



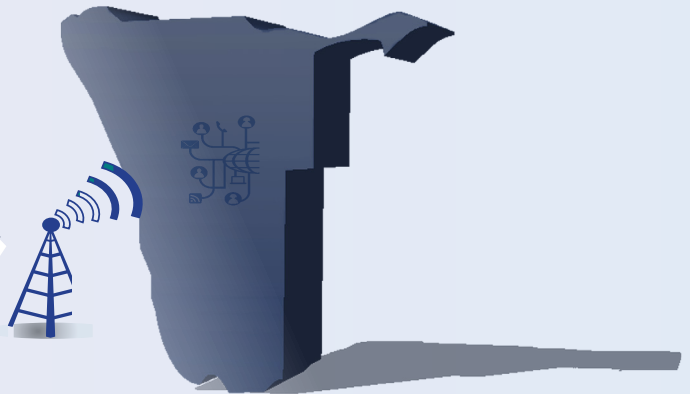
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

# BUDGET SPEECH

BY HONOURABLE STANLEY MUTUMBA SIMATAA, MP

MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

“LEVERAGING ICT”



**VOTE 29**

OF

THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION  
TECHNOLOGY



## Hon. Chairperson of the Whole House Committee Hon. Members

1. I am privileged to present Vote 29 for the very first time. In doing so, I would like to take this moment to thank H.E Dr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia for the trust and confidence shown in tasking me with such onerous responsibilities. In the same vein, let me thank the Hon. Ministers of Finance and Economic Planning and Director General of the National Planning Commission, their Deputies and of course members of their very able teams, for crafting a balanced budget under very challenging national and global economic conditions.

## Hon. Chairperson of the Whole House Committee Hon. Members

2. I have deliberately chosen to present Vote 29 under the theme **"LEVERAGING ICT"** to once again locate the pivotal role ICT plays in the social, economic and political advancement of our country. In his State of the Nation address, H.E President Geingob spoke about the need for Namibia to leverage the digital economy. For us to be able to do so, we need to leverage today's globally interconnected technologies to deliver services both in the public and private sectors. To achieve this, we must improve existing interconnectedness of people, institutions and of course the internet of things (IoT). It is for this reason that concerted efforts are being made to populate broadband throughout the country and improve existing networks while expanding the network to many underserved and unserved rural areas.

3. We must take advantage of the digital youth dividend and place the youth at the centre of digital economic activities. This implies that we should create economic and innovation ecosystems that will not frustrate but facilitate the youths to fully utilize their digital skills.

The youth job landscape has evolved and continues to change. New job opportunities should be explored not only in traditional sectors but in emerging sectors such as ICT.

**Hon. Chairperson of the Whole House Committee**  
**Hon. Members**

4. I am heartened to note that both the public and private sector have embraced ICT as an appropriate conduit to offer virtual and efficient services to their clients. Accounts given in this chamber by the President during the SONA on the ongoing migration to electronic services in the public sector, in particular the implementation of the E-passport by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration, heightened focus on smart towns and cities by the Ministry of Safety and Security and some Municipalities which bodes well with our desire to create a Smart Namibia - all point to the realisation that while initial costs associated with ICT solutions may be high, there are enormous efficiency and cost benefits to be derived from such investments.

5. Two weeks ago, I had the privilege to launch the mobile application that will allow viewers to have virtual access to an array of NBC programs such as news, current affairs, sport and entertainment. With this innovation, our diplomatic missions abroad as well as Namibians in the diaspora, will now be in synch with national developments. We have also seen the print media gravitating towards providing news online - a development that is not only beneficial to the readers but one which reduces the grossly inhibitive operational costs associated with the printing and distribution of papers. These positive digital developments should be nurtured and consolidated.

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**Hon. Members**

6. On the legislative front, efforts are being made to expedite the finalisation of pending priority legislation in the areas of electronic

and cyber security, access to information and of course data protection. The withdrawal of the electronic transactions and cyber security Bill from this chamber last year though having given us an opportunity to further consult with stakeholders, unfortunately prolonged our vulnerability to opportunistic cyber attacks.

Given the primacy of the security of our country, this gap will be closed as a matter of urgency. Having concluded the consultations on this Bill, and further given the realisation that further refinement of the Cybersecurity component is needed, it has been deemed appropriate to separate the two Bills. The separation will allow for the finalisation of the Electronic Transactions component whose realisation will provide the much needed legal framework to amongst other things:

- a) Cater for the prosecution of offences committed through electronic means.
- b) Trigger the introduction of the National Single Window.

7. Equally, the Access to Information Bill is being concluded and should also find its way to the Chamber before the end of the year. The passage of the bill will cement Namibia's position as one of the leading nations continentally and globally in terms of having a truly empowered citizenry. However, I hasten to point out that having access to information legislation should not be regarded as a panacea to existing bottlenecks in providing information to citizens. We need to create a culture where those of us who are custodians of public information, are keen to provide such information on time.

8. It is for this reason that government will soon identify statistical information that need to be published regularly. Notwithstanding that however, it is imperative for citizens to exercise restraint in seeking and divulging information. We should at all times resist the temptation to divulge personal and security related information.

As I have pointed out on several occasions, our rights and freedoms as individuals will be severely impaired when the security of our nation state is compromised!

We can only enjoy unfettered access to information when the security of our nation state is guaranteed. This is the delicate balance citizens are called upon to maintain at all times.

### **Hon Chairperson of the Whole House Committee Hon Members**

9. In our desire to consolidate Namibia's position as one of the countries with the freest press on this planet, we will continue to engage the Editor's Forum on a regular basis to benefit from their views and to also afford us the opportunity to sound our concerns where appropriate. Of late, we have seen a creeping tendency of prejudiced and inaccurate reporting on some issues.

10. While members of the Media should not be muzzled in carrying out their tasks, it is incumbent upon them as powerful entities to uphold ethics that govern their profession more so given the emergence of multiple credible and not so credible online sources. This is so because as Malcom X once said ***"Media is the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent. And that is the power because it controls the minds of the masses"***. Therefore, Media is called upon to exercise their powerful role responsibly!

### **Hon. Chairperson of the Whole House Committee Hon. Members**

11. For our country to forge ahead in unity, we must consistently shun all the vices that pose great danger to the unity of our state. For this reason, isolated agitation emerging from certain quarters for our country to revert back to the previous apartheid system of Bantustans, should be rejected.



The Nationhood and National Pride campaign – in particular the operationalisation of the 14 Regional Forums, will be heightened to provide platforms to consolidate key messages of building a caring, dignified and united Namibia!

By design, Namibia is and will continue to be a unitary state as provided for in Article 1(1) of our Constitution, and as such, shall not now, nor in future be partitioned into Bantustans.



### **Hon. Chairperson of the Whole House Committee Hon. Ministers**

12. Namibia has potential to become one of the preferred locations for the production of blockbuster films. This can be attested by several Hollywood A-listed actors who have graced our country over the years. In order to maximise on this unexploited potential, concerted efforts will be made to conclude the development of the long overdue incentives that will give our country the edge in this globally competitive market.

13. Let me now briefly present the programmes for which the different allocations are being sought:

### 13.1 Programme 1: Information Communications Development

An amount of **Eight Million, Thirty Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$8 030 000.00)** is allocated to cater for the creation of a conducive regulatory framework for a thriving ICT sector and for the advancement of an inclusive ICT Smart Namibia.



### 13.2 Programme 2: Print Media Affairs

An amount of **Twenty Million, Four Hundred and Eighty Five Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$20 485 000.00)** has been allocated to this Programme to amongst other things ensure access to information by the citizenry.



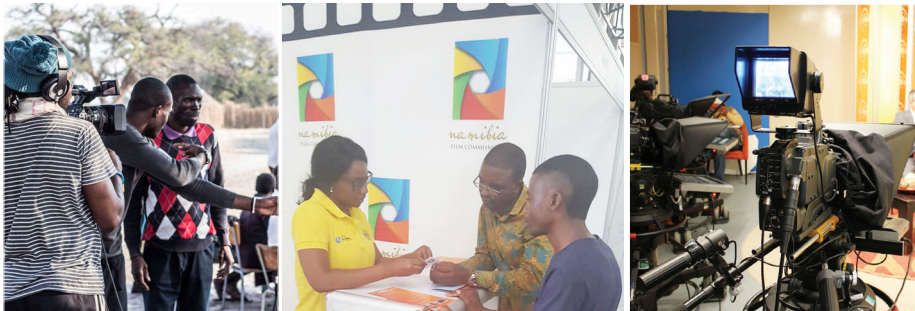


This programme also includes allocations to New Era to the amount of **Fifteen Million Namibia Dollars (15 000 000.00)** and Namzim to the amount of **Ten Million Namibia Dollars (N\$10 000 000.00)** to enable these entities to execute their mandates.



### 13.3 Programme 3: Audio Visual Media and Regional Offices

An amount of **Forty Eight Million, Seven Hundred and Twenty Eight Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$48 728 000.00)** has been allocated to provide for the implementation of ICT roll-out as well as the production, management and dissemination of audiovisual information to the public. This programme includes an allocation of **Three Million Namibia Dollars (N\$3 000 000.00)** only to the undervalued Namibia Film Development Fund to cater for the development of a vibrant film industry in our country. This paltry allocation can hardly sustain our desire to propel Namibia to the global bouquet of preferred film locations.



The programme also includes an allocation of **One Hundred and Forty Million Namibia Dollars (140 000 000.00)** to the NBC which I hasten to add, is grossly inadequate to meet its public broadcaster obligations. Given the huge reductions in allocations to the NBC over the past two financial years, key programs such as the migration from Analogue to DTT where Namibia was regarded as a leader in SADC, is at great risk of being stalled.



Inherent in this Programme is an allocation of **Fifteen Million Namibia Dollars (N\$15 000 000.00)** to the Namibia Press Agency to execute its mandate.



#### 13.4 Programme 4: Coordination and Support

An allocation of **Fifty Two Million, Nine Hundred and Eighty Seven Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$52 987 000 )** has been made to cater for the provision of logistics administrative support services, organizational procedures, the provision of logistic, transport services, development of relevant policies in accordance with legislative requirements and national objectives.

The programme also includes an allocation of **Thirty- Two Million, Six hundred and Sixty Seven Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$ 32 667,000. 00)** to cater for the ongoing construction of modern and ICT compliant Ministerial Regional Offices in Nkurenkuru, Kavango West and Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region respectively.

**Hon. Chairperson of the Whole House Committee  
Hon. Members**

14. In concluding, let me thank my colleagues, the Deputy Minister, the Permanent Secretary, Members of the Ministry's Management and the entire staff for their diligence in executing the Ministry's mandate.

15. It is now my distinct pleasure to submit for your consideration, subsequently support Vote 29 to the amount of **Three Hundred and Forty Five Million, Eight Hundred and Ninety Seven Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$345 897 000.00)** .

**Luitumezi  
Tangi unene  
Pandu  
Okuhepa  
Kaise Ai-os  
Thank you!**

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| Private Bag 13344 | Windhoek | Tel: (061) 2839111 | Fax: 224937