrastructure Sharing Regulation, we will continue with the consolidation and sharing of network infrastructure such as network towers between the service providers in areas where we have a duplication while moving some of these resources to areas where we do not have in order to do more with less and avoid duplication of services. CRAN is also working around the clock to ensure that Namibia does not become a dumping ground for electronics entering our market that may be harmful to our people and our environment, hence all electronics entering the country will be certified.

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Members,

In our quest to ensure our people have access to information for them to make informed decisions, the Ministry drafted the Access to Information legislation, Social Media Use Policy, Communication Plan and reviewed the National Information Policy during the past financial year as per the Harambee Prosperity Plan's pillar of Effective Governance and Service Delivery.

All these pieces of legislation are aimed at encouraging the public to take part in decision making processes and to hold government accountable where and when they feel dissatisfied with the provision of Government services and also to tell Government where we are good.

I would therefore like to assure the public that these draft pieces of legislation will see the light of the day before the end of 2017/18 Financial Year. Our website has been revamped and is now up and running and the public can access information such as Government contact details, policy documents, Cabinet releases, press releases, speeches including the one I am presenting now, all three organs of the State, The Executive, The Legislative and The Judiciary. Hon. Chairperson, Hon. Members you can access this information at www.mict.gov.na

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,

Honourable Members of this august House,

The Budget Allocation to the Ministry amounts to **Four Hundred and Thirty Three Million, Six Hundred and Eighty One Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$ 433 681,000.00)** for the 2017/2018 Financial Year, which constitutes a reduction difference of 14% from the previous allocation of last year.

Allow me to briefly summarize how the allocation will be committed for the implementation to achieve the development goals of the ICT sector for the various programmes:

Programme One:

Information and Communication Technology Development

Nine Million, Eight Hundred and Sixty Thousand, Six Hundred and Eighty Two Namibia Dollars (N\$9 860 682) is earmarked for this programme to facilitate Institutional Policy and Information Technology Infrastructure development.

The Ministry will continue to oversee and facilitate ICT infrastructure development through the expansion and upgrading of modern, affordable and reliable ICT

Infrastructures and Services which are imperative for economic development and global competitiveness.

During the 2017/18 Financial Year, two biannual ICT stakeholder's consultative fora will be conducted to serve as the platform where government and the ICT Industry discuss key ICT related programs, projects and initiatives and review the developments in the ICT sector.

Moreover, the Internet Exchange Point (IXP) growth will be coordinated to ensure that more local Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are connected to the (IXP) while the operationalization of the Scan ICT programme website will be maintained to ensure that accurate ICT data is available to the users. The National Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) which will serve as the national focus point for coordinating cyber security incidents responding to cyber-attacks in the country will still be facilitated.

We, as Government, are committed to deliver high speed broadband to all corners of Namibia and enable seamless government service delivery to all the regions. In this regard, MICT in partnership with the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development will upgrade the Government network infrastructure to boost the internet speed. A framework for software development cost sharing will be established while the establishment of E-education, e-health, e-agriculture, e-transport, e-mining will be facilitated during this coming financial year. To pilot this year, the State of Region Address popularly known as SORA will be broadcast live.

In order to ensure that all Namibians in the identified areas will be covered by telecommunication and broadcasting services, the 100% Network Coverage project will be implemented in conjunction with relevant stakeholders during this financial year

The Ministry will continue to deliver on its mandate of creating an enabling ICT policy and regulatory framework for socio economic development, therefore the development and implementation of ICT policies and laws will be carried out and monitoring and

evaluation will be undertaken to accommodate emerging ICT trends during 2017/18 Financial year.

Moving on to the second Programme: PRINT MEDIA AFFAIRS

Under this programme, an amount of **Thirty Three Million, Four Hundred and Eighty Eight Thousand, Two Hundred and Thirty Three Namibia Dollars (N 33 488 233)** is allocated for the 2017/18 financial year.

In our efforts to ensure that all our citizens enjoy their rights to access information as enshrined in Article 21 of the Namibian Constitution, we will continue to work hard to provide adequate, timely, relevant, factual, truthful and regular information to our people countrywide. In this line, all O/M/A/s will be required to hold press briefings regularly to inform the public about government programmes and activities under their jurisdiction so as to create an understanding between government and the citizens.

As a Ministry responsible for the coordination of management and dissemination of Government information to the public, we will continue to empower the Government spokespersons i.e. the Public Relations Officer's (PRO's) or Information officers and Media Officers) from both central, regional and local authorities to ensure they are well equipped to effectively disseminate information to the public through the media. All forms of communication in this regard will be governed through the GRN Communication plan and the Social Media use policy. The latter two documents will be tabled in this August House for debate and final endorsement. I can also state that in the not too a distant future, all O/M/A/s websites will be required to be up and running and shall have regular updates done by the PRO's.

Moreover, the Ministry shall continue to sensitize the public on issues of national importance through well-crafted key messages via the general media including Government social media platforms. This is aimed at creating dialogue between Government and the public and encouraging the public to participate on socio-economic development of our country. We shall also continue to provide rapid responses through New Era Newspaper feedback page to public queries and concerns raised in the media.

The Ministry's Customer Service Charter is deployed to our regional offices countrywide, and in order for us to get feedback from the public about our services, we have deployed suggestion boxes to our regional offices for the public to make suggestions or lodge complaints. These suggestion boxes are collected on a monthly basis so that we attend to the public suggestions, queries and complaints if any, within the shortest possible time.

The Government publications such as the Namibia Review magazine and the Government Information Bulletin continues to pace-up the momentum for information dissemination to communities throughout the country. These publications have since become successful conduits of information flow between the government and citizens, particularly on issues of policy implementation and developmental projects that are taking place in our country, therefore we will ensure that these publications reach the grassroots communities up to the constituency level.

The Ministry will continue with the execution of national information campaigns such as the Nationhood and National Pride Campaign (NNP), HIV/AIDS, promotion of national events and other related activities aimed at ensuring the understanding of government policies and programmes by the public.

A total amount of **Forty Seven Million, One Hundred Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$47 100, 000) is allocated to New Era Publication Corporation (NEPC) and its subsidiary NAMZIM.**

New Era Publication Corporation (NEPC) will continue to deliver on its mandate of providing objective and factual information service by compiling and publishing newspapers, mainly New Era, New Era Weekend and Kundana, reporting on community-related issues, particularly such issues as may be of importance in the rural

areas of Namibia, national interest and government related matters which may concern our respective communities; distribute the newspaper nation-wide and practice sound business growth and development.

The funds are further required for the printing and distribution of the newspapers country wide, salaries and related expenditures. The servicing of the Corporation's historical debts is an element which is will also be catered for under these funds which is crucial in ensuring that we achieve compliance and eliminate exposure from our creditors, as well as for various unavoidable auxiliaries such as water and electricity bills, stationeries, minor maintenance and renovations.

New Era will continue to summarize the budget for our people up to constituency levels so that ordinary Namibians can understand how the national cake is shared, as well as to educate them about their national leaders.

I would therefore like to thank New Era for the feedback page published weekly on Tuesdays, and further thank all the Government Public Relations Officers for contributing to such page by providing feedback on public queries and concerns. Thank you for being good servants, keep it up!

For NAMZIM, the funds are required to implement its operational activities including continuing to provide news, feature articles, analysis and opinion pieces from an African perspective as well as to market the tourism and investment opportunities in the SADC region.

Printing is a costly exercise and as a means of reducing the operational costs whilst also growing the reach of the paper, The Southern Times will be made available as a subscription based E-paper that will mainly target the countries where it is not cost effective to have a physical print edition delivered. The E-paper is set to be launched during the course of this year. The publication also seeks to penetrate into Tanzania

and Malawi while at the same time increasing its regional foot print and continually enhancing its product offering.

During the 2017/2018 financial year NAMZIM will be hosting a series of business and investment conferences for the SADC market. These conferences will serve as a platform for sharing ideas, experience and mentorship for the regional entrepreneurs. NAMZIM's philosophy is strongly grounded on Pan African development and empowering young entrepreneurs is one way of bringing such dreams to reality.

Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Members,

Our third **PROGRAMME THREE: AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA AND COPYRIGHT SERVICES**, an amount of **Fifty Nine Million, Nine Hundred and Fifty One Thousand, Five Hundred and Thirty Nine Namibia Dollars (N\$59 951 539)** is committed for the implementation, production, sound management and dissemination of audiovisual information to the public. The Ministry will also continue to install Internet facilities at the MPCCs so that our rural communities benefit from this essential service.

Plans are underway to finalize a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of ICT and the National Youth Services for the placement of 52 National Youth Service (NYS) trainees to MPCCs countrywide. This is aimed to create reinforcement of the Centre's capacity and creating an atmosphere where the MPCCs serve the rural communities better, reliably and consistently.

The long awaited decentralization of Audiovisual and Print Functions to the Regional Councils have been accomplished. This function was officially handed over to all 14 regions last year in Otjiwarongo on the 9th December 2016, together with staff to directly work under Regional Council Jurisdictions, therefore funds are needed to cater for the successful implementation of the delegated Audiovisual and Print functions to the regions. The Ministry will continue to implement the barometer on all fourteen (14) regions to evaluate performances and achievements in line with their visions, strategic plans and Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP). When community members are able to

access this information from the regional leadership, it creates trust between Government and the public.

An amount of Six Million Namibia Dollars (N\$6 000 000) is earmarked for the Namibia Film Development Fund.

Namibia will reactivate the film projects that could not commence during 2016/2017 due to budget cuts. Two short films, two documentaries, and four low budget films will be produced. Plans are in the pipeline for a co-production with South Africa following an MoU signed between NFC and National Film and Video Fund, on behalf of the two Governments. This film projects will culminate in job creation and training opportunities to local crew and students. Namibia will continue to organize the hosting of the forum for the film financiers and theatre awards in order to ensure a developed and sustainable film industry.

Honourable Chairperson,

One Hundred and Seventy Nine Million, Five Hundred and Seventy Eight Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$179 578 000) is allocated to the Namibian Public Service Broadcaster, the NBC.

The national broadcaster, NBC has moved a step further in line with ensuring that our people have access to information, as it has increased the TV news bulletins which now broadcast live at 07h00, 10h00, 13h00 and 20h00, with a repeat at 22h00 and 00h00 respectively. This is complimented by TV news flashes around the clock.

NBC is also broadcasting live parliamentary proceedings when in session, as well as the relay of current affairs programs and other international news broadcast such as Russia Today, Cable News Network (CNN) and China Global Network News (CGCN).

In line with His Excellency President's inclusivity in the Namibian House where no one should feel left out, our NBC continues to offer Sign Language interpretation during the TV News bulletins and important national events.

Additional educational and very informative programs have also been introduced on the DTT channels to give more choices for the viewers. These includes the “The Diplomatic Corps” which focuses on Namibia’s diplomats all over the world; “Legends of Change” that deals with inspirational stories from ordinary Namibians who are doing extraordinary things in their respective communities; “African Stories” a joint production venture with Deutsche Well which focuses on inspirational stories from the African continent; “Live your Passion” which deals with young people who have excelled in the vocational fields; as well as “Know Namibia” which educate us about our country’s tourist attraction site for us to know our own Namibian house.

I therefore urge lodge owners to promote Namibia to tourists who are using their accommodation establishment by having NBC TV channels on their bouquets as this will give value to Namibia’s tourism industry.

It is also worth mentioning that the long awaited 100% network coverage is well on track, and am pleased to inform this August House that Schlip, a community outside Rehoboth served as a pilot with the installation of FM and Television services. NBC now provides FM Radio services in, English, Afrikaans, Otjiherero and Damara Nama to the community of Schlip. The Oshivambo and German service will be added once the broadcaster has acquired a 6 input combiner, as the current combiner can only take 4 services.

The TV Installation at Kalkrand is also completed and tested. However, there has been a delay in the provision of DTT Decoders due to lack of funds to procure more decoders. I therefore call upon the community of Schlip and Kalkrand as well as other communities without this service to bear with us while we are addressing the situation for better access to information by our people in such communities.

The NBC has been facing challenges of being able to cover stories in the regions due to inadequate resources. However, earlier this year the NBC embark on a

project whereby training was given to New Era, NAMPA and MICT staff members to empower them to be able to cover stories which can be used on the NBC Television news. This project is beginning to yield results in that we have seen stories coming from these regions.

A programme slot called Public Service Corner has also been created specifically with the aim to cater for information sharing from Government. This is a platform which we must all make use of.

The ten (10) Radio Services of the NBC are also contributing greatly to the dissemination of information to the Namibian people hence we as politicians must make use of these platforms.

I would further like to encourage our local artists to make use of our local TV and Radios as well as MICT's regional offices state of the art recording equipment for recording their songs with good quality, this will contribute to skills development and wealth creation in the country.

For this financial year, the national broadcaster plans amongst others, to increase content channels on the open channel of the DTT platform, also increase the length of the news from 30-45 to cover regional news. This will offer greater viewing choices to NBC audiences and will increase revenue through advertising.

Plans are at an advanced stage to bring these services to our diplomatic missions through the Over the Top (OTT) platforms. The signal will be available globally where our Diplomats are deployed, provided they have internet/broadband access.

Namibia Press Agency is allocated an amount of Twenty Two million, One Hundred and Twenty Five Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$22 125 000)

The Namibia Press Agency continues to play its role of providing news to public and private media houses and as a hub for international news in the country, thus, it remains

the main collector and distributor of information to newspapers, radio stations and television services both nationally and internationally. It also provides editorial wire processing, digital assets management and archiving systems.

As a public media, NAMPA will continue to gather and distribute news to both local and international media as well as on various media service platforms to ensure that all Namibians are kept informed about economic, political and social activities in the country. I urge all communities, commercial stations, print and electronic media to subscribe to Nampa for update news content.

Lastly is COORDINATION AND SUPPORT within the Ministry

Under this programme, an amount of **Fifty Six Million, One Hundred and Thirty Four Thousand, Three Hundred and Four Namibia Dollars (N\$56 134 304)** is allocated.

The funds will be utilized for operational and capital projects including the construction of the Ministry's Regional office in Rundu in the Kavango East region as well as retention funds for the offices in Erongo, Omusati, Eenhana, and Omaheke, which will be paid out to the contractors after one year of practical completion.

The Ministry will towards the end of the financial year 2017/2018 call for Tenders for the construction of the Kavango West (NKURENKURU Regional Office), Zambezi Regional Office (Katima Mulilo) and Hardap Regional Office (Mariental).

In conclusion, let me take this opportunity to thank the media both print and electronic, who are our partners in enhancing democracy and promoting socio-economic wellbeing of our people. I urge them to continue with the commitment and dedication to serve and inform the public factually and responsibly in order to promote peace and stability. However we should take cognizance of the fact that our rights to access to information comes with responsibility, hence I call upon the media and the citizens to exercise this right with utmost responsibility in order to protect our peace and stability that we are enjoying in this country whilst marching together in the spirit of Harambee on our road to prosperity.

I would further like to thank our stakeholders and partners more especially UNESCO and others who are assisting us in pursuing our mandate of ensuring that our people enjoy their constitutional rights of access to information.

Last but not least, let me also thank the staff of the Ministry of ICT for their dedication and hard work in providing services to the nation, the men and women in the Entertainment Industry such as Artist for keeping the Nation entertained. Equally I will be failing in my duty by not recognizing and thanking our Journalists for informing and educating the Nation. I urge them all to rededicate themselves to the course of service delivery in the spirit of Harambee.

Having said this, **Hon. Chairperson** and **Hon. Members**, I now have the distinct honor and pleasure to humbly submit Vote 29 in the amount of **Four Hundred and Thirty Three Million, Six Hundred and Eighty One Thousand** Namibia Dollars **(N\$433, 681, 000)** for your favorable consideration and endorsement.

I thank you; Matumero, Tangi unene; Okuhepa tjinene; Baie dankie; Kaise Ai-os; Vielen dank; Mpandu; Ke a leboga; Lu i tumenzi ahulu.