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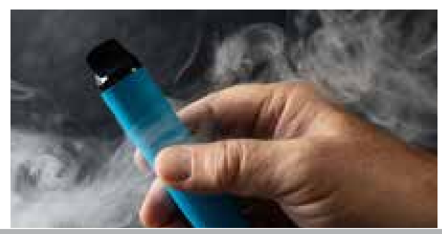

OBSERVERFEATURES

Another task force, another report? Namibia's SOE salary review faces an uphill battle

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Namdia's diamond heist set for courtroom showdown

PATIENCE MAKWELE
Staff Writer

The legal battle over Namibia's N$314 million diamond heist has entered a new phase, with Namib Desert Diamonds (Namdia) and security company G4S Secure Solutions Namibia locked in a dispute over access to evidence that could influence the outcome of the case.

The civil claim, in which Namdia is seeking damages from G4S over alleged negligence, has stalled after the two parties disagreed over the disclosure of documents and records that G4S says are necessary for its defence.

According to a joint status report filed on 27 July 2026, the matter was postponed for the court to determine the further conduct of the case after it emerged that Namdia had not disclosed certain evidence it intends to rely on.

Namdia is suing G4S for N$314 million, representing the value of 446 parcels of diamonds stolen during an armed robbery at the company's premises on 18 January 2025.

The diamond company alleges that G4S breached its contractual obligations by failing to provide adequate security services and by failing to prevent the theft despite having security personnel present at the premises at the time of the incident.

G4S is seeking access to several documents, including Namdia's security

At a glance...

- **Namdia, G4S locked in evidence battle over N$314 million diamond heist lawsuit**
- **G4S demands CCTV, security records and internal documents to challenge negligence claim**
- **Court to decide disclosure dispute as evidentiary fight delays N$314 million civil case**

TO PAGE 2

The legal battle between Namdia and G4S has reached an impasse as both parties clash over evidence in the N$314 million diamond heist lawsuit.

Kasi Vibe launch sparks debate over NNN's role at public events

ALLEXER NAMUNDJEBO
Staff Writer

The participation of President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah at the official opening of the MTC Kasi Vibe Festival has sparked debate over whether the Head of State should be involved in community and fundraising events, with some questioning whether such engagements align with the priorities and stature of the presidency.

NUDO member of parliament Vetahoruhe Kandorozu on Thursday said senior state officials, including the President, Prime Minister and Vice President, should avoid being drawn into officiating events that could instead be handled by ministers, deputy ministers or regional leaders.

"We must avoid inviting and turning our President, Prime Minister or Vice President into officiating these fundraising and unnecessary events," he said.

Kandorozu warned that the continued practice of inviting the country's highest office bearers to such occasions could diminish the significance of those positions.

"If that continues, we might end up inviting them to officiate our weddings," he said.

He argued that the presidency represents the authority of the state and should be reserved for engagements of national importance.

"A President to be invited to events such as Kasi Vibe demoralises and undermines the authority of the state. She is a state's President and activities such as this, as much as they have their own significance, are very impor-

At a glance...

- **President's Kasi Vibe appearance sparks debate over the role and priorities of the Presidency**
- **Critics urge focus on national issues, while others defend engagement with youth and entrepreneurship**
- **Kasi Vibe grows into a major platform for SMEs, creative industries and youth empowerment**

TO PAGE 3

Diamond of the Month: July 2026 celebrating Namibian excellence

Diamond Training Institute proudly recognises Ndayola Ulenga as the Diamond of the Month for July 2026, celebrating her creativity, artistic leadership and growing contribution to the development of Namibia's performing arts.

Ulenga is an actress, singer, playwright, performance artist and theatre-maker whose work explores identity, memory and lived experience. Her journey into the arts began at an early age through music, ballet and school drama. She later studied drama as part of a Bachelor of Social Science degree at the University of Cape Town before completing a postgraduate qualification in management and marketing. After working in marketing and advertising, she eventually committed herself fully to building a career in the arts.

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NATIONAL

Hashiyana denies inviting media to briefing that led to his suspension

SOSTENUS WILHERM
Staff Writer

The suspension of Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) Eenhana Satellite Campus SRC vice president, Rebbeus Hashiyana has escalated into a dispute over student leadership, due process and the circumstances surrounding a media briefing at the campus.

Hashiyana denied that he invited media houses and accused the SRC of suspending him before hearing his side of the story.

Hashiyana, who is responsible for representing students at the NUST centres in the northern regions, told the Windhoek Observer that his suspension stems from what he described as a misunderstanding over the presence of media at the Eenhana campus press conference.

He insists he neither invited media houses nor authorised the invitation circulating on social media, which he says has been used to link him to the briefing.

"Of course, I am suspended because of the misunderstanding which is saying that I invited media houses to come for the press conference, and I did not invite any media house. Let me make it categorically clear, I did not invite any media house," Hashiyana said.

He disputed the authenticity of the invitation that circulated online, saying it did not originate from his office and did not carry his signature or official stamp.

Hashiyana said media personnel were present on campus on 22 July but maintained that their presence did not establish that he had invited them.

According to him, the individuals were NUST students studying Communication and Linguistics who were gathering content as part of their academic work. He argued that they were entitled to be on campus and perform their duties as student journalists.

"There is a statement that was circulating on social media which is an invitation to the media, but that invitation is not published by my office, neither is there my signature or stamp that shows that it is me," he said.

Hashiyana's version directly challenges the position of NUST SRC president Jerome !Nanuseb, who said the disciplinary action followed a media briefing conducted without the knowledge of the SRC president, the executive committee or the broader Eenhana Satellite Campus SRC.

The Eenhana Satellite Campus SRC Vice President Rebbeus Hashiyana *-Photo: Contributed*

In a statement issued on Monday, !Nanuseb stressed that the disciplinary process was not a finding that the concerns raised by Eenhana students were illegitimate, but rather an inquiry into whether Hashiyana complied with the constitutional responsibilities attached to his position.

"The current disciplinary process is therefore not a determination on the legitimacy of the concerns raised. Rather, it concerns whether the constitutional responsibilities attached to office bearers within the SRC were duly observed," !Nanuseb said.

He said the SRC is a collective institution and that public communication and media engagements on matters affecting the university and its students are expected to be coordinated through established governance structures.

According to !Nanuseb, such procedures are intended to ensure accountability, collective decision-making and coherent representation.

The SRC president further said the Eenhana Satellite Campus SRC unanimously resolved to suspend Hashiyana under Article 3.5(1) of the SRC Constitution, which provides for suspension through a motion of censure where there are allegations of constitutional infringements or conduct that may render a member unfit to continue exercising the responsibilities of office, pending applicable institutional processes.

Hashiyana, however, questions whether he was afforded a fair opportunity to respond before the suspension was imposed.

He said he received two suspension decisions, including one that prevented him from travelling to Windhoek and subsequently to South Africa for an SRC tour where he was expected to represent the university.

He said the reason given for excluding him was to allow an investigation to proceed while he remained in Namibia.

"They suspend me for further investigation because they believe that they cannot investigate me while I am abroad," Hashiyana said, adding that he believes the decision should have followed an opportunity for him to explain his side.

Despite his objections, Hashiyana said he is prepared to cooperate with the investigation and wants the process to be conducted fairly.

He said he was interviewed earlier this week and would submit his written statement, with the outcome of the investigation expected next week.

"I am willing and I will cooperate with the investigation. I want justice, I want everything to be impartial," he said.

At the centre of the dispute are wider concerns raised by students at the Eenhana campus. Hashiyana maintains that his decision to advocate publicly was driven by problems affecting students and not by a desire to undermine the SRC leadership.

He said the university has itself acknowledged that the concerns raised require attention, arguing that this validates the substance of the issues he has been highlighting.

"The good part is that the University also revealed that the concerns that we raised are indeed concerns with what is happening on the ground and they require more and immediate attention," Hashiyana said.

The SRC, however, has maintained that the concerns raised by Eenhana students remain a priority. !Nanuseb said the matters "are deserving of urgent attention" and assured students that they would continue to be pursued through institutional channels.

He also announced plans to visit the Eenhana Satellite Campus to engage directly with students and the campus SRC, assess progress and ensure that legitimate concerns are followed through to resolution.

"If you were elected by people, meaning that there is a potential that people see in you, you should accept all the situations that are going to happen," he said.

Despite the suspension, Hashiyana said he remains confident because his mandate came from students.

"I remain confident and I remain solid. I was elected and I did not appoint myself in the office. I will not disappoint my people until they reveal the truth if they are honest with what they are doing," he said.

Namdia's diamond heist set for courtroom showdown

FROM PAGE 1

plan and standard operating procedures applicable on the day of the robbery, disciplinary records relating to the incident, CCTV footage, audio recordings and alarm activation records.

The security company is also requesting diamond acquisition, identification and valuation records relating to the stolen diamonds.

Namdia has indicated that it is in possession of some of the requested information but has withheld certain documents due to confidentiality concerns.

The diamond company has also stated that it does not have the CCTV footage requested by G4S, explaining that the electricity supply to the premises had been disconnected before the robbery occurred.

Legal advisor George Matengu Lifasi said evidence disclosure is a fundamental part of ensuring fairness in civil litigation because both parties must have an opportunity to test the claims and defences presented before court.

"In a civil claim of this nature, the party bringing the case carries the responsibility of proving its allegations. Evidence disclosure is therefore a critical part of ensuring fairness because the opposing party must have an opportunity to test the claims being made against it," Lifasi said.

He said where a party intends to rely on certain documents, records or other material evidence, withholding such information could become a procedural concern because both sides require access to relevant information to properly prepare their cases.

"The court will ultimately have to balance issues of confidentiality against the principle of transparency in litigation. Confidentiality alone does not automatically mean evidence cannot be disclosed, the court may consider whether protective measures can be put in place while still allowing a fair trial," he said.

Lifasi added that the outcome of the disclosure dispute could shape the direction of the case, as the strength of Namdia's claim and G4S's defence would depend heavily on the evidence placed before court.

The dispute follows the January 2025 robbery at Namdia's premises, which resulted in the theft of diamonds valued at about N$314 million.

The incident also resulted in the deaths of Namdia senior protection officer Francois Eiseb, who allegedly responded to the scene while off duty and Max Endjala, who was reportedly linked to the robbery and died after police confronted suspects.

Nine suspects have since been arrested in connection with the criminal investigation, including former Namdia protection officers Joel Angula and Charles Rhoman, G4S security guard Samuel Shipanga and other individuals allegedly linked to the stolen diamonds.

Two additional suspects, Andreas Akwaake and Immanuel Ipinge, were arrested at the Noordoewer border post after allegedly being found in possession of suspected proceeds of crime amounting to more than N$700 000.

Namdia and G4S had not responded to requests for comment by the time of publication.

The matter now returns to court with the disclosure dispute set to determine the next stage of the N$314 million civil claim.

G4S is in a legal battle with Namdia.

IPC calls for transparency in Namibia's offshore petroleum deals

EUGENIA MOCHE
Staff Writer

The Independent Patriots for Change (IPC) has called on the government and state-owned Namcor to provide full transparency on Namibia's offshore petroleum developments, following Galp's announcement of its transaction with TotalEnergies.

On 27 July, Galp confirmed that its deal with TotalEnergies had received all necessary governmental and regulatory approvals.

The Namibian Competition Commission had already approved the transaction without conditions on 28 April. However, Galp noted that remaining joint-venture documentation still needed to be completed.

Once concluded, TotalEnergies will hold a 40% operating interest in Petroleum Exploration Licence (PEL) 83, which contains the Mopane discovery.

Galp will retain 40%, while also acquiring a 10% stake in PEL 56, home to the Venus discovery, and a 9.39% interest in PEL 91.

Rodney Cloete

According to the announced structure, Namcor's interests remain unchanged at 10% in PEL 56 and 15% in PEL 91.

Nonetheless, the IPC emphasised that Namcor's financial obligations, development exposure, and revenue expectations must be clarified.

> Namibia should welcome responsible investors while safeguarding transparency, accountability and a fair national return.

According to a statement released on Tuesday, IPC Shadow Minister of International Relations and Trade, Rodney Cloete, said that TotalEnergies had stated before that government and project partners were targeting a final investment decision (FID) on Venus by the end of July.

Yet, no public announcement had been made, with the company cautioning that more time might be required to conclude discussions.

Cloete highlighted constitutional and statutory provisions that vest Namibia's natural resources in the State.

He said Article 100 of the Constitution affirms that resources in the continental shelf, territorial waters, and exclusive economic zone belong to the State unless otherwise lawfully owned.

Similarly, the Petroleum Act vests petroleum rights in the State, requiring that they be administered transparently and in the national interest.

Cloete further called on the Minister of Mines, Industries and Energy to provide Parliament and the public with a clear account of several key issues, including the date, legal basis, and conditions of ministerial approval for the transaction; confirmation that the public petroleum register will be updated; the final post-completion interests of all licence holders; and the consequences for Namcor's equity, financing obligations, risk exposure, and expected revenue.

The party also pressed for details on statutory licence conditions and enforceable commitments regarding Namibian employment, training, procurement, enterprise participation, skills development, and technology transfer.

The party further requested the status of the environmental assessment and clearance process, safeguards to be imposed, decommissioning and funding arrangements, and applicable insurance or performance guarantees.

While acknowledging that geological and commercially sensitive information may require lawful protection, Cloete warned against using confidentiality to withhold information that is public by law or could responsibly be disclosed in redacted or aggregated form.

"Commercial confidentiality should not, however, be used to withhold information that is public by law," Cloete said.

The party stressed that a final investment decision itself would not automatically guarantee broad prosperity.

"Namibia should welcome responsible investors while safeguarding transparency, accountability and a fair national return," he said.

Cloete highlighted that the IPC would pursue these matters through Parliament, requesting approval conditions, public-benefit commitments, and implementation safeguards.

Kasi Vibe launch sparks debate over NNN's role at public events

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tant to be presided over by ministers, or deputy ministers and governors," he said.

He added that the President should not be expected to take over responsibilities that can be performed by subordinate government officials.

However, he acknowledged the importance of the festival and its contribution to society.

"We just need to understand the value of the President. She just returned from China now and she needs to brief us on what was discovered there. These are the things we need to hear from the President and not these things of officiating events," he said.

Popular Democratic Movement leader McHenry Venaani said the President's main focus should be on addressing national challenges, particularly youth unemployment, which he described as having reached crisis levels.

"That must be her main preoccupation in my view," Venaani told the *Windhoek Observer* on Thursday.

He added that if Nandi-Ndaitwah wanted to maintain a close connection with citizens, attending such events could be justified.

"If she wants to be approachable and cool, she can open such events, no problem in my view," he said.

Political analyst Sackaria Johannes offered a different perspective, saying there was nothing inherently inappropriate about the President officiating the MTC Kasi Vibe Festival, particularly given the event's focus on youth development, culture and the creative economy.

"From a political perspective, there is nothing inherently inappropriate about President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah officiating the MTC Kasi Vibe Festival, particularly if the event was intended to promote youth development, culture, and the creative economy," Johannes said.

However, he noted that the presidency carries significant symbolic weight, meaning every public appearance is viewed through the lens of national priorities and public perception.

"While supporters may view her attendance as a demonstration of accessibility and support for young people, critics may argue that the office should be more closely associated with addressing pressing national challenges," he said.

Johannes added that the debate is ultimately not about whether the President has the authority to attend such events, but whether the engagement reflects public expectations of presidential leadership and priorities.

The debate comes as the MTC Kasi Vibe Festival continues to grow into one of Namibia's largest community-driven events, combining youth entrepreneurship, local culture and live entertainment.

The festival provides a platform for emerging entrepreneurs, creative talent, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), fashion brands and local food vendors to showcase their work.

At the official opening, Nandi-Ndaitwah said that she appreciated the MTC KasiVibe Festival for the invitation extended to her to be part of "the well thought initiative".

"I commend the founders of MTC KasiVibe Festival, Willibard and Salmi Shigwedha, the young Namibian couple, who created a platform that empowers young" she said.

She added that she applauded the organizers for providing opportunities to young Namibians to showcase their entrepreneurial ventures, creative talents, products and services.

"My great admiration goes to the partners, and sponsors of this annual event that brings together entrepreneurs, artists, innovators, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and families from across the country" she said.

She said it is highly gratifying to her as the Head of State to see how Namibians are embracing the NDP6 and becoming part of its implementation team.

The participation of President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah at the official opening of the MTC Kasi Vibe Festival has sparked debate over whether the Head of State should be involved in community and fundraising events. *-Photo: Contributed*

"It is my strong position that if all of us including the youth who are the majority of our population believe in our developmental agenda as set out by our government, together we will be successful. Thereby bringing about a balanced prosperity to all of us" she added.

Nandi-Ndaitwah said the progress of the festival is a testament to the determination of the youth and the innovative spirit that runs through our society.

"The festival's success is a source of pride for Namibia, demonstrating the power of collective effort and the positive impact of investing in our creative and entrepreneurial sectors" she said.

The 2026 edition follows MTC's announcement as the festival's headline naming-rights partner through a N$3 million three-year sponsorship agreement aimed at supporting youth empowerment, entrepreneurship and cultural development.

Held at the Brakwater Recreational Centre (Paaltjies), approximately 15 kilometres north of Windhoek, the festival runs from 31 July to 2 August under the theme "Celebrating Our Diversity".

Nandi-Ndaitwah officially launched the event on Thursday, 30 July, ahead of a weekend programme featuring entertainment, business networking and cultural activities.

The festival has introduced a phased ticketing system, with tickets available at different price points depending on the purchase period.

Organisers have also implemented a fully cashless system, requiring attendees to use the MTC Maris mobile wallet for purchases at the venue.

Free shuttle services have been arranged from various locations in Windhoek to improve accessibility for festivalgoers throughout the event.

The arbitration award, handed down by arbitrator Marlee Calph on Thursday, found that Beifang Mining acted both procedurally and substantively unfairly when it terminated the recognition agreement less than a month after signing it in March 2024. -*Photo: Contributed*

Labour commissioner orders Beifang to recognise Revolutionary Union

ALLEXER NAMUNDJEBO
Staff Writer

The office of the labour commissioner has ruled in favour of the Revolutionary Union (RU) in its long-running labour dispute with Beifang Mining Technology Services Namibia (Pty) Ltd, declaring the company's decision to revoke the union's recognition agreement unlawful and ordering the employer to restore the union's bargaining rights.

The arbitration award, handed down by arbitrator Marlee Calph on Thursday, found that Beifang Mining acted both procedurally and substantively unfairly when it terminated the recognition agreement less than a month after signing it in March 2024.

The dispute dates back to January 2024 when the Revolutionary Union sought recognition as the exclusive bargaining agent for employees at the mining company.

Although the company formally recognised the union and entered into a recognition agreement on 20 March 2024, it revoked the agreement on 11 April 2024, alleging that the union had overstated its membership and no longer represented a majority of employees.

The union challenged the decision before the labour commissioner's office, arguing that the company had ignored both the recognition agreement and the Labour Act by cancelling the agreement without following the prescribed legal process.

After hearing evidence from both parties, the arbitrator rejected the employer's arguments that the agreement was invalid from the outset.

"The respondent failed to prove that the applicant misrepresented its membership numbers in a manner that would render the agreement a nullity," Calph wrote in the award.

The ruling noted that evidence presented during arbitration suggested the union had maintained majority support among employees and that discrepancies identified in membership records were insufficient to justify the employer's decision.

More significantly, the arbitrator found that Beifang Mining failed to comply with the termination provisions contained in both the recognition agreement and Section 64(11) of the Labour Act.

"The respondent did not give 90 days' notice. It sent a letter on 11 April 2024, purporting to revoke the agreement with immediate effect," the award states.

Calph further held that employers cannot unilaterally withdraw recognition from a trade union without complying with mandatory statutory procedures.

"The respondent could not simply take the law into its own hands and self-help by unilaterally cancelling the agreement," the arbitrator said.

The award also emphasised that the Labour Act requires employers to give a recognised union three months to regain majority representation before recognition can be withdrawn.

"The language 'must' is peremptory," Calph wrote, adding that the statutory notice period "is a fundamental protection against the arbitrary withdrawal of recognition by an employer."

In the final ruling, the labour commissioner declared the cancellation of the recognition agreement "null and void and of no force and effect" and ordered that the agreement concluded on 20 March 2024 be reinstated.

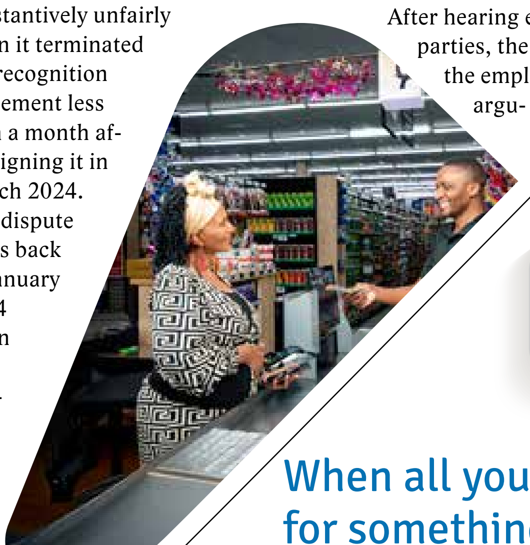
The arbitrator also declared that the Revolutionary Union continues to represent the majority of employees in Beifang Mining's bargaining unit and directed the company to resume deducting union membership subscriptions from employees who belong to the union.

In addition, Beifang Mining was ordered to cease "any and all forms of interference, intimidation, or victimisation" of employees because of their union membership and to comply fully with the terms of the recognition agreement.

Calph also ruled that "the proper remedy is to reinstate that recognition and to treat the agreement as if it had never been terminated."

The arbitration award is final and binding on both parties.

However, under Section 89 of the Labour Act, either party may appeal or apply for a review before the Labour Court.



Learners intrigued by mining equipment. - *Photo: Contributed*

Namdeb breaks career access barriers for //Kharas learners

SOSTENUS WILHERM
Staff Writer

Learners in the //Kharas Region have been given a rare opportunity to explore career possibilities without leaving their communities after Namdeb hosted its first-ever Career Fair in Oranjemund, addressing a long-standing challenge of limited access to career guidance in remote areas.

The two-day event, held on 17 and 18 July, brought together professionals, educational institutions and industry representatives to expose learners to various career pathways, with a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM).

For many learners outside Namibia's major towns, access to career exhibitions and direct interaction with professionals remains limited due to distance and financial constraints.

Namdeb's decision to host the career fair in Oranjemund was aimed at closing that gap by bringing career information and industry exposure closer to learners.

The initiative was organised in partnership with the //Kharas Regional Council and the directorate of education, innovation, youth, sport, arts and culture, attracting participation from Oranjemund Private School, CambriLearn Tutor Centre, Ambrosius Amutenya Primary School, !Garibams Secondary School and Tsau //Khaeb Secondary School in Rosh Pinah.

Namdeb said career awareness should start early, allowing learners to understand available opportunities and the skills required to compete in a changing labour market.

Speaking during the opening of the event, Namdeb organisational effectiveness and talent manager Charity Jeftha said the future workforce will require individuals who can adapt, innovate and continue learning.

"Future-ready professionals will be those who embrace lifelong learning, think critically, solve complex problems, communicate effectively, collaborate across cultures, and use technology responsibly. Technical knowledge will always matter, but uniquely human skills such as creativity, resilience, emotional intelligence and ethical leadership will become even more valuable," Jeftha said.

She said while technical qualifications remain important, personal skills such as problem-solving, communication and adaptability will increasingly determine success in the workplace.

The company said the career fair was designed not only to introduce learners to possible professions but also to help them understand the educational pathways and competencies needed to achieve their career goals.

Historically, learners in Oranjemund had to travel to larger centres such as Windhoek to attend career fairs, creating barriers for those unable to afford travel or accommodation costs.

By bringing the event to the town, Namdeb said it was ensuring that learners from the region are not disadvantaged because of their location.

The initiative was welcomed by //Kharas regional school counsellor Alexio Pienaar, who said the career fair provided learners with valuable information to make informed decisions about their future.

Pienaar said exposing learners to different industries allows them to better understand career opportunities and make choices based on accurate information rather than assumptions.

Beyond career development, Namdeb also extended its community support through a road safety initiative aimed at protecting schoolchildren.

On 20 July, the company donated reflector bands to learners at Ambrosius Amutenya Primary School as part of efforts to improve pedestrian safety amid rising concerns over road accidents.

Namdeb chief operating officer Jurgen Jacob said the company's safety responsibility extends beyond its operations and into the communities it serves.

"Safety is Namdeb's number one value, and this commitment extends beyond the workplace into our communities," Jacob said.

The reflector bands are designed to improve visibility during low-light conditions, helping motorists identify pedestrians more easily and reducing risks for learners walking to and from school.

Namdeb said the career fair and safety initiative form part of its broader commitment to investing in education, skills development and community wellbeing.

The company believes that creating access to career information at an early stage can help develop a generation of young Namibians who are better prepared to participate in the country's future economy.

The initiative demonstrates that career opportunities do not have to be limited by geography, and that bringing information closer to communities can play a key role in shaping Namibia's future workforce.

PUBLIC NOTICE

ELECTRICITY CONTROL BOARD

RENEWAL OF MORATORIUM ON GRANTING OF GENERATION LICENCES FOR EXPORT PURPOSES

The Electricity Control Board (ECB) would like to inform the public that the Minister of Industries, Mines and Energy, in terms of section 21 (1) of the Electricity Act, 2007 (Act No. 4 of 2007), on recommendation by the ECB, renewed the moratorium on the granting of generation licenses for export purposes as from 05 September 2025 for a period of 40 months ending 05 January 2029 or until the existing transmission network constraints are alleviated, whichever occurs first. The moratorium is further subject to earlier review should additional regional cross-border transmission capacity become available.

Exempted from this moratorium are variable renewable energy generating plants incorporating Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) intended for night-time export to the Southern Africa Power Pool (SAPP). This exemption is subject to viability and night-time transmission capacity confirmation with the National Transmission Company South Africa (NTCSA), and will be considered on a first-ready, first-served basis, prior to licence consideration. Also exempted are the Namibian Independent Power Producers whose participation in transmission infrastructure upgrades within NTCSA network has been formally confirmed by NTCSA, where such upgrades are intended to alleviate transmission congestion and unlock export capacity into SAPP. The ECB, in collaboration with NamPower, is currently assessing the available capacity and is therefore not considering the submission of new licence applications for export purposes until further notice. The ECB will not consider such applications until the moratorium is lifted; the applicable transmission constraints are formally confirmed to have been resolved, or the capacity assessment referred to above has been finalised. The ECB will revert to stakeholders and the public once this assessment has been finalised.

The Modified Single Buyer (MSB) market framework currently allows private generators to develop generation capacity in Namibia for export purposes. However, existing limited regional cross-border transmission capacity continues to constrain electricity exports from Namibia into SAPP, thereby necessitating the renewal of the moratorium.

For any clarification and further information, please contact **Mr. Lameka Amuanyena** at lamuanyena@ecb.org.na or alternatively **+264 61-374 300**.

Additional information on the moratorium is also available on the ECB's website on the link below: https://www.ecb.org.na/moratorium-on-vre-export-licenses/

TEL: +264 61 374 300 | www.ecb.org.na | info@ecb.org.na | P.O. Box 2923, Windhoek, Namibia

ECB House, 35 DrTheo-Ben Gurirab Street | Business Hours: Monday - Thursday 08:00 - 17:00 | Friday 08:00 - 13:00

Zambezi gets stronger community radio voice

PATIENCE MAKWELE
Staff Writer

The Adventist World Radio (AWR) Namibia and the Namibia North Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are strengthening the role of AWR-Zambezi as a community information platform aimed at improving access to local news, education, health information and public awareness programmes in the Zambezi region.

Representatives from AWR Namibia and the Namibia North Conference introduced the station's services to the Office of the Zambezi regional Governor during a courtesy visit on Thursday, highlighting its role in providing locally relevant content and engaging communities on issues affecting their daily lives.

AWR-Zambezi provides programming focused on information sharing, education, development matters and faith-based content, with the aim of reaching communities across the region.

AWR Namibia country director Annette Mabuka said while the organisation's primary mission is centred on spreading the gospel, the radio platform also seeks to respond to broader community needs.

"While our primary mission is to proclaim the Gospel and prepare people for the second coming of Christ, we are equally committed to addressing the needs and well-being of the communities we serve," Mabuka said.

She said access to reliable information remains an important part of community development, particularly in areas where residents need timely updates on issues affecting their lives.

Zambezi Governor Dorothy Kabula welcomed the continued presence of AWR-Zambezi, saying community-based media platforms play an important role in ensuring information reaches residents.

"Communities, that's where they go and they share whatever they want to. So I'm happy to have that also in the region," Kabula said.

She said the station could complement existing media platforms by providing another avenue for residents to access information and engage on local issues.

"Although we already have NBC and other media outlets, this is our own local community radio. Thank you for coming to share this information with us. It is truly impressive," she said.

The Governor also commended the Seventh-day Adventist Church for its support to communities during times of need, recalling its assistance to flood victims earlier this year.

"When we experienced the floods, your church came and contributed to assisting the flood victims," she said.

She further praised the work of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), describing it as a valued partner in humanitarian support and community development.

"I know ADRA under the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They are very caring when it comes to supporting communities," she said.

For some residents, the value of community radio lies in its ability to provide information while preserving local voices and reaching audiences beyond traditional media platforms.

Nasilele Maswahu, a resident of the Zambezi, said having another radio platform was important but stressed that it should focus on issues affecting ordinary people.

"It is good to have another radio platform in the region but the most important thing is that it must speak about issues affecting ordinary people. We need information about services, health, education and emergencies in languages that communities understand. A community radio station should give people a voice not only broadcast to them," Maswahu said.

She said Adventist World Radio has already made an impact in many households through its faith-based and educational programmes.

"My parents back home never miss the evening Bible study programmes. The programmes also help children learn without relying only on television. However, one challenge is that these impactful programmes are competing with the rise of mobile phones," she said.

Maswahu encouraged parents to manage children's screen time and continue exposing them to educational content available through radio.

"As parents, we need to reduce phone time and allow our children to learn through radio like we did. They have many programmes designed for children," she said.

The continued focus on community broadcasting comes as the Zambezi region faces challenges requiring effective communication channels, including flooding, public health concerns and awareness of government programmes.

AWR-Zambezi station manager Memory Muketela said the station aims to provide content that responds to community needs while creating opportunities for residents to share their experiences and concerns.

Community radio has increasingly been recognised as an important tool for reaching audiences at local level, particularly in areas where access to timely information can influence how communities respond during emergencies and development initiatives.

AWR-Zambezi forms part of Adventist World Radio's broader network of radio services, using broadcasting and digital platforms to provide educational, health and community-focused programming.

Stakeholders say collaboration between media organisations, authorities and communities will remain important in ensuring residents have access to accurate, relevant and timely information.

COURTESY VISIT...**AWR & Hope Channel Namibia Country Director paid a courtesy call to Zambezi region Governor Dorothy Kabula.**
-Photo: Contributed

OBSERVEROPINION
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Editorial

Every presidential platform must advance the national interest

The debate surrounding President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah's decision to officiate at the opening of the MTC Kasi Vibe Festival is a worthwhile one. In any mature democracy, it is both appropriate and healthy for citizens to question how the country's highest office is utilised and whether presidential engagements reflect the nation's most pressing priorities.

That debate should continue. But it should also be guided by one fundamental principle: every platform occupied by the President must become a platform for advancing the national interest.

The Presidency is unlike any other public office. It carries constitutional authority, symbolic significance and the responsibility of setting the national agenda. Every appearance, whether before Parliament, at an investment summit, an agricultural show, a university graduation or a community festival, is far more than a ceremonial engagement. It is an opportunity to lead, to inspire and to communicate the country's priorities.

It is therefore understandable that NUDO parliamentarian Vetahoruhe Kandorozu cautions against the Presidency becoming overly involved in events that ministers, deputy ministers or regional governors are fully capable of officiating. His argument is rooted in protecting the stature of the office and ensuring that the President's time is reserved for matters of strategic national importance.

Equally understandable is the view expressed by PDM leader McHenry Venaani, who believes the President's primary attention should remain fixed on issues such as youth unemployment, economic growth and the daily struggles confronting ordinary Namibians. These concerns resonate because they reflect the realities facing thousands of citizens searching for jobs, opportunities and hope.

Neither viewpoint should be dismissed. However, they raise an even more important question. Should the focus be on where the President speaks, or on what the President says?

> “The debate, therefore, should not be reduced to whether the President attended Kasi Vibe. The more meaningful question is whether the Presidency used the occasion to advance the national conversation. On that score, the answer is yes.

Around the world, presidents routinely use public gatherings beyond formal state functions to communicate national priorities. They address business conferences, sporting events, agricultural exhibitions, cultural festivals and community celebrations because leadership is not confined to the walls of Parliament or State House. Every gathering of citizens presents an opportunity to reinforce national values, encourage investment, promote social cohesion and articulate government's vision.

The MTC Kasi Vibe Festival offered precisely such an opportunity.

President Nandi-Ndaitwah did not merely cut a ribbon or welcome festival-goers. She spoke about entrepreneurship, youth empowerment, innovation, small businesses and the implementation of Namibia's development agenda. She challenged young Namibians to become active participants in building the country's future and praised the entrepreneurial spirit that has transformed Kasi Vibe into one of Namibia's fastest-growing community initiatives.

Those are not simply festival themes. They are national priorities.

If anything, the occasion illustrated how a President can use an unconventional platform to reinforce issues that matter to every Namibian household. Employment, enterprise, innovation and economic participation should not only feature in Budget speeches and State of the Nation Addresses. They should be woven into every engagement where citizens are gathered.

That is what effective leadership looks like.

The debate, therefore, should not be reduced to whether the President attended Kasi Vibe. The more meaningful question is whether the Presidency used the occasion to advance the national conversation. On that score, the answer is yes.

At the same time, the discussion should not overlook the significance of Kasi Vibe itself. There remains a tendency to dismiss festivals as little more than entertainment. That perception ignores the important economic role these platforms increasingly play. Kasi Vibe has evolved into far more than a weekend of music and celebration. It has become a marketplace for ambition.

Hundreds of entrepreneurs use the festival to introduce new products, attract customers, build brands and generate income. Fashion designers, food vendors, artists, technology innovators and small enterprises gain exposure that many could never afford through traditional commercial channels.

For a young entrepreneur, a successful weekend at Kasi Vibe can mean new clients, expanded markets, valuable business connections and much-needed capital to grow an enterprise.

That matters.

Namibia cannot create prosperity through government employment alone. The public sector has limits. Sustainable economic growth will increasingly depend on entrepreneurs who identify opportunities, take risks, build businesses and create jobs. Every successful small business strengthens local economies, broadens the tax base and reduces dependence on the state.

Platforms such as Kasi Vibe therefore deserve to be viewed not merely as entertainment events but as economic development initiatives.

The private sector deserves recognition for appreciating this reality. MTC's sponsorship reflects confidence in the country's entrepreneurs and creative industries. It also demonstrates that investment in youth enterprise should not be viewed as corporate charity but as an investment in Namibia's future economy.

The organisers, too, deserve commendation. Through careful planning, business networking opportunities, SME exhibitions, improved accessibility and digital innovation, they have steadily transformed Kasi Vibe into a platform that celebrates culture while creating genuine economic opportunities.

This does not mean every community event requires presidential attendance. The Presidency must remain selective. The office derives much of its authority from exercising sound judgment about where its presence adds genuine national value. Many important events can and should continue to be led by ministers, governors and other public representatives.

But selectivity should never become detachment.

A President should be visible where Namibians are working, innovating, investing and creating opportunities for others. Leadership cannot be exercised only from podiums inside government buildings. It must also be demonstrated wherever citizens are building the nation from the ground up.

Ultimately, the Presidency should not be judged solely by the venues it visits but by the messages it consistently delivers.

If every appearance reinforces economic growth, entrepreneurship, innovation, accountability, national unity and hope, then every platform becomes an extension of national leadership.

That should be the standard.

Kasi Vibe was not merely a festival. It was a showcase of Namibian enterprise, creativity and resilience. It reminded the country that behind every food stall, fashion label, craft display and start-up business is someone pursuing the very objective government seeks to achieve: creating jobs, building wealth and expanding opportunity.

Those are precisely the conversations that deserve the attention of the Presidency, and precisely the kind of platform from which a President should speak.

Namibia's change trajectory and its ideological basis?

Yours Truly Ideologically with Kae Matundu-Tjiparuro

Can any political party and/or formation ever put Namibia on the right trajectory – a progressive trajectory – if it does not have, in the least, an ideological foundation for what this trajectory, however progressive it may be, is?

Yours Truly Ideologically is prompted to pose this question, given his circumspection that unless the country knows where it is coming from, where it currently is, and where it is headed, then whatever it is currently doing and may be doing in the future, if not rooted in a deep-seated analysis, especially as to the nature and genesis of the problematic it is confronting, whatever endeavour it is embarking upon may in the final analysis only be a matter of assumptions.

In terms of governance, then, can any country, including Namibia, be trusted to be governed properly if what is being done and for what purpose?

To answer this question, it is only right and proper that we retrace our steps to from where we emerged as a new and independent country, to become a sovereign country equal among any other sovereign countries in the world.

We emerged from colonialism. In this instance, and in the last stages of colonialism, we emerged in 1990 from apartheid South Africa's occupation, and hence apartheid colonialism.

That is before Imperial Germany's colonialism up until the Second World War, when the then South West African territory was entrusted as a mandate to Britain, which in turn delegated such to the Cape Colony that was then under its colonial influence.

Speaking of colonialism, colonialism was not an end in itself but a means towards an end – or a manifestation of something else, which is capitalism.

Many writers on imperialism and colonialism have written extensively on these subjects, which was more than just academic expiation of the respective writers.

Notably, among them Lenin, Kwame Nkrumah, Frantz Fanon, and Walter Rodney, known for their works like Lenin's Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism; Nkrumah's Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism; Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth; and Rodney's How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.

All of these and many others were theses on colonialism, putting in context the system operative masterminding the colonisation of Africa, or any other colonised countries then in Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Pacific – not excepting Namibia.

This goes without saying that the Namibian struggle was not solely and only about colonialism. It could not have been, as colonialism was and could not have been the only problem the indigenes had, because colonialism was only a manifestation, if not precursor, of and to something else and bigger – which is capitalism.

Thus, with her attainment of independence in 1990, Namibia did not come to the end of the road. This is as far as the indigenes are concerned and/or may have been concerned.

May have been concerned because it has been unclear and never was it clear if the Namibian who clamoured for freedom and independence then did so to just see the end to colonialism, while colonialism was not an end in itself but a means towards capitalism.

Namibia thus embarked, and/or must have embarked, on the long haul – which in today's political parlance is defined variously as either sovereignty, independence, liberty, justice – you name them. In a nutshell, the end of colonialism.

But what about neo-colonialism? Not to mention capitalism. Is and has Namibia ever been aspiring towards the end of neo-colonialism and capitalism?

A big no, because just like any and/or many, if not all, anti-colonial revolutions in Africa, likewise the anti-colonial revolution in the then South West Africa, today's Namibia, has failed to conceptualise what was and needed to follow the demise of colonialism – not to mention capitalism.

Because despite colonialism being a tool of capitalism, Namibia and/or anti-colonial Namibian revolutionaries, in their anti-colonial agitations and endeavours, also failed to conceptualise the new society they purported to want to create after colonialism.

Or are and have been saying that capitalism has not and never been our problem? Our problem has been colonialism, and if you like neo-colonialism as it pertains currently with the supposed demise of colonialism, as indeed capitalism.

If colonialism was but only another stage of capitalism, can we really maintain and conclude that with the presumed and believed end of colonialism, as it is generally assumed, there is no capitalism in our country?

Can we say today because capitalism, which in colonial times was not good and could not have been for the country and its majority indigenes, has now eventually turned today to be good?

Or is it a matter that capitalism inherently was not bad but was only made to be bad by colonialism – meaning once colonialism, that was once perceived and believed an anathema to indigenous progress and prosperity, has been done away with, then capitalism is good for us and/or the country? As much as colonialism was a function and factor of capitalism?

As long as Namibia's development trajectory is not informed, and/or juxtaposed, to colonialism, and by extension to capitalism, the independence, freedom, and justice, as you would have it currently in Namibia, cannot but be like the chasing of a mirage.

For essentially it means we and/or the country does not know what development is and why. Because it is a contradiction in terms to speak of and about development within capitalism, the very system that engineered colonialism.

It is thus strange and a mockery of the Namibian revolution that today, with the demise of colonialism, capitalism, the harbinger of colonialism, is not an issue. While, historically, it is and has been the very embodiment of separate development, inequality, exploitation, poverty – you name them. Everything its prodigy, colonialism, was designed for and to be.

At no point has Namibia paused to rethink where she is coming from, dating back to the forerunners of the anti-colonial revolution to this day.

What do we have in place and how would those currently running the administrations, from the executive, parliamentarians, and members of the judiciary, perceive themselves currently and visualise the country?

Between changing the administration, which has happened, and changing society, which is far from attainment, there is a gulf. As changing society requires a fundamental change based on ideology. Does the current corps in charge subscribe to any ideology? Which?

The backlog of bills: A constitutional test for Namibia's eighth parliament

PAUL T. SHIPALE
(with inputs by Folito Nghitongovali Diawara Gaspar)

Beyond parliamentary procedure

A parliament is judged not by the number of speeches delivered within its chamber, but by its ability to transform the aspirations of the people into enforceable law. Debates may shape public opinion, but legislation shapes the State itself.
Every Act of Parliament defines the relationship between citizens and government, regulates the economy, protects constitutional rights, and determines how public institutions function. When proposed legislation accumulates without progressing through the legislative process, parliament faces what is commonly known as a backlog of bills.
While this may appear to be a procedural matter, it is, in reality, one of the clearest indicators of a nation's constitutional health and institutional capacity.

The eighth parliament and the weight of expectations
As Namibia's eighth parliament begins its work, expectations are understandably high. Citizens expect reforms that stimulate economic growth, modernise public administration, strengthen accountability, improve service delivery, and prepare the country for an increasingly digital and competitive global economy.
Yet these ambitions cannot be realised through policy announcements alone. They require legislation. Every meaningful reform ultimately depends upon Parliament's ability to scrutinise, amend and enact laws in a timely and constitutionally sound manner.
A legislative backlog should therefore not be measured merely by the number of bills awaiting debate. A single delayed constitutional amendment, investment law or public finance reform may have greater national consequences than dozens of routine administrative bills.
The real question is not how many bills remain pending, but what opportunities are being postponed while they remain unresolved.

Parliament as a constitutional institution
This distinction is important because parliament is not simply a law making factory. The Namibian constitution establishes parliament as one of the principal pillars of democratic governance. Its responsibility extends beyond approving legislation.
Parliament represents the sovereignty of the people, exercises oversight over the executive, safeguards constitutional supremacy, and ensures that public power is exercised within the limits of the law.
Every delayed bill therefore raises broader constitutional questions about the state's capacity to convert democratic mandates into practical public policy.

The difference between deliberation and paralysis
Legislative delay should not automatically be interpreted as institutional failure. Democracy is deliberately slower than authoritarian decision making because it values consultation over expediency.
Parliamentary committees examine draft legislation, hear submissions from experts and citizens, assess constitutional implications, and identify unintended legal consequences before bills become law.
This process exists to prevent poor legislation, protect minority rights, and preserve the integrity of the constitution. The challenge arises when careful scrutiny becomes institutional paralysis.
There is an important distinction between deliberate constitutional review and persistent legislative stagnation. The first strengthens democracy while the second weakens it.

When delayed laws delay national development
When legislative backlogs become chronic, their consequences extend far beyond parliament. Delayed legislation postpones solutions to national challenges.
Investors continue operating within outdated regulatory frameworks.
Government ministries may lack the legal authority required to implement new policies.
Local authorities remain constrained by obsolete legal structures. Courts continue interpreting laws that no longer reflect contemporary realities.
Citizens, meanwhile, experience the consequences through slower public services, delayed justice, housing reforms that remain unfinished, regulatory uncertainty for businesses, and postponed improvements in education, healthcare, digital governance and local government.

The economic cost of legislative inertia
The economic implications deserve particular attention. Modern economies depend upon legal certainty. Investment decisions are rarely based solely upon natural resources or market size but they are equally influenced by predictable legal frameworks.
Legislation governing public procurement, competition policy, investment protection, mining, energy, digital commerce, cybersecurity, financial regulation and public private partnerships provides the certainty upon which both domestic and foreign investors rely.
When such legislation remains stalled, uncertainty increases. Uncertainty raises investment risk. Increased risk discourages investment, limits job creation, and ultimately slows national economic growth.
In this sense, a legislative backlog is not merely a parliamentary concern but it is an economic development issue.

Parliament and the executive shared responsibility
Responsibility for legislative backlogs, however, cannot be assigned exclusively to parliament. The executive also plays a decisive role.
Governments frequently introduce large volumes of legislation towards the end of parliamentary sessions, submit incomplete drafting instructions, alter policy positions during the legislative process, or fail to coordinate effectively across ministries before bills reach parliament.
These administrative shortcomings inevitably increase the burden placed upon parliamentary committees.
Effective legislative management therefore requires close coordination between cabinet and parliament long before legislation reaches the floor of the National Assembly.

Committee work the engine room of parliament
Equally important is the role of parliamentary committees. The quality of legislation is largely determined not during plenary debate but within committee rooms. It is there that technical evidence is examined, constitutional concerns are tested, stakeholders are consulted and proposed amendments are developed.

If committees lack sufficient legal researchers, policy analysts, drafting specialists or administrative support, legislative delays become almost inevitable. Strengthening committee capacity should therefore be viewed not as an administrative expense but as an investment in constitutional governance.

Lessons from other parliamentary democracies
Namibia is by no means unique in confronting this challenge. Established democracies have developed institutional mechanisms to manage legislative workloads more effectively.
In the United Kingdom, governments carefully schedule legislative programmes because bills that fail to complete the parliamentary process before dissolution generally lapse unless specific procedures preserve them.
South Africa publishes legislative programmes and committee work plans to improve parliamentary planning and oversight.
Canada has repeatedly witnessed important government bills expire when parliament is dissolved, reinforcing the importance of prioritising legislation early within a parliamentary term.
These examples demonstrate that legislative backlogs are not symptoms of democratic weakness alone but they are governance challenges that require disciplined institutional planning.

Measuring success by quality, not quantity
The measure of parliamentary success should never be the number of laws enacted within a session. Quantity is an inadequate indicator of democratic performance.
Poorly drafted legislation often requires subsequent amendment, generates constitutional litigation, creates regulatory confusion and undermines public confidence.
Legislative effectiveness should instead be assessed by the quality, constitutional integrity, practical enforceability and long term impact of the laws parliament adopts.

A reform agenda for the eighth parliament
For the eighth parliament, this presents an opportunity rather than merely a challenge. It can establish an annual National Legislative Programme that clearly prioritises bills according to constitutional and national urgency.
It can strengthen parliamentary committees through enhanced research and legal support. It can require ministries to complete pre-legislative consultation before introducing bills.
It can improve coordination between cabinet and parliament to prevent legislative congestion. It can introduce transparent public dashboards that allow citizens to monitor the progress of every bill from introduction to presidential assent.
Such reforms would not merely accelerate legislation but they would strengthen democratic accountability and public trust.

Every delayed bill represents a deferred promise
Ultimately, every bill awaiting parliamentary action represents more than unfinished legislative business. It represents a promise made to citizens but not yet fulfilled.
Behind every delayed bill are individuals waiting for better public services, entrepreneurs seeking regulatory certainty, communities expecting institutional reform, and future generations whose opportunities depend upon decisions yet to be taken.
The true constitutional significance of a legislative backlog therefore lies not in the number of bills awaiting debate, but in what those delays reveal about the state itself.
They reveal whether democratic institutions possess the capacity, discipline and strategic vision to transform electoral mandates into practical governance.

What happens to unfinished bills when parliament ends?
One question that rarely enters public debate is what becomes of legislation that remains incomplete when a parliamentary term comes to an end. In many parliamentary democracies, the answer is straightforward: unless specific constitutional or procedural mechanisms provide otherwise, unfinished bills lapse upon the dissolution of parliament.
This means that years of policy development, stakeholder consultations, committee deliberations and legislative drafting may effectively come to an end.
A newly elected parliament may choose to reintroduce the same legislation, but the process often begins anew, consuming additional time and public resources.
Whether a bill should automatically lapse or be carried over into the next parliament is not merely a procedural matter but it is a constitutional question.
On one hand, allowing bills to lapse respects the democratic principle that each newly elected parliament should determine its own legislative priorities.
On the other hand, automatically abandoning carefully developed legislation may undermine policy continuity, delay urgent reforms and increase the cost of governance.
For Namibia, this debate deserves careful consideration. As the eighth parliament establishes its legislative agenda, it should also reflect on whether existing parliamentary rules provide the appropriate balance between democratic renewal and institutional continuity.
Efficient legislatures do not simply make laws but they preserve institutional memory while respecting the constitutional mandate granted by each new election.

Towards a legislative performance index
Modern democracies increasingly recognise that institutions should be evaluated not only by their intentions but also by measurable performance. Parliament should be no exception.
While governments are frequently assessed through economic growth, fiscal discipline and service delivery, legislatures are seldom evaluated using objective indicators of institutional effectiveness.
Namibia could pioneer a Legislative Performance Index as a tool for strengthening transparency, accountability and public confidence in parliament.
Such an index would not rank political parties or individual members of parliament. Instead, it would measure the effectiveness of parliament as a constitutional institution.

Possible indicators could include:
- The average time required for a bill to progress from introduction to presidential assent.
- The percentage of bills completed within each parliamentary session.
- The proportion of legislation subjected to public consultation before enactment.
- Committee attendance and participation rates.
- The average number of committee hearings conducted for each bill.
- The availability and utilisation of independent legal, constitutional and economic research during legislative scrutiny.
- The percentage of enacted legislation requiring significant amendment within a defined period because of drafting deficiencies.
- The implementation rate of legislation by the Executive after enactment.

Publishing these indicators annually would enhance institutional transparency while enabling citizens, researchers and policymakers to assess parliament's performance using evidence rather than political rhetoric.
More importantly, it would encourage long term institutional improvement instead of short term political point scoring.
Ultimately, the effectiveness of a parliament should not be measured solely by how many laws it passes, but by whether those laws are timely, constitutionally sound, responsive to national priorities and successfully implemented.
A Legislative Performance Index would provide Namibia with an objective framework through which parliamentary excellence could be continuously measured, strengthened and publicly demonstrated.

Conclusion: The legacy of the eighth parliament
As Namibia's eighth parliament embarks upon its constitutional mandate, history is unlikely to remember how many speeches were delivered or how many motions were debated. It will remember whether parliament succeeded in converting democratic aspiration into effective law.
The nation's democratic maturity will be measured not by the number of bills introduced, but by the wisdom, timeliness and constitutional integrity with which they are enacted.
In the end, the strength of parliament is measured not by the volume of its legislative agenda, but by its ability to ensure that no essential reform remains trapped in an ever growing backlog of unfulfilled national expectations.
We agree with the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) that parliament needs to come up with creative and more effective approaches to legislative processes such as extending the working hours and days to tackle the backlog of bills and it is incumbent upon the Speaker to move towards that approach as ultimately her ability to lead parliament will be under scrutiny.
Disclaimer: The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of our employers or this newspaper. They represent our personal views as citizens and Pan-Africanists.

OBSERVERMONEY

A supplement of the Windhoek Observer publication

Beneath Our Feet: How mining built Namibia and why its next chapter could be even more valuable

Can lithium power Namibia's next mining boom

The EPL economy

www.observer.com.na PARAGON MEDIA FRIDAY 31 JULY 2026

MINING IN NUMBERS

The great diamond reckoning

For more than a century, diamonds have been synonymous with Namibia's prosperity.
They built Oranjemund from a windswept settlement into one of southern Africa's most exclusive mining towns.
They financed roads, schools and hospitals, generated billions of Namibia dollars in export earnings and established Namibia as one of the world's most respected producers of gem-quality diamonds.
Few industries have shaped the country's economy as profoundly.

De Beers sale process advances amid weak diamond market

CHAMWE KAIRA
Staff Writer

De Beers remains on track for sale as parent company Anglo American continues to streamline the diamond business and cut costs in response to challenging global diamond market conditions.

Anglo American chief executive officer Duncan Wanblad said the company is advancing the sale process for De Beers while implementing measures to improve its cost performance and reduce capital expenditure to lessen the impact of weak diamond demand.

"We are also advancing the sale process for De Beers alongside streamlining opportunities to improve its cost performance and reduce capital expenditure to minimise the impact from challenging diamond markets," Wanblad said in the company's half-year results.

The update forms part of Anglo American's broader portfolio optimisation strategy, which is focused on copper, premium iron ore and crop nutrients ahead of its planned merger with Teck to create a global metals and minerals company.

Separately, MoneyWeb reported this week that Anglo American is discussing a deal worth about US$$1 billion (N$16.5bn) to sell its De Beers diamond business, just a fraction of what the one-time diamond monopoly was once worth.

Anglo has been looking to sell De Beers since it fended off an almost $50 billion approach from BHP Group in early 2024, yet its disposal process has been stymied by a crisis in the diamond market.

Anglo has so far taken three impairments on De Beers in just three years, lowering its carrying value for the unit to US$2.3 billion in February, MoneyWeb reported.

Earlier this month, it picked a consortium led by former De Beers chief executive officer Gareth Penny as the preferred bidder.

The current deal structure envisages Global Diamond Consortium, a group led by Penny and including Namibia, Angola and some of the world's biggest diamond traders, paying about US$1 billion for Anglo's 85% stake in De Beers, according to people familiar with the situation. About $750 million will be paid upfront, with a further US$250 million paid later, the people said.

MoneyWeb added that there will also be additional payments based on the performance of the business after the sale completes, some of the people said, asking not to be identified because the matter is private.

GDC would also pump about US$$500 million into De Beers as part of the deal with Anglo, the people said. Still, the discussions are not complete and there is no guarantee a deal will be completed or agreed on these terms, some of the people said.

Diamonds are important for the Namibian economy. Namdeb Holdings is 50% owned by the Government of the Republic of Namibia and 50% by the De Beers Group. Namdeb Holdings is the holding company for Namdeb Diamond Corporation and Debmarine Namibia, with a 100% shareholding in each.

In 2025, Debmarine produced 1 435 000 carats. On the other hand, Namdeb Diamond Corporation produced 647 181 carats, according to the Chamber of Mines of Namibia statistics.

Namdeb Holdings reported a turnover of N$12.076 billion in 2025, paid corporate tax worth N$72.279 million, paid N$987.416 million in royalties and paid N$260 million in export levy, according to the Chamber of Mines.

Duncan Wanblad

TOP Gainers NSX Local		
Share code	Close	1MoM%
SBN Holdings Ltd	13.50	2.04%
Mobile Telecommunications Limited	9.41	0.86%
Paratus Namibia Holdings Ltd	12.40	0.81%
Capricorn Group Limited (prev Capricorn Investment Group Ltd)	28.26	0.71%
Letshego Holdings (Namibia) Ltd	5.55	0.54%

TOP Losers NSX Local		
Share code	Close	1MoM%
Oryx Properties Limited	13.62	-0.15%
Nictus Holdings - Nam	3.4	0.00%

TOP 5 Gainers NSX Overall		
Share code	Close	1W%
PSG Financial Services Ltd (Prev. PSG Konsult Limited)	33.78	4.84%
Oceana Group Limited	71.70	4.15%
Investec Limited	131.73	1.45%
Momentum Metropolitan Holdings	39.84	0.76%
Capricorn Group Limited	28.26	0.39%

TOP 5 Losers NSX Overall		
Share code	Close	1W%
Vukile Property Fund Limited	24.02	-3.07%
Shoprite Holdings	282.8	-2.92%
Old Mutual Ltd	13.11	-2.46%
Paladin Energy Limited	109.58	-2.20%

Currencies				
	Close	1D%	%MoM	%YTD
USD/ZAR	16.33	0.74%	-0.62%	-1.03%
EUR/ZAR	18.669271	0.84%	-1.64%	-3.76%
GBP/ZAR	21.86832	0.95%	-0.30%	-1.52%
USD/EUR	0.87469935	-0.04%	1.01%	2.88%

Commodities				
	Close	1D%	%MoM	%YTD
Brent Crude Oil (ICE $/bbl)	78.02	5.20%	-17.22%	28.22%
Gold NYMEX Near Term ($/ozt)	4070.9	-1.79%	-6.11%	-5.89%
Platinum NYMEX Near Term ($/ozt)	1576.40	-4.53%	-9.89%	-22.52%
Copper Cash Official LME ($/mt)	13090.00	-1.65%	-4.18%	4.69%
Uranium Near Term (NYM $/lbs)	85.30	-0.18%	0.06%	4.53%

Money Market Rates				
	3 MONTH	6 MONTH	9 MONTH	12 MONTH
Average Bank NCDs	6.87	7.05	7.23	7.32
Treasury Bill Rates	7.18	7.41	7.50	7.53

JSE INDICES				
Share code	Close	1D%	%MoM	%YTD
JSE ALSI	109,488.65	1.05%	-2.5%	-6.46%
All Share Industrials	139,396.98	-0.26%	1.0%	-5.29%
Mid Cap	103,396.06	0.55%	-2.9%	-9.39%
Small Cap	108,126.45	0.84%	0.3%	-0.68%
Industrial 25	129,906.87	-0.34%	0.9%	-5.91%
Financial 15	25,767.85	0.59%	2.0%	2.99%
Resource 10	104,246.21	3.39%	-11.2%	-18.46%
Top 40	101,317.16	1.13%	-2.8%	-7.21%

World Market				
Share Code	Close	1D%	%1M	%YTD
FTSE100	10,489.04	-1.66%	1.12%	-6.46%
S&P500	7,534.10	-0.28%	1.04%	-5.29%
DAX	25,118.27	-2.23%	1.14%	-9.39%
ASX	8,762.50	-0.21%	1.86%	-0.68%
NASDAQ	26,114.49	0.20%	-0.23%	-5.91%
NSX Overall	2,270.41	1.63%	-3.09%	6.58%
NSX Local	844.60	0.02%	1.43%	10.96%

This data is provided by FACTSET and YFinance as at 09/07/2026

OBSERVERMONEY

Sheep industry faces processing squeeze

CHAMWE KAIRA
Staff Writer

Namibia's sheep industry is facing a temporary processing disruption after Farmers Meat Market (FMM) in Mariental, the country's only export-approved sheep abattoir, suspended slaughter operations amid rising costs, high inventory levels and challenges in export markets.

A research analysis by Simonis Storm Research said the disruption should be viewed as a processing and market access challenge rather than a collapse of the sheep sector.

The firm said information disclosed by FMM points to four key issues including disrupted slaughter schedules, higher local procurement prices combined with exchange rate pressures, stock holdings reaching about 90% capacity, and ongoing negotiations with European customers over prices.

According to the analysis, the problem stems from an "export parity squeeze", where procurement costs rise before export revenues are received. The stronger Namibia dollar against the euro reduced export earnings when translated into local currency, while higher livestock buying prices increased pressure on margins.

"The interruption is open ended and carries no public restart trigger," Simonis Storm said, adding that the available information does not indicate insolvency or permanent closure.

FMM is owned by Hartlief Corporation, which is 85% controlled by the Ohlthaver & List Group. The research noted that the group has invested about N$373 million in the Mariental operation, including the abattoir, a biogas plant and the Aimab Super Farm.

The disruption comes at a time when Namibia's sheep sector has recorded strong marketing performance. Between January and May 2026, the country marketed 353 944 sheep, representing a 38.2% increase compared to the same period last year.

Live exports dominated the market, accounting for 280 567 sheep, or 79.3% of total marketed animals. Export-approved slaughter accounted for 34 814 sheep, while domestic slaughter contributed 38 563 animals.

South Africa absorbed 99.6% of Namibia's live sheep exports during the period, highlighting the sector's dependence on regional markets.

Simonis Storm said this creates a structural challenge for Namibia's livestock industry. While live exports provide farmers with an important alternative market and protect producer liquidity, they also result in value addition taking place outside Namibia.

"A stoppage at the only export abattoir does not destroy the farm output represented by affected animals. It changes where processing value, wages, by-products and logistics margins are captured," the report stated.

The research also highlighted that the challenge is not simply one of weak demand. Instead, the processor is caught between higher procurement costs, increased financing costs due to high inventory levels, reduced throughput and limited ability to adjust customer prices.

The analysis estimated that restoring previous export revenue levels could require customer price increases of between 12% and 14%, depending on procurement costs and processing margins.

The situation has also triggered renewed calls among producers for greater participation in the sheep value chain. More than 230 farmers attended a Livestock Producers Organisation indaba in Mariental on 22 July 2026, where they agreed to establish a producer-driven company with founder shares priced at N$7 500 each.

The initiative aims to give farmers greater ownership and influence over the industry, including future market development and value addition opportunities.

The Farmers Meat Market (FMM) in Mariental suspended slaughter operations amid rising costs, high inventory levels and challenges in export markets.
- Photo: Contributed

Angolan Kwanza introduced into the SADC-RTGS system

In line with efforts to boost Southern African Development Community (SADC) trade and financial integration, Lesetja Kganyago, Governor of the South African Reserve Bank and Chairperson of the SADC Committee of Central Bank Governors (CCBG), and Manuel Tiago Dias, Governor of the Banco Nacional de Angola, on 27 July 2026 formally announced the introduction of the Angolan kwanza as a settlement currency in the SADC real-time gross settlement (SADC-RTGS) system.

The kwanza's inclusion supports regional payments modernization efforts and aligns with the Group of Twenty's (G20) cross-border payment goals of reducing costs, increasing speed and improving efficiency in cross-border transactions.

The Angolan kwanza is the second settlement currency to be introduced in the SADC-RTGS system, which has settled transactions exclusively in South African rand since its inception in 2013. There are currently 15 countries participating in the SADC-RTGS system.

By enabling direct settlement in kwanza, participants transacting in the currency can reduce foreign exchange conversion requirements, helping to lower transaction costs for participants and their customers.

The intention is to onboard additional regional currencies, such as the Botswana pula, in due course.

The enablement of a multi-currency capability in the SADC-RTGS system is one of the strategic initiatives to strengthen regional financial integration, promote greater use of local and regional currencies in cross-border trade and reduce reliance on non-SADC currencies.

A more diverse set of settlement currencies in the system makes it easier for businesses and customers to transact across SADC countries in local currencies.

The Angolan kwanza has been introduced as a settlement currency in the SADC real-time gross settlement (SADC-RTGS) system. - *Photo: SADC*

Faster settlement can also help businesses manage cash flow more efficiently and access funds more quickly when trading across the region.

The SADC-RTGS system, which marked 13 years of operation on 13 July 2026, processes R250.7 billion worth of transactions per month.

It is operated by the South African Reserve Bank, as appointed by the SADC Committee of Central Banks Governors.

In 2025, trade and interbank transactions between Angola and the other 14 SADC states amounted to approximately US$3.77 billion across nine currencies.

South Africa accounted for a significant share of these flows, at nearly US$2.99 billion, representing about 60% of transaction volumes and 79% of total value.

The SADC-RTGS system supports economic growth by enabling a more connected regional payments system, reducing friction in economic activity and helping to create an environment that is conducive to trade, investment and job creation.

Payments are safer and more secure because transactions are settled through central banks. There is also a reduction in the delays and risks associated with using multiple banks and foreign intermediaries to process payments.

By joining the SADC-RTGS system, a country can enable its currency to play a greater role in regional trade and finance, reduce reliance on foreign currencies and intermediaries, lower the cost of doing business across borders and strengthen its position within the evolving Southern African and African financial landscape.

- www.sadc.int

Beneath our feet: How mining built Namibia and why its next chapter could be even more valuable

From ancient copper traders to offshore diamonds and uranium that powers the world, Namibia's mining story is one of resilience, wealth and unfinished ambition.

Long before Namibia became known as one of Africa's most stable mining jurisdictions, before giant haul trucks carved through open pits or ships vacuumed diamonds from the Atlantic seabed, the country's mineral wealth was already shaping the lives of its people.

For centuries, indigenous communities extracted copper, iron, salt and ochre from the land. Copper from the Tsumeb region was fashioned into tools and ornaments, iron ore became weapons and agricultural implements, while salt was traded across southern Africa as a prized commodity.

Long before international mining companies arrived, Namibia's first miners were already proving that the country's greatest treasure lay beneath its soil.

Today, mining remains the backbone of the Namibian economy. The sector contributes approximately 13–14% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), generates more than 60% of export earnings in many years, attracts billions of dollars in foreign direct investment and supports tens of thousands of direct and indirect jobs.

It has built towns, financed public services and positioned Namibia as one of the world's leading producers of diamonds and uranium.

Yet, more than a century after the first industrial mines opened, an important question remains unanswered: has Namibia truly captured the full value of its extraordinary mineral wealth?

A country forged by minerals

Few countries can claim that their modern identity has been so profoundly shaped by geology.

The story begins in earnest during Germany's colonial administration of German South West Africa between 1884 and 1915. Prospectors quickly realised that beneath Namibia's harsh and seemingly unforgiving landscape lay extraordinary mineral riches.

Among the earliest discoveries was the legendary Tsumeb Mine, which would become one of the richest polymetallic ore bodies ever discovered anywhere in the world.

Unlike conventional copper mines, Tsumeb produced astonishing concentrations of copper alongside lead, zinc, silver, germanium and dozens of rare minerals. Scientists have identified more than 240 different mineral species at the mine, with many first discovered there.

Tsumeb rapidly evolved into one of southern Africa's premier mining towns.

Railways were constructed to transport ore to ports, engineering expertise flowed into the country, and supporting industries developed around the mine. It became a symbol of industrial progress long before Namibia itself existed as an independent nation.

Then came the discovery that would forever change Namibia's fortunes.

When diamonds changed everything

In 1908, railway worker Zacharias Lewala reportedly picked up a glittering stone near Lüderitz while working alongside German railway inspector August Stauch.

Railway worker Zacharias Lewala, who discovered the first diamond near Kolmanskop.

It was a diamond.

That single discovery triggered one of the greatest diamond rushes in history.

Within months, prospectors descended upon the Namib Desert. Entire settlements sprang from the sand almost overnight. Among them was Kolmanskop, once one of Africa's wealthiest towns.

The town became an oasis of luxury in the desert.

Residents enjoyed electricity before Berlin itself had universal electrification. There was an ice factory, hospital, casino, ballroom, school, bakery and even the first X-ray machine in southern Africa, installed not for medicine, but to prevent workers from stealing diamonds.

Such was the extraordinary wealth generated by Namibia's diamond fields.

Germany soon declared a vast restricted diamond zone known as the Sperrgebiet, an area that remains tightly controlled today.

As richer deposits were discovered further south, Kolmanskop declined, eventually becoming one of the world's most photographed ghost towns, slowly reclaimed by drifting desert sands.

It remains a powerful reminder of both the prosperity and impermanence of mining booms.

South African rule and industrial expansion

Following Germany's defeat in the First World War, South Africa assumed administration of the territory.

Mining expanded dramatically.

Diamond production became increasingly mechanised, while offshore exploration revealed that enormous quantities of diamonds had been washed into the Atlantic Ocean over millions of years.

Those discoveries laid the foundation for what is today regarded as the world's most advanced marine diamond mining industry.

Today, Namibia extracts more diamonds from the ocean floor than any other country on Earth.

Using sophisticated vessels equipped with remotely operated crawler systems, diamonds are recovered from depths exceeding 100 metres beneath the Atlantic.

It is mining unlike anywhere else in the world.

Perhaps even more significant was another discovery made decades later.

The uranium revolution

In the early 1970s, the development of the Rössing Uranium Mine near Swakopmund transformed Namibia into one of the world's leading uranium producers.

At the time, global demand for nuclear fuel was rising rapidly.

Rössing became one of the largest open-pit uranium mines ever constructed and soon established itself as a cornerstone of Namibia's export economy.

Today, uranium remains one of Namibia's most strategically important commodities.

Alongside Rössing, operations such as the Husab Mine, operated by Swakop Uranium, and the Langer Heinrich Mine, operated by Paladin Energy, consistently place Namibia among the world's top uranium-producing nations.

As countries seek cleaner alternatives to coal-fired electricity, nuclear energy has regained international attention. This has renewed investor interest in Namibia's uranium reserves.

Ironically, while Namibia generates relatively little electricity from nuclear power itself, the uranium mined from its deserts helps power cities across Europe and Asia.

Mining after independence

When Namibia achieved independence in 1990, the mining industry remained central to the economy.

The challenge facing the new government was balancing foreign investment with national ownership, environmental responsibility and inclusive economic development.

The solution was not nationalisation but partnership.

Government retained significant interests in strategic operations, most notably through Namdeb, the joint venture with De Beers that manages the country's diamond resources.

This model has allowed Namibia to remain attractive to international investors while ensuring that mining revenues contribute directly to national development.

Over the past three decades, successive governments have strengthened mining legislation, improved regulatory certainty and encouraged exploration.

The result has been continued investment across diamonds, uranium, gold, zinc, copper and increasingly, critical minerals essential for the global energy transition.

Exploration activity has intensified in recent years, particularly as demand grows for minerals required in electric vehicles, renewable energy technologies and battery storage.

Lithium, graphite, rare earth elements, cobalt and vanadium are all attracting investor interest.

For Namibia, this could represent the beginning of an entirely new mining era.

But it also raises an old question.

Will the country once again export mostly raw materials?

Or will it finally move further up the value chain?

That question may determine whether Namibia merely remains a successful mining nationor becomes a truly industrialised economy.

From digging minerals to building wealth

If the first century of mining in Namibia was about discovering extraordinary mineral wealth, the next century will be judged on something entirely different: how much of that wealth remains in Namibia.

For decades, economists have described mining as both a blessing and a paradox. It generates foreign exchange, creates jobs and attracts investment, yet its benefits can be fleeting if countries simply export raw materials while importing finished products at many times the value.

Namibia is hardly alone in facing this dilemma. Across Africa, nations rich in natural resources have often struggled to convert mineral wealth into broad-based industrialisation.

The challenge is no longer finding minerals. It is finding ways to extract more value from them before they leave the country's borders.

Learning from Botswana

Perhaps the most frequently cited comparison is Botswana.

Like Namibia, Botswana is sparsely populated, politically stable and heavily dependent on mining. Both countries built their post-independence economies on diamonds.

Yet Botswana has, over the years, managed to capture significantly more value from its diamond industry.

The decision by De Beers to relocate much of its diamond sorting, aggregation and sales operations from London to Gaborone fundamentally changed Botswana's economic landscape.

Thousands of skilled jobs were created, while local expertise in valuation, grading, cutting and polishing steadily expanded.

The ripple effects extended well beyond mining. Financial services, logistics, aviation, hospitality and professional services all benefited from the influx of international buyers who regularly travelled to Botswana for diamond auctions.

Namibia has made important progress of its own. Diamond cutting and polishing factories have operated locally for years, and the government has consistently promoted local beneficiation. However, the scale has remained relatively modest compared to Botswana's transformation.

The lesson is not that Namibia should

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imitate Botswana in every respect. Rather, it demonstrates that minerals can become the foundation for a diversified economy if governments and industry deliberately build value chains around them.

The world’s underwater diamond capital

One area where Namibia stands entirely alone is marine diamond mining.

While most people imagine miners descending underground or digging vast open pits, Namibia’s diamonds increasingly come from beneath the Atlantic Ocean.

Specialised mining vessels, equipped with sophisticated crawler systems and recovery plants, carefully vacuum diamond-bearing gravel from the seabed before processing it onboard.

The technology is among the most advanced in global mining and represents decades of engineering innovation.

These marine diamonds are renowned for their exceptional quality. Because they have been naturally polished by millions of years of ocean currents, Namibian diamonds consistently command premium prices on international markets.

The country’s reputation is built not on producing the greatest number of diamonds, but among the finest.

That distinction matters.

In luxury markets, quality often outweighs quantity.

Uranium and the global energy transition

If diamonds built Namibia’s past, uranium may well define much of its future.

As governments around the world pursue lower-carbon energy systems, nuclear power has regained prominence.

More than 30 countries are actively expanding or planning new nuclear generation capacity, while small modular reactors promise to reshape electricity production over the coming decades.

That places Namibia in an enviable position.

The country’s uranium reserves rank among the world’s largest, and mines such as Rössing, Husab and Langer Heinrich are strategically important suppliers to international energy markets.

Unlike fossil fuels, uranium is increasingly viewed by many governments as part of the solution to climate change.

Demand is therefore expected to remain robust for decades.

For Namibia, the opportunity extends beyond mining itself.

It includes research partnerships, technical training, specialised engineering services and potentially developing regional expertise in nuclear-related industries.

Gold’s quiet rise

While diamonds and uranium dominate headlines, gold has quietly become one of Namibia’s fastest-growing mining sectors.

The success of the Otjikoto Mine demonstrated that Namibia possesses commercially viable gold deposits capable of attracting international investment.

Exploration has since accelerated, with projects such as Twin Hills promising to extend the country’s gold production for decades.

Gold also offers an important advantage.

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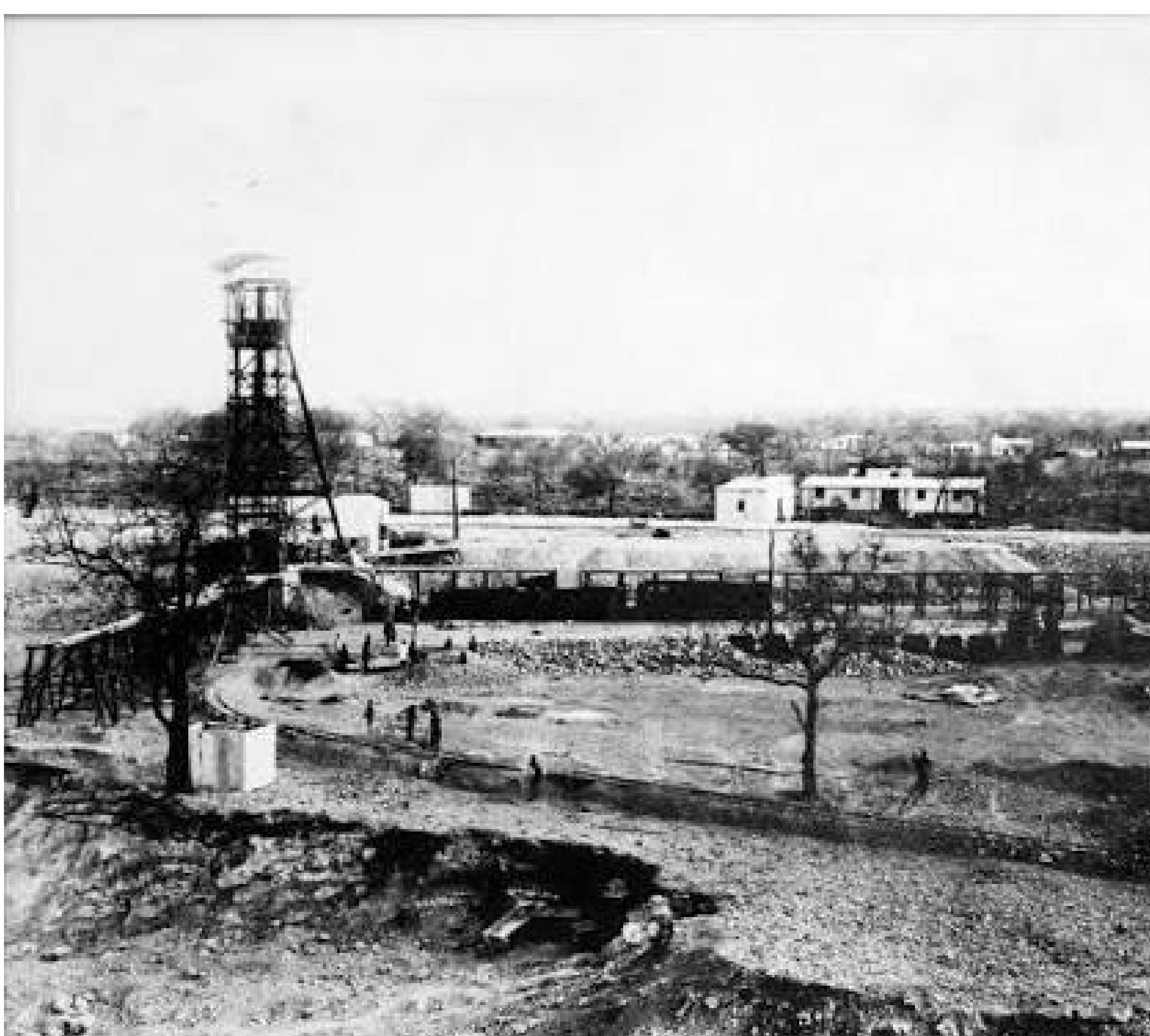
Diamonds being sorted after discovery in the Lüderitz area.



The Tsumeb Mine

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Unlike some commodities whose prices fluctuate with industrial demand, gold often performs strongly during periods of economic uncertainty.
That provides Namibia with valuable diversification within its mining portfolio.
Critical minerals, the next frontier
Perhaps the most exciting chapter of Namibia's mining story has yet to be written.
The global transition toward electric vehicles, renewable energy and battery storage has triggered unprecedented demand for so-called critical minerals.
Lithium powers rechargeable batteries.
Graphite forms battery anodes.
Rare earth elements are essential for wind turbines, electric motors and advanced electronics.
Vanadium is increasingly important for large-scale energy storage.
Cobalt remains crucial in many battery technologies.
Namibia possesses geological potential for many of these minerals.
International exploration companies have taken notice.
If developed responsibly, critical minerals could become the twenty-first century equivalent of the country's historic diamond discoveries.
The difference is that the world now needs these minerals not simply for economic growth, but for the transition to cleaner energy.

Oil should complement mining, not replace it
Recent offshore oil discoveries have understandably generated enormous excitement.
The prospect of Namibia becoming an oil-producing nation has captured global attention and attracted some of the world's largest energy companies.
Yet mining should not be overshadowed.
Unlike oil, Namibia's mining industry has been built over more than a century. It possesses established infrastructure, experienced professionals, strong regulatory institutions and international credibility.
Rather than viewing oil as a replacement for mining, policymakers should see the two industries as complementary.

Together, they could transform
Namibia into one of Africa's foremost natural resource economies.
However, history offers an important warning.
Countries blessed with abundant natural resources sometimes fall victim to the so-called "resource curse", overdependence on commodity exports, weak economic diversification and growing inequality.
Avoiding that fate will require disciplined governance, transparent institutions and long-term investment in education, infrastructure and innovation.

Beyond extraction
Mining today bears little resemblance to the industry of a century ago.
Automation, artificial intelligence, remote sensing, drone technology and sophisticated geological modelling are transforming how minerals are discovered and extracted.
Future mines will require fewer manual labourers but far more engineers, software specialists, environmental scientists and data analysts. That presents both an opportunity and a challenge.
Namibia's universities and technical institutions must ensure they produce graduates equipped for this technological revolution.
Equally important is ensuring that mining companies continue investing in local supplier development.
Every truck maintained locally, every engineering contract awarded to Namibian firms and every technology startup supporting mining operations keeps more value circulating within the domestic economy.
Mining should not be viewed simply as an employer.
It should be an ecosystem.

The historic Dewet mining shaft in Tsumeb.

Responsible mining in an age of sustainability
Modern investors increasingly judge mining companies not only by production figures but also by environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards.
Water management has become particularly important in Namibia's arid environment.
Uranium mines around the Erongo Region depend on careful water conservation, desalination technology and environmental monitoring to minimise their impact.
Mine rehabilitation has likewise become an essential component of responsible resource development.
Communities increasingly expect that once mining ends, landscapes will be restored and alternative economic opportunities created.
This is no longer optional.
It is central to maintaining the industry's social licence to operate.

The unfinished journey
Mining has given Namibia much.
It financed railways that connected distant communities. It built ports that linked the country to global markets.
It created towns such as Tsumeb, Arandis, Rosh Pinah and Oranjemund. It generated export earnings that funded schools, hospitals and public infrastructure.
Yet history also reminds us that extraordinary mineral wealth does not automatically produce extraordinary national prosperity.
That depends on the choices countries make.
The next chapter of Namibia's mining story will not be written solely in underground tunnels or open pits.
It will be written in laboratories, classrooms, boardrooms and factories.
It will depend on whether young Namibians become geologists, metallurgists, software engineers and entrepreneurs rather than merely employees in extractive industries.
It will depend on whether more minerals are processed locally, whether communities benefit directly from mining activity and whether resource revenues are invested wisely for future generations.
Beneath Namibia's vast deserts lies one of the richest geological endowments on Earth.
But the country's greatest resource has never been uranium, diamonds, copper or gold.
It is the wisdom to transform finite mineral wealth into lasting national prosperity.
If the first century of mining unearthed Namibia's riches, the next century must ensure those riches build a nation that prospers long after the last mine has closed.


Power Progress through Partnerships
Our commitment as a homegrown partner is to drive progress and build resilience. Our seamless, integrated design, powered by strategic insights, ensures that we deliver solutions that support Namibia's burgeoning mining sector.
Let's journey together as we lay the groundwork for a robust and prosperous future.
Partner with us today.
Contact us on:
+264 61 299 1473
cibservicedesk@bankwindhoek.com.na
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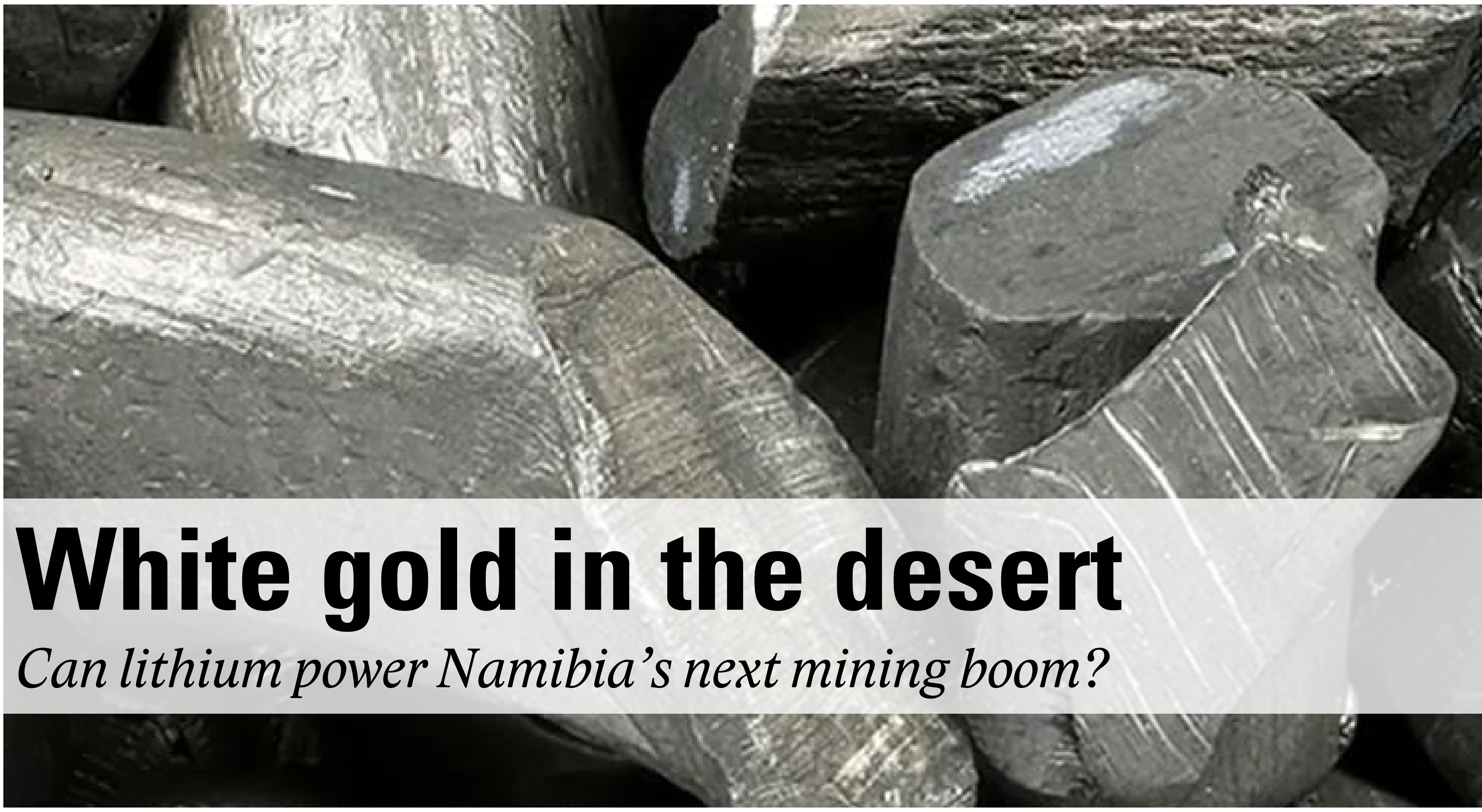


White gold in the desert

Can lithium power Namibia's next mining boom?

A century ago, Namibia's fortunes were transformed by diamonds. Half a century later, uranium established the country as a strategic player in the global energy market.

Today, another mineral is attracting investors from around the world, triggering exploration licences, multimillion-dollar acquisitions and renewed optimism across the mining sector.

Its name is lithium.

Often called "white gold", lithium has become one of the world's most sought-after minerals, not because of its rarity, but because it sits at the heart of the global transition to clean energy.

Every electric vehicle, smartphone, laptop, tablet and large-scale battery storage system depends on lithium. Without it, the green energy revolution would simply stall.

For Namibia, the question is no longer whether lithium matters. It is whether the country can transform a lithium rush into lasting economic prosperity.

A tiny metal with enormous importance

Lithium is the lightest metal on the periodic table. Soft enough to be cut with a knife and highly reactive, it was first discovered in 1817 by Swedish chemist Johan August Arfwedson.

Despite its abundance in the Earth's crust, lithium rarely occurs in pure form. It is typically extracted from hard-rock minerals such as spodumene or from underground brine deposits.

What makes lithium extraordinary is its ability to store energy.

It has the highest electrochemical potential of all metals, making it the ideal ingredient for rechargeable lithium-ion batteries.

Today, lithium powers virtually every modern portable electronic device.

More importantly, it has become the backbone of electric mobility.

The battery that changed the world

Every electric vehicle contains lithium.

Depending on battery size, a single electric car requires between 8 and 60 kilograms of lithium.

A Tesla Model Y, for example, contains roughly 50 kilograms of lithium compounds.

Battery energy storage systems used to stabilise electricity grids require even larger quantities.

As countries expand renewable energy generation through wind and solar power, demand for battery storage is growing almost as rapidly as demand for electric vehicles.

The result is unprecedented global demand for lithium.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), global lithium demand has more than tripled since 2017 and could increase by more than eight-fold by 2040 under announced energy transition policies.

In 2024 alone, global electric vehicle sales exceeded 17 million units, accounting for roughly one in every five new vehicles sold worldwide.

Each one required lithium.

A US$20 billion market and growing

The lithium industry has become one of the fastest-growing mining sectors in the world.

Global lithium demand reached approximately 205,000 tonnes of lithium metal (around 1.1 million tonnes of lithium carbonate equivalent) in 2024, with batteries consuming more than 85% of total production.

Australia remains the world's largest producer, accounting for approximately 45–50% of global mine supply.

Chile follows, with Argentina, China and Zimbabwe also ranking among major producers.

Africa's role, however, is expanding rapidly.

Zimbabwe has emerged as the continent's leading lithium producer, while Namibia is increasingly attracting exploration companies seeking the next significant discovery.

Namibia's lithium rush

Over the past five years, Namibia has witnessed an explosion in lithium exploration.

Dozens of exploration licences have been granted across Erongo, Karas, Kunene and the central regions.

Companies from Australia, Canada, China and Europe have invested heavily in geological surveys and drilling programmes.

Among the most advanced projects is Andrada Mining's Uis Mine in the Erongo Region.

Historically known as a tin mine, Uis is now producing tin concentrate while simultaneously developing its lithium and tantalum resources.

The company estimates that its pegmatite field stretches for more than 70 kilometres, making it one of the world's largest known hard-rock pegmatite systems.

Elsewhere, exploration continues around Karibib, Omaruru and other pegmatite-rich regions.

The excitement has prompted comparisons with Australia's early lithium boom.

Prices: A rollercoaster ride

Like all commodities, lithium prices move in cycles.

Between 2020 and late 2022, lithium prices surged by more than 600%, driven by booming electric vehicle demand and supply shortages.

Producers rushed to expand operations.

Exploration companies multiplied.

Investors poured billions into new projects.

Then reality intervened.

New mines entered production faster than expected, particularly in Australia and China.

Demand growth continued but failed to absorb the additional supply immediately.

Lithium prices fell sharply through 2023 and 2024, in some cases by more than 80% from their peak.

Many smaller producers postponed projects.

Yet most analysts believe the downturn is cyclical rather than structural.

Long-term demand remains exceptionally strong.

More than electric cars

Although electric vehicles dominate headlines, they account for only part of lithium's importance.

Lithium-ion batteries are found in:

- Smartphones
- Laptops
- Tablets
- Power tools
- Medical devices
- Drones
- Grid-scale electricity storage systems
- Military equipment
- Space technology

As artificial intelligence data centres expand globally, battery storage is becoming increasingly important for maintaining reliable electricity supplies.

Lithium demand therefore extends well beyond the automotive sector.

Namibia's opportunity

Mining experts argue that Namibia's greatest opportunity is not merely exporting lithium concentrate.

It lies in beneficiation.

Instead of shipping partially processed minerals overseas, Namibia could eventually produce battery-grade lithium chemicals.

That would create significantly greater economic value.

Downstream industries including battery component manufacturing, chemical processing and specialised engineering services could emerge over time.

Achieving this would require substantial investment in energy infrastructure, skilled labour and industrial development.

But the prize is considerable.

Countries that move higher up the battery value chain capture far greater economic benefits than those exporting raw minerals alone.

Lessons from diamonds

Namibia has experienced commodity booms before.

Diamonds transformed the southern coast.

Uranium reshaped the Erongo Region.

Each created employment and export earnings, but also highlighted the risks of dependence on raw commodity exports.

Lithium presents an opportunity to apply those lessons.

The objective should not simply be to mine more.

It should be to retain more value within Namibia.

Challenges ahead

Lithium mining is not without controversy.

Hard-rock mining consumes significant amounts of energy and water.

Communities increasingly expect responsible environmental management, transparent licensing and meaningful local participation.

Price volatility also remains a concern.

The dramatic boom-and-bust cycle of recent years demonstrates that investors should avoid assuming permanently high prices.

As with every mineral, success depends on managing both opportunity and risk.

The next chapter

History has a curious habit of repeating itself.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, few imagined that diamonds would shape Namibia's destiny.

Half a century later, uranium became indispensable to the world's nuclear energy industry.

Today, lithium occupies a similarly strategic position.

Unlike oil or coal, lithium is not a fuel that is consumed.

It is an enabler, a mineral that allows renewable energy, electric mobility and digital technologies to function.

Whether Namibia becomes a major lithium producer remains to be seen.

Exploration is still underway, prices remain volatile and global competition is intense.

Yet one fact is beyond dispute.

The world is electrifying, batteries are becoming as essential to modern life as steel was to the Industrial Revolution, and lithium has become one of the defining minerals of the twenty-first century.

If managed wisely, Namibia's lithium rush could prove to be far more than another mining boom.

It could become the foundation of the country's next generation of industrial growth, provided the nation remembers the lesson every commodity boom eventually teaches: real wealth is created not by what comes out of the ground, but by what a country chooses to do with it once it does.

The EPL economy

Inside Namibia's billion-dollar exploration rush, and why an Exclusive Prospecting Licence is not the lottery ticket many believe it to be

There are few documents in Namibia today that generate as much excitement, speculation and misunderstanding as an Exclusive Prospecting Licence, better known simply as an EPL.

For some, it represents the promise of unimaginable wealth. For others, it is little more than a piece of paper that unlocks conversations with foreign investors.

Every week, stories circulate of individuals who have "struck it rich" after securing an EPL, fuelling the perception that obtaining one is the quickest route to becoming a millionaire.

The reality, however, is very different.

Mining executives often joke that owning an EPL is like owning a fishing licence. It gives you permission to fish, but it does not guarantee there are any fish in the water.

That distinction is at the heart of Namibia's exploration boom.

What exactly is an EPL?

An Exclusive Prospecting Licence is a legal right granted by the ministry of industries, mines and energy that gives its holder the exclusive right to explore a designated area for minerals.

The licence does not give ownership of the land. It does not allow mining. It does not prove that commercially valuable minerals exist beneath the surface.

It simply gives one company, or one individual, the exclusive opportunity to find out.

Typically issued for three years and renewable subject to exploration commitments, an EPL can cover an area of up to 1 000 square kilometres.

Think of it as a research permit rather than a mining permit.

Before a single tonne of ore can be extracted, years of geological mapping, drilling, laboratory testing, environmental studies, engineering assessments and regulatory approvals still lie ahead.

Namibia's exploration boom

Namibia has quietly become one of Africa's exploration hotspots.

The country's reputation for political stability, predictable mining legislation and world-class geological potential has attracted investors from Australia, Canada, China, Britain and South Africa.

More recently, the global scramble for lithium, graphite, rare earth elements and uranium has intensified interest even further.

Large parts of Erongo, Kunene, Karas, Otjozondjupa and Omaheke have become the focus of exploration programmes.

The rush has been driven largely by the global energy transition.

As the world shifts towards electric vehicles, renewable energy and battery storage, demand for critical minerals has surged.

Namibia possesses many of them.

The numbers tell the story

Namibia has issued hundreds of active Exclusive Prospecting Licences over the years covering commodities including diamonds, uranium, gold, copper, zinc, lithium, graphite and rare earth elements.

Yet only a tiny fraction of these licences will ever become producing mines.

Mining experts estimate that globally, fewer than one in every thousand exploration projects eventually develops into a commercially viable mine.

Even where minerals are discovered, they may not be economically recoverable.

A deposit may be too deep.

The grade may be too low.

Water may be unavailable.

Infrastructure may be too costly.

Or commodity prices may simply make mining uneconomical.

Exploration is therefore an industry built as much on disappointment as discovery.

The myth of quick money

The perception that EPLs create instant millionaires has become deeply embedded in Namibia.

Stories of foreign companies acquiring local exploration rights for millions of dollars have fuelled a wave of speculative applications.

Many hopeful entrepreneurs believe the real business is not exploring, but selling the licence itself.

Veteran mining consultant Dr. Bryan E. Bowes has repeatedly cautioned that exploration licences should never be viewed as guaranteed wealth.

"The value is not in the licence," he has often remarked at mining conferences. "The value lies in what you can prove beneath the ground."

That distinction is enormous.

An unexplored EPL has potential.

A drilled resource has value.

A producing mine creates wealth.

Confusing those three stages has led many newcomers to unrealistic expectations.

The expensive business of finding rocks

One of the biggest misconceptions surrounding exploration is that obtaining an EPL is the difficult part.

In truth, the real work begins after approval.

Modern exploration is one of the most expensive and technically demanding activities in the mining industry.

Geologists conduct field mapping across remote terrain.

Geophysicists fly airborne surveys using highly specialised equipment.

Teams collect thousands of rock and soil samples.

Diamond drilling programmes often require dozens, or even hundreds, of drill holes.

Each hole can cost tens of thousands of Namibia dollars.

A serious exploration programme can easily require investments exceeding N$100 million before investors know whether a viable mine exists.

Most projects never reach that point.

Why foreign investors still come

Despite the risks, Namibia continues attracting international mining companies.

The reason is simple.

When discoveries are made, the rewards can be enormous.

Every major mine in Namibia began as an exploration project.

Rössing.

Husab.

Otjikoto.

Langer Heinrich.

Twin Hills.

Each started with geologists studying maps, collecting samples and drilling holes long before any mine was built.

Former Chamber of Mines of Namibia Chief Executive Veston Malango has frequently described exploration as "the lifeblood of mining."

Without exploration, there are no new discoveries.

Without discoveries, existing mines eventually close.

Without replacement mines, the industry declines.

Exploration is therefore not a luxury.

It is an economic necessity.

The lithium effect

No mineral has accelerated Namibia's exploration rush quite like lithium.

Five years ago, lithium attracted relatively little public attention.

Today, it dominates mining conferences, investor presentations and government discussions.

Electric vehicles, battery storage and renewable energy have transformed lithium into one of the world's most strategic minerals.

Projects that were once explored solely for tin are now being reassessed for lithium.

Exploration companies have seen their market values increase dramatically based simply on encouraging drilling results.

Yet experienced mining executives continue urging caution.

An encouraging assay is not a mine.

A mineral resource is not a bank account.

Economic feasibility remains the ultimate test.

A licence is not a mine

Perhaps the most important lesson for aspiring licence holders is understanding the long timeline involved.

From exploration licence to operating mine typically takes between seven and fifteen years.

Some projects require even longer.

Environmental approvals.

Community consultations.

Feasibility studies.

Infrastructure development.

Financing.

Engineering.

Each phase carries risk.

Many projects fail.

Not because minerals are absent, but because economics change.

Commodity prices fall.

Construction costs rise.

Capital becomes scarce.

Mining is ultimately as much about finance as geology.

Government's balancing act

The government faces its own challenge.

It must encourage exploration while discouraging speculation.

Officials have increasingly emphasised that licences are issued to promote mineral discovery, not to create a secondary market where permits are traded without meaningful exploration.

The ministry has strengthened monitoring of work commitments and has become more rigorous in assessing renewal applications.

The objective is to ensure that prospective ground remains active rather than locked away by speculative holders.

That approach has generally been welcomed by serious investors.

More than a piece of paper

Namibia's mining future depends heavily on exploration.

Every future uranium mine, lithium project, copper operation or gold discovery will begin with an EPL.

That alone makes these licences strategically important.

But they should never be mistaken for guaranteed wealth.

They are opportunities.

Nothing more.

Nothing less.

The country's current exploration boom reflects growing international confidence in Namibia's geology, governance and investment climate.

That is good news for the economy.

However, as the excitement surrounding critical minerals continues, one truth remains unchanged.

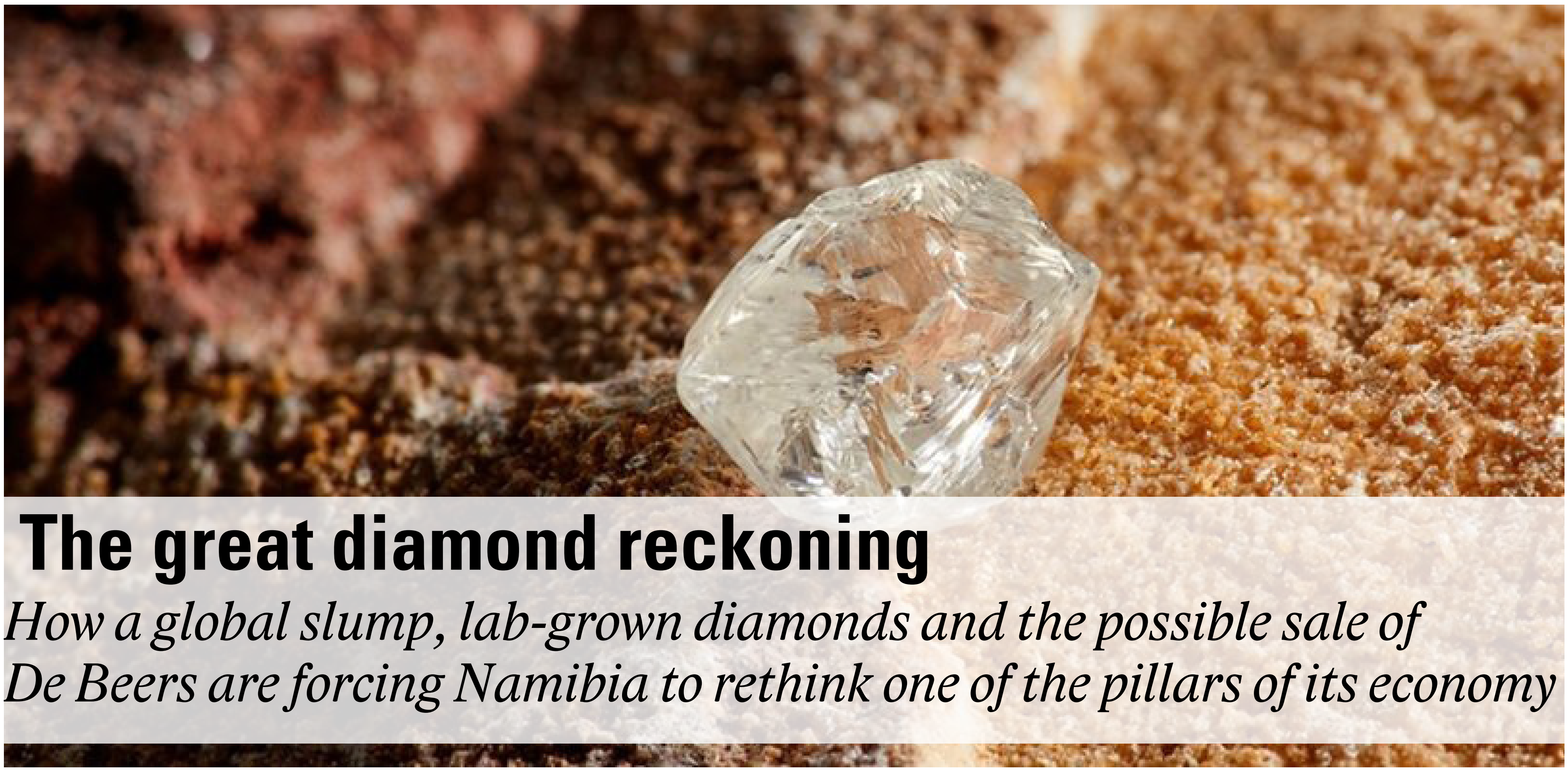
The richest part of any EPL is not the certificate hanging on an office wall.

It is the scientific knowledge still waiting to be uncovered beneath Namibia's ancient rocks.

Only when that knowledge is matched with investment, perseverance and a little geological luck does an Exclusive Prospecting Licence become something far more valuable than a permit.

It becomes the foundation of Namibia's next mine, and perhaps its next chapter of economic growth.

MINING IN NUMBERS



The great diamond reckoning

How a global slump, lab-grown diamonds and the possible sale of De Beers are forcing Namibia to rethink one of the pillars of its economy

For more than a century, diamonds have been synonymous with Namibia's prosperity.

They built Oranjemund from a windswept settlement into one of southern Africa's most exclusive mining towns.

They financed roads, schools and hospitals, generated billions of Namibia dollars in export earnings and established Namibia as one of the world's most respected producers of gem-quality diamonds. Few industries have shaped the country's economy as profoundly.

Today, however, the sparkle has dimmed.

The global diamond industry is experiencing its deepest structural crisis in decades. Prices for natural diamonds have fallen sharply since their post-pandemic peak, demand in China has weakened, younger consumers are questioning traditional luxury purchases, and laboratory-grown diamonds, once dismissed as novelty products, have become a mainstream alternative.

At the same time, one of the world's most iconic companies is itself in transition. Anglo American, the mining giant that owns 85% of De Beers, is pressing ahead with plans to sell the business as part of a broader restructuring after years of declining earnings and multi-billion-dollar write-downs.

Reports indicate that a consortium led by former De Beers chief executive Gareth Penny has emerged as the preferred bidder, with governments including Botswana, Namibia and Angola expressing interest in the company's future.

For Namibia, these are not distant corporate developments. They raise fundamental questions about the future of one of the country's most important economic sectors.

When the world's luxury market sneezes

Namibia's diamond industry has always depended on consumers thousands of kilometres away.

When engagement ring sales slow in New York, luxury spending weakens in Shanghai or jewellery retailers reduce inventories in Mumbai, the effects are eventually felt in Lüderitz, Oranjemund and along Namibia's Atlantic coastline.

Diamonds remain one of Namibia's most valuable exports and continue to contribute significantly to government revenue through taxes, royalties and dividends from the 50-50 joint venture between the Namibian Government and De Beers, Namdeb Holdings.

But when prices fall, the consequences ripple through the economy.

Mining companies cut production.

Exploration budgets shrink.

Contractors receive fewer orders.

Capital projects are delayed.

Government revenues come under pressure, narrowing the fiscal space available for infrastructure, healthcare and education.

This is precisely the environment Namibia now faces.

The downturn has become severe enough that Anglo American has repeatedly written down the value of De Beers, while the group's revenues from diamonds have fallen dramatically from their 2022 highs.

The company that changed the world

Few companies have influenced consumer behaviour as profoundly as De Beers.

Its famous slogan, "A Diamond is Forever," transformed diamonds from luxury commodities into symbols of eternal love.

For decades, De Beers controlled as much as 80% of the global rough diamond trade, carefully managing supply to support prices and cultivating the idea that a diamond engagement ring was an essential expression of commitment.

Today, that model is under unprecedented pressure.

"The sale of De Beers has never been closer," Chief executive Al Cook recently said, indicating that a transaction could happen "in weeks rather than months" as Anglo American completes its restructuring.

The irony is difficult to ignore.

The company that once defined the global diamond industry is itself searching for a new owner.

The rise of the laboratory diamond

The greatest disruption has not come from another mining company.

It has come from technology.

Laboratory-grown diamonds are chemically, physically and optically identical to natural diamonds. They are not imitations like cubic zirconia or moissanite.

They are genuine diamonds, created in laboratories over several weeks instead of beneath the Earth's surface over billions of years.

The difference lies in cost.

Where natural diamonds remain scarce by definition, laboratory production can be expanded.

As manufacturing technology improved, prices collapsed.

A laboratory-grown diamond that once sold for close to the price of a natural stone can now cost as much as 70% to 90% less.

For younger consumers facing rising living costs, the value proposition is compelling.

An engagement ring that once required months of savings can now be purchased at a fraction of the price.

A tale of two markets

The emergence of laboratory-grown diamonds has fundamentally changed the industry's narrative.

Natural diamonds are increasingly being positioned as rare luxury assets with geological histories spanning billions of years.

Lab-grown diamonds are marketed as affordable, modern and technologically advanced.

Neither proposition is necessarily wrong.

Paul Zimnisky, one of the world's leading independent diamond analysts, has repeatedly argued that the natural diamond industry must stop competing with laboratory-grown diamonds on price and instead reinforce rarity, provenance and emotional value.

That is precisely the strategy De Beers has adopted.

Earlier this year, the company announced organisational changes centred on strengthening its position as a premium natural diamond business, while highlighting renewed growth in demand for higher-value natural diamonds in key markets.

In other words, De Beers is no longer trying to convince consumers that laboratory-grown diamonds are inferior.

Instead, it is arguing that they belong in a completely different category.

The comparison is similar to natural pearls versus cultured pearls, or original artwork versus limited-edition prints.

Namibia's premium advantage

Fortunately, Namibia occupies a unique position within the natural diamond industry.

Unlike many producers that focus on volume, Namibia is renowned for quality.

The country's marine diamonds, recovered from the Atlantic seabed by Debmarine Namibia's sophisticated mining vessels, are among the highest-value gem diamonds in the world.

They have been naturally polished over millions of years by ocean currents before settling on the seabed.

This gives Namibia a competitive advantage.

If natural diamonds increasingly become luxury collectibles rather than mass-market jewellery, quality will matter more than quantity.

That plays directly to Namibia's strengths.

The uncertainty surrounding De Beers

The proposed sale of De Beers inevitably raises questions about Namibia's future.

Would a new owner maintain current investment levels?

Would employment remain stable?

Would exploration continue?

These are legitimate concerns.

Botswana's Minister for State President, Defence and Security, Moeti Mohwasa, recently confirmed that Anglo American has selected a preferred buyer while Botswana evaluates the "optimal structure" for any transaction, emphasising the importance of a financially strong long-term partner.

Namibia, too, has a strategic interest.

Through Namdeb Holdings, the Government already owns 50% of Namibia's diamond operations.

That joint-venture structure provides an important measure of stability, regardless of who ultimately acquires De Beers.

Even so, ownership transitions often delay investment decisions and create uncertainty across the supply chain.

More than a diamond story

Perhaps the most important lesson from today's downturn is not about diamonds at all.

It is about diversification.

For years, policymakers have spoken of reducing Namibia's dependence on a single commodity.

Now the urgency is unmistakable.

Fortunately, the country is no longer solely a diamond economy.

Uranium has become one of Namibia's fastest-growing export industries, supported by global interest in nuclear energy.

Gold production continues to expand.

Copper and zinc remain strategically important.

Critical minerals such as lithium, graphite and rare earth elements are attracting growing international investment, while offshore oil discoveries promise an entirely new chapter in the country's natural resource story.

The future mining economy will almost certainly be broader than the one that carried Namibia through the twentieth century.

Beyond the sparkle

There is a tendency during commodity downturns to declare the end of an industry.

History suggests caution.

Diamonds survived the Great Depression, two World Wars, financial crises and countless recessions.

They will survive laboratory-grown diamonds as well.

But the industry emerging from this transition will look very different.

Natural diamonds will become increasingly defined by rarity, provenance and luxury.

Laboratory-grown diamonds will dominate the affordable jewellery market.

For Namibia, the challenge is not resisting change but adapting to it.

That means strengthening beneficiation, investing in branding Namibian diamonds, expanding downstream industries and using today's mining revenues to build tomorrow's economy.

The world's fascination with diamonds may be changing, but Namibia's opportunity remains.

The country's greatest asset has never been the stones themselves.

It is the ability to transform finite natural wealth into lasting national prosperity.

That is a challenge no laboratory can manufacture, and no market downturn should be allowed to diminish.

YOUNG OBSERVER
A SUPPLEMENT OF WINDHOEK OBSERVER

Youth lead renewed pride in Mayeyi culture ahead of Batsara festival

Digital classroom opens new learning opportunities for Okakarara learners

www.observer.com.na PARAGON MEDIA FRIDAY 31 JULY **2026**

From hookah to hospital

...young Namibian's vaping addiction mirrors growing national concern

PATIENCE MAKWELE
Staff Writer

What began as an innocent pastime during the Covid-19 lockdown became a dangerous addiction that a 27-year-old Namibian says almost claimed his life.

For years, Petersen Timothy believed vaping was harmless. Today, after repeated hospital admissions and a serious lung condition, he is sharing his story in the hope that other young people will not follow the same path.

The Young Observer has changed Petersen's name to protect his identity.

Petersen, who has lived with asthma since the age of six, said his introduction to smoking came in 2020 when Covid-19 restrictions left him spending most of his time at home with cousins and neighbours.

"Back then, we bought a hookah pipe just to pass the time. It was something we did for fun," he recalled.

What started as occasional smoking soon developed into a craving. When portable vaping devices became more popular a few years later, he switched to disposable vapes and said he rarely went anywhere without one.

"I always had one with me. I lost count of how many times I vaped in a day because it became part of my routine," he said.

However, the addiction quickly took hold.

"I started because the people around me were doing it. Before I knew it, I always wanted another puff."

Although doctors repeatedly warned him about the dangers because of his asthma, Petersen admitted he ignored the advice. Instead, he hid his habit from his parents by vaping outside the house or while everyone was asleep.

"My lips became dark and I tried to hide it but I could not hide the addiction anymore."

His health continued to deteriorate. In 2022, Petersen was admitted to the Katutura Intermediate hospital after doctors discovered his lungs were not in good condition.

Although treatment helped him recover temporarily, he returned to vaping only a few months later.

Towards the end of 2025, what his family believed was another asthma attack resulted in another emergency hospital visit.

"They rushed me to hospital thinking it was just my asthma but the doctors said my lungs had become worse again. It was very frightening for my family," he said.

Despite repeated hospitalisations, Petersen said quitting nicotine proved harder than he expected.

"Even when I was sick, I would still sneak away just to vape. Looking back, I realise it delayed my recovery."

Earlier this year, doctors diagnosed him with lipoid pneumonia, a lung condition he believes was linked to years of vaping. The diagnosis became the wake-up call he needed.

"Every time I breathed in, it felt like I was breathing through sharp objects. That was when I realised if I did not stop, my family might lose me."

He immediately stopped selling vaping products, asked family members not to vape around him and committed himself to breaking his addiction.

Today, Petersen says he has been vape-free for five months and is slowly regaining his health.

"The doctors say I am improving and I am grateful for that."

His experience comes as Namibia intensifies efforts to tackle the growing use of vaping products among young people.

The ministry of education, innovation, youth, sport, arts and culture recently announced it is reviewing school safety policies and the Education Act to explicitly prohibit vaping devices in schools after increasing reports of learners using them.

Education minister Sanet Steenkamp said the ministry is working to close legal loopholes while strengthening learner codes of conduct and school safety frameworks.

The ministry of health and social services is also reviewing the Tobacco Products Control Act to bring electronic cigarettes, vapes and hubbly bubbly under tighter regulation as concerns grow over youth nicotine addiction and the lack of clear controls on emerging tobacco products.

The growing concern is backed by alarming statistics.

According to the 2024 Namibia Global School-based Student Health Survey, about 23% of learners aged 13 to 17 reported using electronic cigarettes, while 18% used tobacco products and 9% smoked conventional cigarettes.

The World Health Organization warned that nicotine exposure during adolescence can interfere with brain development, increase dependence and make quitting significantly more difficult later in life.

Lawmakers have also raised alarm over the growing popularity of hubbly bubbly and vaping among learners.

The National Council's Standing Committee on Health, Social Welfare and Labour Affairs has been investigating the prevalence of vaping in schools and its impact on learners' health, amid calls for stronger regulation and public awareness.

For Petersen, however, the debate is no longer about policy.

It is about survival.

"I started because of peer pressure and because everyone around me was doing it," he said. "People think vaping is different from smoking but the damage is real."

He urged young people not to ignore the advice of parents, teachers and health professionals.

"Following peer pressure should never be something you do because you can lose your life. I cannot change what happened to me but maybe someone else can make a different choice."

He shared that when he is ready to publicly raise awareness about the dangers associated with vaping he will use his active TikTok account with over 9 000 followers but for now he's hope is that young people learn from his experience.

"I am still in recovery, I have been documenting everything so that one day when I am ready to share my story without withholding my identity'hopefully soon' young people including adults can learn and stand together with the government to put an end to this."

As Namibia moves to tighten controls on vaping products, Petersen hopes his story will serve as a warning that addiction can begin with what seems like harmless fun but end with consequences that last a lifetime.

Electronic cigarettes, commonly known as vapes, are at the centre of growing calls for tighter regulation amid rising concerns over youth nicotine use.

B2Gold Namibia, in partnership with EduVision, opened a smart classroom at Coblenz Combined School.

Digital classroom opens new learning opportunities for Okakarara learners

PATIENCE MAKWELE
Staff Writer

Learners at Coblenz Combined School in the Okakarara Constituency have gained access to digital learning tools following the establishment of a smart classroom aimed at improving access to technology-driven education in rural Namibia.

The facility, introduced through a partnership between B2Gold Namibia and EduVision, includes digital learning equipment and an online-access smart board valued at nearly N$300 000.

B2Gold Namibia managing director John Roos said the investment is intended to expose learners to research tools, interactive lessons and virtual learning platforms that can place them on equal footing with learners in more technologically advanced schools.

Roos challenged learners and educators to ensure that the investment translates into improved academic performance.

"We want to see returns; we want to see your marks improve," he said, adding that the company expects the technology to make a measurable difference in learners' performance.

EduVision director Frikkie Louw said the initiative was established to address the digital divide affecting learners in remote areas.

He said EduVision's vision since 2018 has been to use technology to bridge the educational gap between urban and rural schools, describing education as one of the most important investments in Namibia's future.

Coblenz Combined School principal Uazuvara Kuzatjike and school board member Rapupara Tjipira welcomed the initiative, saying the facility would support the school's efforts to improve learning outcomes.

The smart classroom forms part of B2Gold Namibia's wider education support programme, with the company having established 20 smart classrooms across the country to date.

Youth lead renewed pride in Mayeyi culture ahead of Batsara festival

PATIENCE MAKWELE
Staff Writer

Youths have expressed renewed pride in their Mayeyi heritage, saying the annual Batsara Cultural Festival provides an opportunity for a younger generation to reconnect with ancestral traditions, preserve their language and celebrate an identity they fear could be weakened by changing lifestyles.

With the annual celebration set for 2 August in Sangwali, young Mayeyi people say the festival has evolved beyond a cultural gathering into a platform where they can embrace their roots while giving their traditions a modern voice.

Among those eagerly awaiting the festival is Namakaliza Libonina, who said preparations are already underway, with many young people ready to celebrate the heritage they hold dear.

"We are looking forward to it. We have already bought our outfits and we are ready to go because this is our culture, this is our heritage and this is our pride," Libonina said.

She said despite many young Mayeyi people living away from their traditional homeland, their connection to their ancestry remains strong.

"In as much as we are always far from home, the fact remains that we carry Mayeyi blood in us. We carry our ancestral heritage with us, our gifts, life guidelines and principles that we live by and our ways of living that we learned from our ancestors," she said.

Libonina believes this year's celebration will be particularly memorable, citing the expected attendance of Vice President Lucia Witbooi and the growing participation of young people.

She also welcomed what she described as a new generation of Mayeyi artists who are using music to keep the Shiyeyi language alive.

"We have a number of fresh talents and new voices among the youth. They have learnt how to sing our songs and blend them into Amapiano, rap and other music genres. Years ago people used to say speaking Shiyeyi was difficult, let alone singing in it but today young people are proving otherwise," she said.

Although many Mayeyi people now live in towns and cities across the country, Libonina said distance has not diminished their commitment to celebrating their culture.

"Those who cannot travel to Sangwali still gather wherever they are. Families come together, wear traditional attire, listen to our music and celebrate with us even from afar," she said.

Her sentiments were echoed by Salimbo Likezo, a member of the renowned Mayeyi cultural group Tilipatye, who believes music has become one of the strongest tools for preserving culture among young people.

Likezo said his group deliberately incorporates traditional Mayeyi culture into its performances to ensure younger generations remain connected to their heritage despite the growing influence of modern lifestyles.

"We are involved mostly in culture because we do not want African culture to disappear. As modern culture continues to influence many young people, we are trying to create a balance so that our children do not leave their culture behind," he said.

He encouraged aspiring young artists to embrace the Shiyeyi language instead of feeling discouraged by perceptions that it is difficult to sing or perform in.

"We encourage young people to be themselves. They should not shy away from their culture or their language because that is who they are," Likezo said.

Likezo said cultural exchanges have also strengthened ties between Mayeyi communities in Namibia and Botswana, where Tilipatye has performed several times at festivals.

"When we perform in Botswana, it reminds us that we are one people. They also come to our festivals and through these exchanges culture continues to unite us across borders," he said.

The youth-driven enthusiasm reflects one of the key objectives behind the annual Batsara Cultural Festival.

Mayeyi Traditional Authority spokesperson Walters Kamaya said the festival, which has been held annually since 1993, was established to bring the community together, strengthen cultural identity and ensure younger generations understand their heritage.

"The aim of gathering is to honour ourselves, reflect and regain our identity. It is also a way of teaching our culture to the young ones and ensuring that we preserve it for future generations," Kamaya said.

He said one of the festival's central goals is to encourage young people to speak Shiyeyi and understand the customs and traditions passed down by their forefathers.

"The most important thing is that people should know their language. When we talk about culture, it is something that should be taught and something that people should know," he said.

Kamaya explained that the name Batsara reflects the Mayeyi people's long-standing association with water, symbolising resilience and perseverance.

Young Mayeyi performers blend tradition with contemporary music, reflecting a growing movement among youth to preserve their language and cultural identity.

"Water cannot easily be obstructed. The Mayeyi people liken themselves to water because they believe they cannot be stopped," he said.

Held under the theme "Celebrating our heritage, honouring our roots, building our future," this year's festival will feature traditional dance, music, craft exhibitions, indigenous cuisine and displays celebrating the Mayeyi way of life.

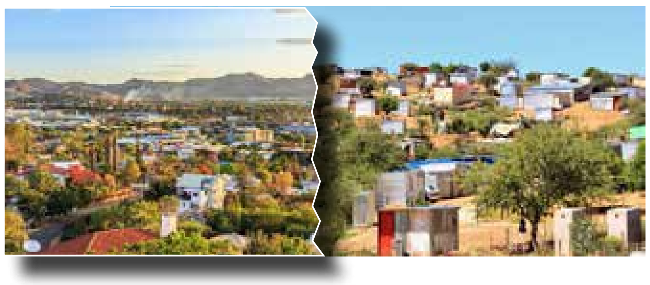
Kamaya said the event is open to people from all communities and encouraged Namibians to attend and experience Mayeyi culture first-hand.

"There will be traditional food, crafts, cultural performances and many other activities throughout the day. Everyone is welcome," he said.

As excitement builds ahead of Saturday's celebration, young Mayeyi people say Batsara is no longer simply an annual cultural event.

For them, it has become a symbol of identity, belonging and resilience and proof that while traditions may evolve with each generation, the pride of being Mayeyi continues to endure.

The long shadow of apartheid: Why Namibia remains one of the world's most unequal nations



Namibia's tourism moment: Can we become Southern Africa's premier travel destination?

Another task force, another report? Namibia's SOE salary review faces an uphill battle

The announcement by Prime Minister Elijah Ngurare that government has established an 11-member task force to review governance and remuneration in Namibia's state-owned enterprises (SOEs) has reignited a debate that has simmered for years.

For some, the move represents a long-overdue intervention into a public sector plagued by uneven salary structures, weak governance and declining public confidence.

For others, it is merely another commission destined to produce an excellent report that ultimately gathers dust on a government shelf.

The skepticism is understandable.

Namibia has no shortage of commissions, inquiries, task forces and policy reviews. What has often been lacking is the political will and administrative discipline to implement their recommendations.

The new task force has been mandated to conduct a comprehensive review of governance practices, executive remuneration, board remuneration, recruitment processes and human resource management across public enterprises. It is expected to report back to Cabinet within three months with recommendations aimed at creating greater consistency, accountability and efficiency across the sector.

On paper, the initiative appears timely.

Public enterprises remain central to Namibia's economy. They manage strategic infrastructure, provide essential public services and collectively employ thousands of Namibians. Yet many have become synonymous with recurring financial losses, repeated government bailouts, boardroom instability and governance controversies.

Against that backdrop, public outrage over highly paid executives has become increasingly difficult to ignore.

Taxpayers frequently question why executives in loss-making public enterprises earn salaries significantly higher than senior public servants while their organisations continue to depend on Treasury support.

That public frustration undoubtedly influenced government's decision.

Yet whether remuneration is truly the problem remains open to debate.

Elijah Ngurare

> The issue has never really been the recommendations, It has been implementation.

The implementation question

Former finance minister Calle Schlettwein has been among the strongest voices urging caution.

While welcoming government's willingness to review the sector, Schlettwein argued that Namibia has travelled this road before. Salary bands, remuneration guidelines and governance reforms have previously been developed.

"The issue has never really been the recommendations," he has argued. "It has been implementation."

Schlettwein warned that previous attempts to regulate executive salaries were undermined when certain enterprises effectively circumvented the intended limits by moving themselves into higher remuneration categories or finding administrative ways around the restrictions. Without effective enforcement mechanisms, he cautions, another review risks producing the same outcome.)

His criticism strikes at the heart of Namibia's governance challenge.

The country rarely struggles to identify problems.

It struggles to sustain reforms.

A symptom rather than the disease?

The debate also raises a broader question.

Are executive salaries themselves the real problem?

Or are they merely the visible symptom of deeper institutional weaknesses?

Corporate governance specialists have increasingly argued that remuneration should never be examined in isolation.

Competitive executive salaries are common internationally.

Large organisations require experienced leadership capable of managing billions of dollars in assets, thousands of employees and highly technical operations.

The private sector routinely pays substantial executive packages.

The difference is accountability.

Shareholders expect measurable returns.

Boards monitor performance closely.

Executives who consistently underperform rarely remain in office.

In many public enterprises, however, that direct relationship between pay and performance is often less obvious.

Losses accumulate.

Government guarantees increase.

Service delivery deteriorates.

Yet executive remuneration frequently remains relatively protected.

That disconnect fuels public resentment.

The issue therefore becomes less about whether executives deserve to earn high salaries and more about whether those salaries are clearly linked to measurable organisational performance.

Governance begins with boards

The task force's mandate extends beyond salaries.

It will also review governance structures and board remuneration.

That may ultimately prove far more significant.

Boards determine organisational direction.

They appoint chief executives.

They evaluate performance.

They approve remuneration packages.

They oversee risk.

Weak boards inevitably produce weak institutions.

Several governance experts have argued that Namibia's public enterprise reforms should begin with strengthening board appointments rather than reducing executive salaries.

Professional competence, independence and sector expertise are increasingly regarded internationally as the foundations of successful public enterprises.

If boards lack those qualities, salary reform alone is unlikely to transform organisational performance.

A poorly governed enterprise paying lower salaries remains a poorly governed enterprise.

Public confidence has eroded

Part of the skepticism surrounding the latest initiative stems from history.

Namibians have witnessed repeated cycles of reform announcements.

New policies.

New governance frameworks.

New strategic plans.

Yet many familiar problems persist.

Several SOEs continue to depend on taxpayer support while simultaneously facing recurring leadership disputes, audit concerns or operational challenges.

This history makes it difficult for the public to embrace another review with optimism.

Many citizens now judge government less by announcements and more by outcomes.

The creation of a task force, while important, is therefore only the beginning.

Its credibility will ultimately depend on what happens after the report is submitted.

The fiscal reality

The review also comes at a time when government finances remain under pressure.

Although Namibia's economic outlook has improved through strong uranium and gold exports and continued oil and gas exploration activity, fiscal pressures remain significant.

The International Monetary Fund has recently advised Namibia to improve expenditure efficiency and reduce pressures on the public wage bill in order to strengthen public finances over the medium term. (IMF)

While SOE executive remuneration represents only a small portion of total government expenditure, it carries enormous symbolic significance.

Citizens expect prudence when public resources are constrained.

Visible disparities between executive compensation and organisational performance inevitably attract political attention.

The politics of public perception

Salary reviews also carry political value.

Few issues resonate more strongly with taxpayers than executive pay.

The image of highly paid executives leading struggling public enterprises creates an immediate emotional response.

Governments worldwide recognise this.

Reviewing remuneration demonstrates responsiveness to public concern.

Whether it addresses the structural causes of institutional underperformance is another matter.

Critics therefore argue that salary debates can sometimes distract attention from more difficult

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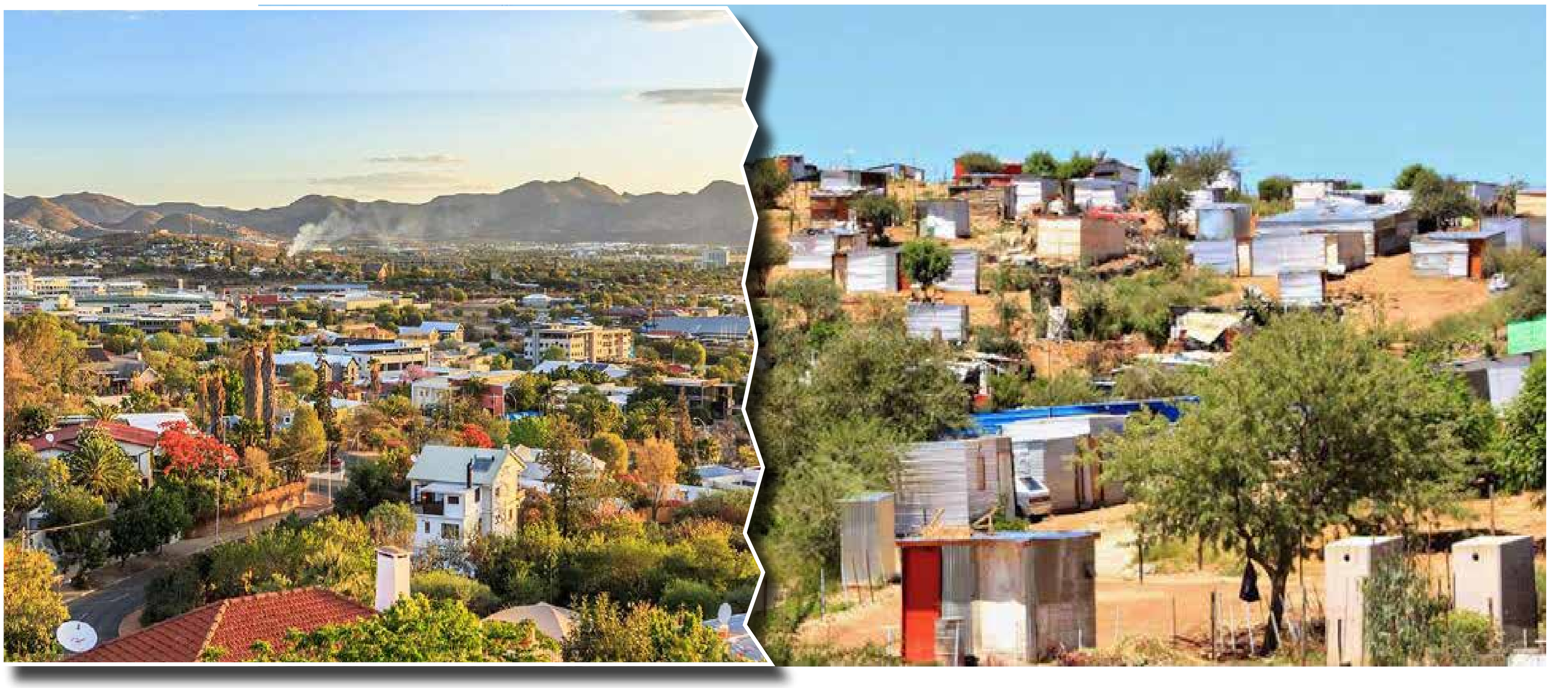

The long shadow of apartheid: Why Namibia remains one of the world's most unequal nations

Thirty-six years after independence, Namibia continues to carry an unenviable distinction. Despite its political stability, vast natural resources and upper-middle-income status, it remains one of the most unequal societies on Earth.

The contradiction is striking.

The country is rich in diamonds, uranium, gold, fisheries and, increasingly, green hydrogen potential. It boasts modern banking institutions, world-class infrastructure by regional standards and an economy expected to benefit significantly from offshore oil discoveries.

Yet nearly one million Namibians still live in informal settlements. Youth unemployment remains alarmingly high. Thousands of households depend on social grants, while a relatively small segment of society controls a disproportionate share of the country's wealth.

For many economists, inequality—not poverty—is Namibia's defining socio-economic challenge.

And while economic inequality is often measured in rands or dollars, in Namibia it is visible in geography.

Drive from Windhoek's affluent suburbs through Ludwigsdorf, Klein Windhoek or Auasblick before entering Havana, Goreangab or Okuryangava, and the contrast is immediate. Within minutes, modern homes with swimming pools give way to zinc shacks without proper sanitation.

> "The country is rich in diamonds, uranium, gold, fisheries and, increasingly, green hydrogen potential. It boasts modern banking institutions, world-class infrastructure by regional standards and an economy expected to benefit significantly from offshore oil discoveries.

The divide is not accidental.

It is historical.

A legacy deliberately engineered

Namibia's inequality did not emerge naturally.

It was systematically designed during German colonial rule before being entrenched under South Africa's apartheid administration between 1915 and 1990.

Land ownership was racially structured.

Quality education was racially structured.

Employment opportunities were racially structured.

Access to capital was racially structured.

The apartheid economy ensured that white Namibians accumulated land, businesses, financial assets and educational opportunities while the black majority supplied labour with limited prospects of upward mobility.

When Namibia gained independence in 1990, political power changed hands.

Economic power largely did not.

Economist and former Bank of Namibia Governor Tom Alweendo, before entering politics, repeatedly argued that Namibia inherited "one of the most unequal income distributions in the world", warning that political liberation alone would not dismantle structural inequality.

That warning remains relevant today.

Measuring inequality

The most widely used measure of inequality is the **Gini coefficient**, where zero represents perfect equality and one represents complete inequality.

Namibia's Gini coefficient has consistently hovered around 0.59 to 0.60, placing it among the highest globally.

Although this represents an improvement from estimates exceeding 0.70 shortly after independence, the reduction has been painfully slow.

According to the World Bank, Namibia combines relatively high average income with extremely unequal distribution of wealth and opportunity.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) similarly notes that inequality in Namibia is driven not merely by differences in income but by unequal access to productive assets, quality education, healthcare, housing and employment.

These are structural inequalities that persist across generations.

A child born into an affluent household begins life with vastly different opportunities than one born in an informal settlement.

Education, nutrition, healthcare and social networks all influence future earning potential.

The result is inequality reproducing itself.

Wealth inequality versus income inequality

Too often public debate focuses only on salaries.

But economists distinguish between income inequality and wealth inequality.

Income refers to what people earn.

Wealth refers to what people own.

This distinction is crucial.

A professional earning N$80,000 a month may appear wealthy, yet someone earning less but owning commercial farms, rental property, investment portfolios and businesses possesses significantly greater long-

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Another task force, another report? Namibia's SOE salary review faces an uphill battle

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governance reforms.

Board appointments.

Political interference.

Procurement oversight.

Performance management.

Accountability systems.

These issues rarely generate dramatic headlines.

Yet they often determine whether institutions succeed or fail.

An opportunity for genuine reform

Despite widespread skepticism, dismissing the task force outright would also be premature.

Its broad mandate provides an opportunity to recommend meaningful structural reforms.

Among the issues many observers believe deserve attention are:

- Clear performance contracts for executives.
- Independent, merit-based board appointments.
- Public disclosure of remuneration linked to measurable performance indicators.
- Stronger consequences for persistent institutional underperformance.
- Uniform governance standards across public enterprises.
- Regular public reporting on implementation.

If these issues receive serious attention, the review could extend well beyond salaries.

It could become one of the most significant governance exercises undertaken in Namibia in recent years.

Reports do not reform institutions

History nevertheless offers an uncomfortable lesson.

Good reports are relatively easy to produce.

Implementation is far more difficult.

Namibia has accumulated numerous policy documents identifying governance weaknesses across public institutions.

Many recommendations have been technically sound.

Fewer have fundamentally transformed institutions.

This explains why the announcement has generated cautious optimism rather than widespread celebration.

Citizens have heard similar promises before.

They now want evidence.

The real test begins after three months

The Prime Minister's task force will almost certainly deliver recommendations.

The quality of those recommendations will matter.

But they will not determine success.

Success will depend on whether Cabinet adopts the proposals, whether legislation is amended where necessary, whether boards are held accountable, whether remuneration becomes genuinely linked to performance and whether implementation is monitored transparently.

Without those steps, the latest review risks becoming another well-written report remembered more for its launch than for its impact.

The challenge before government is therefore larger than reviewing executive salaries.

It is restoring public confidence in the governance of Namibia's public enterprises.

For many Namibians, the question is no longer whether government understands the problems.

It is whether government is finally prepared to solve them.

The establishment of the task force offers an opportunity to answer that question.

Whether it becomes a turning point or merely another chapter in Namibia's long history of unfinished reforms will depend not on the report it produces, but on what government chooses to do once the report reaches Cabinet.

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term wealth.
Wealth generates more wealth.
Assets appreciate.
Investments compound.
Businesses create new income streams.
Property values rise.
Meanwhile, families without assets remain dependent solely on wages.
Professor Thomas Piketty, whose research on global inequality transformed economic thinking, argues that wealth tends to concentrate over generations unless deliberate interventions broaden ownership.
Namibia illustrates this phenomenon vividly.
Large portions of productive agricultural land remain concentrated.
Business ownership remains concentrated.
Capital markets remain inaccessible to many citizens.
The consequence is persistent wealth inequality even where income inequality gradually improves.

South Africa's mirror image
Namibia's experience closely resembles that of South Africa.
Both countries inherited apartheid economies designed around racial exclusion.
Both achieved political democracy without fully transforming economic ownership.
South Africa consistently ranks alongside Namibia and Brazil among the world's most unequal countries.
Despite being Africa's largest industrial economy, South Africa continues to experience severe unemployment, widespread township poverty and concentrated corporate ownership.
Economists frequently describe both countries as possessing "dual economies."
One economy is globally competitive, technologically advanced and highly productive.
The other struggles with unemployment, informality and low productivity.
The coexistence of these two realities fuels frustration.
For many young people, democracy has delivered political rights but not meaningful economic inclusion.

Why economic growth has not solved inequality
A common misconception is that economic growth automatically reduces inequality.
Evidence suggests otherwise.
Namibia has experienced periods of respectable GDP growth driven by mining, fishing and tourism.
Yet these sectors are capital intensive rather than labour intensive.
Mining contributes substantially to GDP.
It contributes comparatively fewer jobs.
Similarly, offshore oil discoveries promise substantial future revenues but may not significantly reduce unemployment unless linked to broader industrial development.
Economic growth without inclusive job creation tends to widen inequality rather than reduce it.
This phenomenon is known as "jobless growth."
Namibia has repeatedly experienced precisely this challenge.

Education: Progress and persistent gaps
Education has undoubtedly transformed Namibia since independence.
School enrolment has expanded dramatically.
University participation has increased.
Thousands of first-generation graduates have entered professional careers.
Yet educational inequality remains.
Urban schools generally outperform rural schools.
Private education often delivers better outcomes than public education.
Access to technology remains uneven.
Many rural schools still struggle with infrastructure, teacher shortages and learning resources.
Employers increasingly report shortages of specialised technical skills while graduates often struggle to secure employment.
The mismatch between education and labour market demand contributes to youth unemployment.

Land remains emotionally and economically significant
Few issues illustrate inequality more clearly than land ownership.
Land is both an economic asset and an emotional symbol.
Commercial agriculture contributes significantly to Namibia's economy.
Yet ownership remains highly concentrated despite three decades of land reform.
Government has pursued willing-buyer, willing-seller policies alongside resettlement programmes.
Progress has been made.
Critics, however, argue that redistribution has been too slow, while supporters caution against reforms that undermine agricultural productivity.
South Africa continues wrestling with identical debates.
The challenge for both countries is balancing historical justice with food security and investor confidence.

The unemployment trap
Perhaps no statistic better captures Namibia's inequality challenge than youth unemployment.
Thousands of educated young Namibians enter the labour market each year only to find limited opportunities.
Without employment, individuals cannot accumulate savings.
Without savings, they cannot invest.
Without investments, wealth creation becomes nearly impossible.
The cycle repeats.
Economists frequently warn that prolonged youth unemployment carries broader social consequences including increased crime, mental health challenges, reduced consumer spending and political instability.
A nation cannot sustainably reduce inequality while large segments of its youth remain economically excluded.

Can social grants solve inequality?
Namibia's social protection system is widely regarded as one of Africa's strongest.
Old-age pensions, disability grants and child support programmes have reduced extreme poverty.
They have undoubtedly improved millions of lives.
However, grants redistribute income.
They do not create wealth.
Recipients remain consumers rather than owners of productive assets.
Long-term inequality requires broader ownership of businesses, land, investments and financial capital.

The entrepreneurship gap
Small and medium enterprises are often described as engines of inclusive growth.
Yet Namibian entrepreneurs frequently identify financing as their greatest obstacle.
Banks understandably require collateral.
Many aspiring entrepreneurs possess ideas but lack assets.
Without collateral they cannot secure financing.
Without financing businesses cannot expand.
Without expansion jobs are not created.
Breaking this cycle requires innovative financing mechanisms alongside improved business development support.

A generation demanding inclusion
Young Namibians increasingly judge economic performance differently from previous generations.
Political freedom is valued.
But economic participation is expected.
Access to quality education, affordable housing, meaningful employment and entrepreneurship opportunities increasingly define perceptions of success.
The frustration is understandable.
Young professionals often find themselves earning salaries while unable to purchase homes because property prices continue rising faster than incomes.
Many graduates remain dependent on parents well into adulthood.
Social mobility becomes increasingly difficult.

What needs to change?
Reducing inequality requires more than economic growth.
It requires inclusive growth.
Economists broadly agree on several priorities:

- Improve the quality of education and technical skills.
- Accelerate labour-intensive industrialisation.
- Expand affordable housing.
- Improve access to finance for entrepreneurs.
- Encourage employee ownership and broader capital market participation.
- Reform land ownership responsibly while maintaining productivity.
- Strengthen public service delivery.
- Reduce corruption and improve governance.
- Support sectors capable of creating large-scale employment, particularly manufacturing, agriculture and technology.

None of these measures alone will solve inequality.
Together, however, they could gradually transform economic opportunity.

The oil test
Namibia now stands on the threshold of potentially transformative oil and gas production.
The discoveries offer enormous promise.
But history offers a warning.
Resource wealth alone does not reduce inequality.
Countries blessed with abundant natural resources have often become more unequal when revenues benefit a narrow elite.
Namibia therefore faces a defining national question.
Will future oil revenues broaden opportunity or merely increase existing wealth concentration?
The answer will depend less on geology than governance.

Beyond statistics
Ultimately, inequality is not merely an economic indicator.
It shapes life expectancy, educational outcomes, public health, social cohesion and even trust in democratic institutions.
When citizens believe hard work alone cannot improve their circumstances, social contracts weaken.
That is why reducing inequality is not simply about redistribution.
It is about expanding opportunity.
Namibia has achieved remarkable political stability since independence.
Its democratic institutions remain among Africa's strongest.
Its economy possesses extraordinary natural advantages.
Its people are resilient, entrepreneurial and increasingly educated.
Yet the unfinished business of independence remains economic inclusion.
South Africa's experience demonstrates that political freedom without meaningful economic transformation leaves societies deeply divided.
Namibia still has an opportunity to chart a different path.
The question is whether the country can transform future economic growth into shared prosperity rather than concentrated wealth.
The long shadow of apartheid has not disappeared.
But history need not dictate the future.
The choices made over the next decade—in education, land reform, industrialisation, entrepreneurship, governance and resource management—will determine whether Namibia remains one of the world's most unequal nations or finally begins closing the gap between promise and reality.

Namibia's tourism moment: Can we become Southern Africa's premier travel destination?

Namibia has always had something that few countries can claim.

It has never needed to manufacture beauty.

From the towering dunes of Sossusvlei to the haunting silence of the Skeleton Coast, from the wildlife spectacle of Etosha National Park to the rugged landscapes of Damaraland and the life-giving waters of the Zambezi Region, Namibia possesses a tourism product that is both authentic and extraordinary.

Yet for decades, the country has quietly watched its neighbours dominate the African tourism conversation.

South Africa has built a global tourism powerhouse around diversity, accessibility and world-class infrastructure. Botswana has cultivated an exclusive, high-value safari brand that attracts some of the world's wealthiest travellers.

Namibia has often found itself somewhere in between, less commercial than South Africa, less exclusive than Botswana, yet possessing landscapes arguably unmatched by either.

Today, however, something appears to be changing.

Hospitality occupancy rates are climbing. Luxury lodges report strong bookings. International airlines continue expanding routes into Windhoek. The country's global profile has risen sharply following major offshore oil discoveries and growing international interest in green hydrogen.

But is Namibia truly experiencing a tourism boom?

The answer is yes, with caveats.

The opportunity has never been greater.

Whether Namibia fully capitalises on it depends on decisions made today.

> "South Africa has built a global tourism powerhouse around diversity, accessibility and world-class infrastructure. Botswana has cultivated an exclusive, high-value safari brand that attracts some of the world's wealthiest travellers.

Hospitality: Namibia punches above its weight

Perhaps Namibia's greatest tourism success story lies in its hospitality industry.

Across the country, visitors consistently praise the quality of lodges, guesthouses and safari camps.

Whether staying in a boutique guesthouse in Swakopmund, a luxury lodge overlooking the Namib Desert or a family-run establishment near Etosha, tourists often encounter exceptional service, cleanliness and attention to detail.

Industry figures indicate that occupancy rates have recovered strongly following the COVID-19 pandemic, with many establishments reporting some of their strongest seasons in recent years.

Unlike mass-tourism destinations, Namibia has positioned itself as a destination where visitors pay more but receive an immersive experience.

That strategy mirrors Botswana.

Botswana deliberately adopted a "high-value, low-volume" tourism model to protect environmentally sensitive areas such as the Okavango Delta.

The result has been fewer tourists but significantly higher spending per visitor.

Namibia has naturally evolved towards a similar model, although without formally adopting Botswana's restrictive approach.

The challenge is maintaining quality while ensuring enough affordable accommodation exists for middle-income travellers.

Unlike Botswana, Namibia's tourism market has traditionally relied heavily on self-drive visitors from Germany, South Africa and neighbouring countries.

These travellers often stay longer, spend across multiple regions and support smaller establishments rather than only luxury resorts.

Maintaining that balance will be crucial.

Roads: Namibia's greatest competitive advantage

Ask almost any international visitor what surprised them most about Namibia.

Many will answer the roads.

Despite being one of Africa's least densely populated countries, Namibia possesses an extensive road network that consistently receives praise from tourists.

The B-roads connecting Windhoek to Swakopmund, Walvis Bay, Keetmanshoop, Otjiwarongo and Oshakati are generally well maintained.

Even the country's gravel roads—essential for reaching many iconic destinations, are regarded among the best on the continent.

Compared with South Africa, Namibia experiences significantly lower traffic volumes outside urban areas.

Compared with Botswana, road accessibility extends to a greater number of tourism destinations.

For self-drive enthusiasts, this matters enormously.

Driving through Namibia is not merely transportation.

It becomes part of the experience.

The endless open landscapes, minimal congestion and dramatic scenery create journeys that are every bit as memorable as the destinations themselves.

However, maintaining this advantage requires constant investment.

Gravel roads deteriorate quickly after seasonal rains.

Increased heavy vehicle traffic associated with mining and future oil developments could accelerate road damage.

Road safety also remains a concern.

Long distances, excessive speed and wildlife crossings continue contributing to accidents involving tourists and residents alike.

Infrastructure excellence cannot become an excuse for complacency.

Community-based tourism: Namibia's global success story

Perhaps nowhere has Namibia distinguished itself more than in community-based conservation.

Long before conservation became fashionable, Namibia pioneered a model allowing rural communities to benefit directly from wildlife.

Through communal conservancies, local people acquired legal rights to manage wildlife and generate income from tourism.

The results have attracted international recognition.

Wildlife populations that once declined dramatically have recovered.

Communities receive income through lodge partnerships, hunting concessions, campsite operations and tourism employment.

Species such as black rhino, desert-adapted elephants and lions have benefited from conservation efforts supported by local communities rather than imposed upon them.

Botswana has implemented similar community initiatives around the Okavango Delta.

South Africa has achieved notable successes through private game reserves.

Yet Namibia's conservancy system remains one of Africa's most ambitious examples of conservation linked directly to rural development.

The model is not without criticism.

Some conservancies generate substantial income while others struggle financially.

Revenue distribution has occasionally created tensions.

Human-wildlife conflict remains an ongoing challenge for communities living alongside elephants, lions and predators.

Nevertheless, Namibia has demonstrated that wildlife can become an economic asset rather than a liability.

That lesson carries global significance.

Pricing: Is Namibia becoming too expensive?

Tourism operators increasingly face an uncomfortable question.

Has Namibia priced itself beyond the reach of ordinary travellers?

There is no simple answer.

Compared with many European destinations, Namibia still offers excellent value.

Compared with neighbouring South Africa, however, many visitors perceive Namibia as significantly more expensive.

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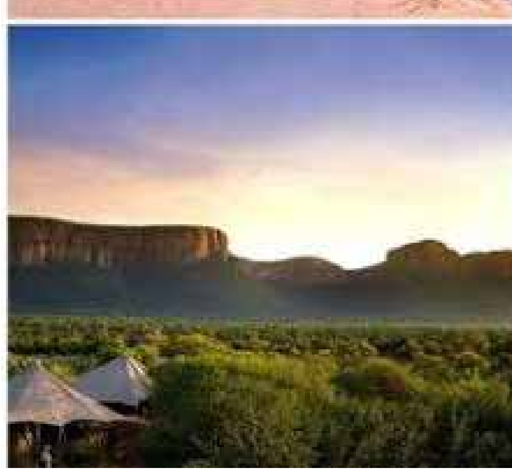


Accommodation prices have risen steadily.
Fuel costs remain substantial given the vast distances travelled.
Restaurant meals in tourism hotspots increasingly reflect international pricing.
Entrance fees, guided excursions and vehicle hire further increase holiday costs.
Botswana deliberately embraces premium pricing.
Its strategy intentionally limits visitor numbers while maximising revenue.
South Africa follows the opposite model.
Its scale allows accommodation options ranging from backpacker hostels to ultra-luxury hotels.
Namibia occupies a difficult middle ground.
It cannot compete with South Africa on affordability.
Nor can it fully justify Botswana's premium pricing across every tourism segment.
The risk is becoming perceived as expensive without consistently delivering an exclusive luxury experience.
That perception deserves careful monitoring.

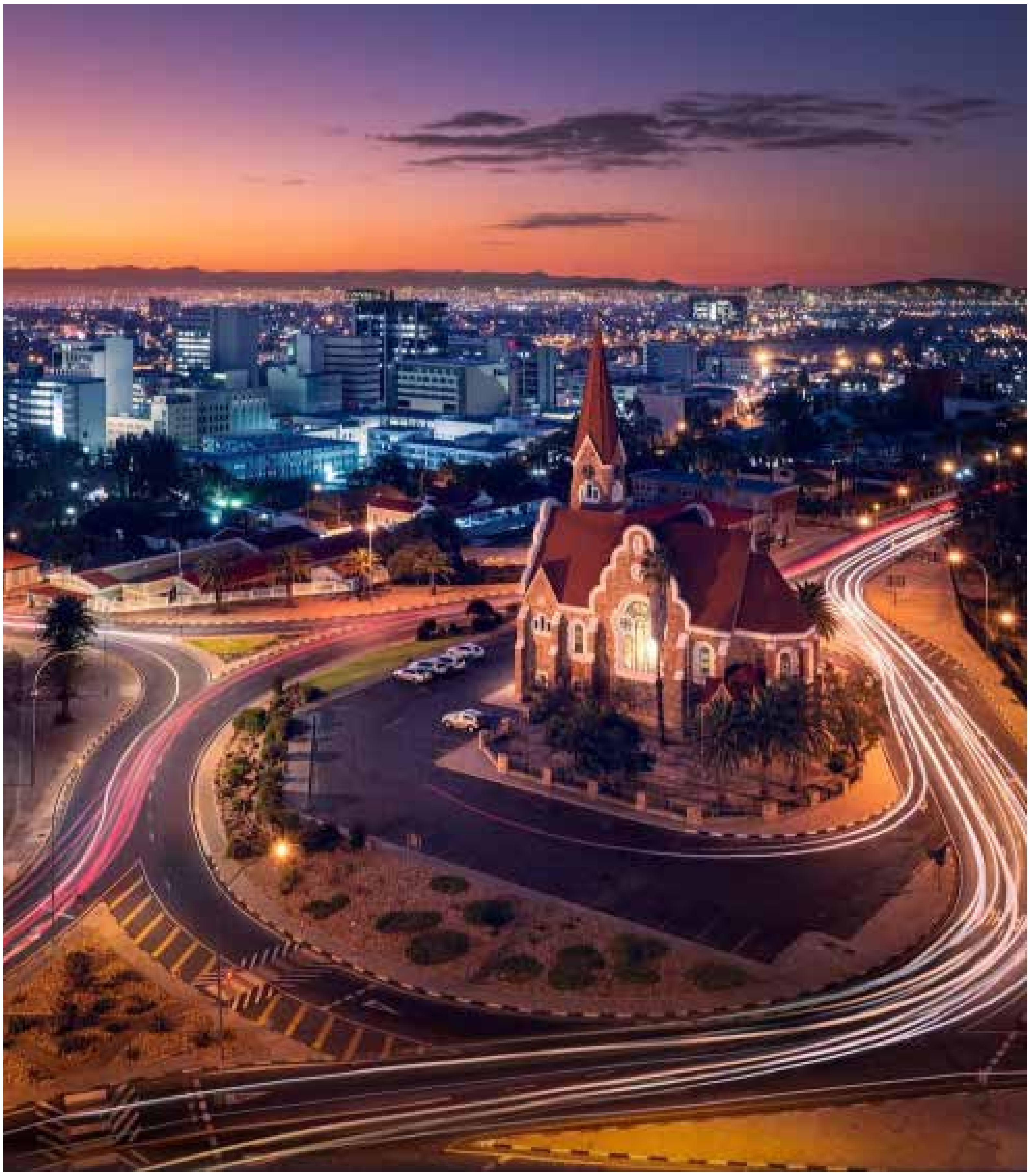
Ease of travel: Simplicity matters
One of Namibia's greatest strengths is simplicity.
International visitors generally describe the country as easy to navigate.
English serves as the official language.
Road signage is clear.
Major tourism routes are well established.
Crime affecting tourists remains relatively low compared with several competing destinations.
Political stability provides additional confidence.
These factors create enormous competitive advantages.
Contrast this with many international destinations where language barriers, complex bureaucracy or security concerns complicate travel planning.
South Africa enjoys superior air connectivity but continues battling international perceptions regarding crime.
Botswana offers remarkable wildlife experiences but limited tourism infrastructure outside key safari circuits.
Namibia occupies an attractive middle ground.
Nevertheless, improvements remain possible.
Additional direct international flights would reduce travel costs.
Simplified regional travel arrangements within the Southern African Development Community could encourage multi-country itineraries.
Digital visa systems and improved border efficiency would further strengthen competitiveness.
Tourists increasingly judge destinations not only by attractions but by convenience.

Car rental: The engine driving Namibian tourism
Few countries depend on self-drive tourism as heavily as Namibia.
The ability to rent a vehicle and explore independently has become central to the country's tourism identity.
Fortunately, Namibia possesses a mature vehicle rental industry.
Visitors can choose between compact vehicles, sport utility vehicles, luxury four-wheel drives and fully equipped camping vehicles.
Many operators provide detailed route planning, satellite navigation, emergency support and camping equipment.
The industry enjoys an excellent reputation internationally.
However, challenges remain.
Rental costs have increased significantly over recent years.
Four-wheel-drive vehicles suitable for gravel roads often represent one of the largest expenses within an entire holiday budget.
Insurance excesses remain confusing for many international visitors.
Cross-border travel into Botswana, Zambia or South Africa often requires additional documentation and fees.
Demand during peak season also limits vehicle availability.
As tourism continues growing, fleet expansion and service innovation will become increasingly important.
Electric vehicle tourism, though still limited, may eventually create new opportunities as charging infrastructure develops.

South Africa and Botswana: Lessons worth learning
Namibia need not imitate either neighbour.
But there is much to learn from both.
South Africa excels in marketing.
Cape Town has become one of the world's most recognisable tourism brands.
The Kruger National Park remains synonymous with African safaris.
Wine tourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism and business tourism all complement one another.
Botswana, by contrast, has remained disciplined.
It has resisted mass tourism.
Its focus on exclusivity has protected fragile ecosystems while maintaining exceptionally high visitor spending.
Namibia possesses elements of both models.
Its challenge is defining its own identity.
Should Namibia become Southern Africa's premier self-drive destination?
Should it position itself as the world's leading desert tourism experience?
Should community conservation become its defining international brand?
Perhaps the answer lies in combining all three.

The road ahead
The future of Namibian tourism extends beyond attracting more visitors.
It is about ensuring tourism creates sustainable jobs, strengthens rural economies and preserves the country's extraordinary natural heritage.
Government must continue investing in transport infrastructure, digital connectivity and destination marketing.
The private sector must maintain service excellence while remaining sensitive to affordability.
Communities must continue receiving meaningful benefits from conservation and tourism partnerships.
Tourism cannot succeed if prosperity is confined to a handful of luxury establishments.
Its benefits must reach villages, craft markets, tour guides, transport operators, restaurants and family-owned guesthouses across the country.
Namibia possesses every ingredient required to become one of the world's premier travel destinations.
The landscapes are unmatched.
The wildlife is exceptional.
The hospitality industry consistently exceeds expectations.
The roads invite exploration.
The people welcome visitors with warmth and authenticity.
What remains is the courage to think strategically.
Tourism is no longer simply an economic sector.
It is one of Namibia's greatest national assets.
In an era where travellers increasingly seek authenticity over excess, silence over congestion and meaningful experiences over hurried itineraries, Namibia offers precisely what much of the world is searching for.
The country's tourism moment has arrived.
The question is not whether Namibia can compete with Botswana or South Africa.
The real question is whether Namibia can finally convince the world that it deserves to stand alongside them—not as an alternative destination, but as a destination of first choice.

Is Windhoek really boring? Or are we simply telling our story poorly?



It is perhaps the harshest criticism any capital city can receive.
"Boring."
Not unsafe.
Not expensive.
Not overcrowded.
Simply… boring.
The word has lingered over Windhoek following remarks from tourism stakeholders who relayed what some international visitors have been saying for years. Many tourists, they argue, arrive in Namibia's capital, spend a night, perhaps two, and then immediately head for Sossusvlei, Etosha National Park, Swakopmund or the Skeleton Coast. Windhoek, for many, is little more than a place to collect a rental vehicle, stock up on groceries and sleep before the real holiday begins.
It is a criticism that stings because it contains an uncomfortable truth.
Windhoek has never been the reason most tourists visit Namibia.
But perhaps the better question is this: Should it be?
Every great tourism destination has a gateway city. Cape Town is the gateway to South Africa's Western Cape. Nairobi introduces visitors to Kenya before they head to the Maasai Mara. Arusha serves Tanzania's northern safari circuit. Gaborone welcomes visitors to Botswana before they explore the Okavango Delta.
Yet unlike those cities, Windhoek has struggled to become a destination in its own right.
The irony is that it possesses many of the ingredients required for success.
It is clean.
It is relatively safe.
It is easy to navigate.
Its hospitality industry consistently receives praise.
Its restaurants compare favourably with many cities across Africa.
Yet visitors continue asking the same question:
"What is there to do after dinner?"
That question should concern every Namibian.
Because in tourism, perception often becomes reality.

A city that works, but does it inspire?
Windhoek is, above all else, a functional city.
Government operates efficiently here.
Businesses are headquartered here.
Banks function smoothly.
Roads are generally well maintained.
The airport connects travellers with the rest of the country.
Everything works.
But tourism is not built merely on functionality.
People do not travel thousands of kilometres to admire efficient traffic circles or orderly suburbs.
They travel for experiences.
They seek moments that surprise them.
They want stories to tell long after they return home.
And this is where Windhoek struggles.
Unlike Nairobi, Johannesburg or Lagos, Windhoek does not overwhelm visitors with sensory experiences.
There is little organised street culture.
Public performances are rare.
Markets often close early.
Nightlife remains relatively subdued outside weekends.
After business hours, parts of the central business district become noticeably quiet.
For some travellers, this calmness is refreshing.
For others, it feels lifeless.

Nairobi: Chaos with character
Nairobi is hardly a perfect city.
Traffic congestion can be exhausting.
Security concerns remain.
Urban sprawl presents enormous planning challenges.
Yet few tourists would describe Nairobi as boring.
Why?
Because Nairobi has personality.
The city pulses with creativity.
Its coffee culture rivals many European capitals.
Its art galleries showcase emerging African artists.
Neighbourhoods such as Karen, Westlands and Kilimani have developed distinct identities through restaurants, music venues and cultural attractions.
Visitors can spend an afternoon exploring craft markets before attending a live jazz performance in the evening.
Food festivals, literary events and fashion shows fill the calendar throughout the year.
Even Nairobi National Park, where lions roam against a backdrop of skyscrapers—creates a uniquely memorable urban experience.
The city tells visitors a story.
Windhoek often leaves visitors to discover its story on their own.

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Johannesburg: Reinventing itself through culture
Johannesburg presents another fascinating comparison.
Few cities have undergone such dramatic transformation.
Once viewed primarily as South Africa's commercial engine, Johannesburg has deliberately reinvented itself through culture, heritage and creativity.
Neighbourhoods such as Maboneng and Braamfontein have become symbols of urban renewal.
Old industrial buildings now house galleries, design studios, cafés and performance spaces.
Public art dominates entire streets.
Weekend markets attract thousands.
Historical tours explore the struggle against apartheid while contemporary artists challenge visitors to engage with modern South African identity.
The city embraced its imperfections.
Rather than hiding its history, Johannesburg turned it into an attraction.
Windhoek possesses an equally compelling story.
The city's colonial architecture, liberation history and cultural diversity remain underutilised tourism assets.
Many visitors pass landmarks without fully understanding their significance.
The stories exist.
They simply are not being told boldly enough.

Lagos: Energy impossible to ignore
Then there is Lagos.
Few cities divide opinion as dramatically.
It is noisy.
Crowded.
Traffic can be legendary.
Infrastructure struggles to keep pace with growth.
Yet Lagos has become synonymous with African creativity.
Music.
Fashion.
Film.
Cuisine.
Entrepreneurship.
The city never appears to sleep.
Its nightlife is internationally recognised.
Afrobeats has transformed Lagos into a global cultural capital.
Art fairs attract collectors from around the world.
Restaurants celebrate Nigerian cuisine with remarkable confidence.
The city projects identity.
Visitors may not love every aspect of Lagos.
But they rarely forget it.
That is tourism's ultimate objective.
Memorability.

Does Windhoek hide its own culture?
Perhaps Windhoek's greatest weakness is not the absence of culture.

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It is the visibility of culture.
Namibia possesses extraordinary artistic talent.
Its musicians perform internationally.
Its sculptors, painters and photographers receive growing recognition.
Its designers increasingly showcase Namibian fashion beyond national borders.
Its culinary scene continues evolving.
Yet much of this creativity remains fragmented.
Visitors often struggle to discover where local artists exhibit.
Theatre performances receive limited promotion.
Live music is inconsistent.
Craft markets rarely become full-day experiences comparable to those found elsewhere in Africa.
The result is unfortunate.
Tourists leave believing Windhoek lacks culture.
The reality is different.
The culture exists.
It simply lacks coordination and visibility.

Katutura: An untold story

No discussion about Windhoek tourism is complete without mentioning Katutura.
For many international visitors, township tours become among the most memorable experiences of their entire Namibian journey.
They encounter history.
Resilience.
Entrepreneurship.
Food.
Music.
Community.
Yet Katutura remains under-marketed as a cultural destination.
Cities around the world increasingly celebrate neighbourhoods once overlooked.
Johannesburg embraced Soweto.
Cape Town elevated Bo-Kaap.
Nairobi promotes Kibera through community tourism initiatives.
Katutura possesses equal potential.
Not because poverty should become a tourist attraction.
Rather because communities possess authentic stories worth sharing on their own terms.
Community-based tourism succeeds when local residents become beneficiaries rather than spectators.
Namibia already understands this principle through its internationally acclaimed communal conservancies.
The same philosophy could transform urban tourism.

Hospitality without experiences

Ironically, one area where Windhoek performs exceptionally well is hospitality.
Hotels generally receive positive reviews.
Guesthouses are welcoming.
Service standards continue improving.
Restaurants offer impressive diversity, from traditional Namibian cuisine to international dining.
Coffee culture has expanded significantly.
Wine bars and rooftop venues have emerged.
Accommodation is not the problem.
The challenge begins once guests step outside.
A visitor can enjoy an outstanding dinner.
But what follows?
Where is the evening jazz performance?
Where is the open-air theatre?
Where is the public art walk?
Where is the weekly food market showcasing Namibia's regions?
Where is the cultural festival that encourages tourists to extend their stay?
Hospitality cannot thrive independently of experiences.
Hotels sell beds.
Cities sell memories.

The events economy

Modern tourism increasingly revolves around events.
Cities compete not merely through attractions but through calendars.
Festivals generate hotel bookings.
Concerts stimulate restaurants.
Sporting events fill guesthouses.
Conferences support airlines.
Film festivals attract international media.
Windhoek hosts notable events, including the Windhoek Karneval, cultural celebrations and sporting competitions.
Yet these remain relatively isolated rather than forming a year-round programme.
Imagine if every month offered a signature event.
A Namibian food festival.
A photography biennale.
An African literature festival.
A desert music celebration.
A public sculpture exhibition.
A marathon through historical precincts.
Cities become exciting when something is always happening.

Public spaces matter

Successful tourism cities invite people outdoors.
Cape Town has the V&A Waterfront.
Johannesburg has vibrant public markets.
Nairobi increasingly invests in pedestrian-friendly cultural spaces.
Windhoek possesses beautiful weather for most of the year.
Yet relatively few public spaces encourage lingering.
Pedestrian-friendly precincts remain limited.
Night markets could flourish.
Street performers could animate public squares.
Weekend artisan markets could become regular attractions rather than occasional events.
Cities are experienced on foot.
If people cannot comfortably wander, they seldom discover unexpected delights.

Marketing a personality

Perhaps the greatest lesson from Nairobi, Johannesburg and Lagos is not infrastructure.
It is confidence.
Each city unapologetically celebrates its identity.
Windhoek often markets Namibia exceptionally well.
But it seldom markets itself.
Tourism campaigns feature dunes.
Wildlife.
Deserts.
Coastlines.
Rarely do they feature Windhoek as a vibrant urban experience.
Yet every traveller begins somewhere.
Every first impression matters.
If Windhoek becomes memorable, Namibia becomes even stronger.

The opportunity ahead

Calling Windhoek boring may feel unfair.
It overlooks the city's safety, hospitality, efficiency and understated charm.
But criticism should not automatically be dismissed.
Sometimes it provides direction.
Windhoek does not need to become another Johannesburg.
It should not attempt to imitate Lagos.
Nor should it replicate Nairobi.
Its strength lies precisely in being different.
It is smaller.
Calmer.
More accessible.
Less intimidating.
That uniqueness can become its competitive advantage, provided it is enriched with culture, creativity and experiences that encourage visitors to stay another day.
Because every additional night spent in Windhoek means another meal in a restaurant, another museum ticket sold, another craft purchased, another taxi ride, another concert attended and another opportunity for Namibian entrepreneurs to benefit from tourism.
The city already has the foundation.
It has quality hotels.
Excellent restaurants.
Friendly people.
Good roads.
A rich history.
Remarkable architecture.
An emerging creative community.
What it needs now is ambition.
Not the ambition to become Africa's loudest city.
But the ambition to become Africa's most unexpectedly delightful capital.
Perhaps Windhoek is not boring after all.
Perhaps it has simply spent too many years letting Namibia tell the country's story while forgetting to tell its own.
And that may be the easiest problem of all to solve.

From left to right: Agape Hlatshwayo - CFO Danger Escape, Asher Hlatshwayo- CEO Danger Escape, Sello Hatang and Wendy Silinyana- Director MiniBoss and BigBoss Business School Johannesburg

We shape leaders while they are young

There is a Setswana proverb that has echoed through generations: Le ojwa le sale metsi.

Translated, it means clay is moulded while it is wet. Once it has hardened, reshaping it becomes difficult.

Our elders understood something that modern leadership theory is only now beginning to rediscover: character, confidence, curiosity and courage are best cultivated early. We do not wait until adulthood to produce leaders. We nurture them while they are impressionable, while their imagination is unrestricted and while they believe that impossible things might simply require someone brave enough to try.

This truth came alive for me during a recent edition of Power Week's Leadership Spotlight, where I hosted entrepreneur and innovation champion Wendy Silinyana alongside an extraordinary 11-year-old entrepreneur, Asher Hlathwayo.

I expected to interview an accomplished leader. What I did not expect was to leave the studio convinced that South Africa has underestimated the potential in its own children. The interview was not really about Silinyana. It became something much bigger. It became a conversation about what becomes possible when adults choose to invest in children before the world teaches them to doubt themselves.

I have interviewed presidents, captains of industry, Nobel laureates, global activists and celebrated leaders. Yet there was something deeply moving about watching an 11-year-old confidently explain a business he had created to help keep children safe.

That spirit cannot suddenly appear when someone graduates from university. It must be nurtured over years. It must be encouraged in classrooms, around dinner tables, in libraries and in communities where children are reminded that their imagination is not a distraction but an asset.

This is why initiatives like those championed by Silinyana deserve far greater national support. Through MiniBoss and BigBoss Business School, young people are not merely taught entrepreneurship as another school subject. They are trusted to build real businesses, solve real problems, pitch real ideas and engage with real markets. The distinction matters.

Confidence cannot be taught through theory alone. It is developed through experience.

Leadership cannot simply be explained. It must be practised.

Innovation is not inherited. It is cultivated. The young entrepreneurs emerging from the programmes are evidence of what happens when children are trusted with responsibility instead of being protected from it.

Whether it is developing footwear solutions for people living with mobility challenges, creating games that teach children about safety or building fashion brands that confront bullying and restore confidence, the young innovators are improving the lives of others.

That is leadership. Leadership is not measured by age. It is measured by the willingness to solve problems beyond yourself.

Listening to Asher, I was reminded that our children are often capable of far more than we allow them to demonstrate. Adults sometimes underestimate children because we mistake youth for incapacity. Yet history tells a different story. Young people have challenged injustice, advanced science, transformed technology, started global companies and reshaped societies. Their greatest limitation has seldom been ability. It has often been an opportunity.

As a country, we need to ask ourselves difficult questions:

What if every school exposed learners to entrepreneurship alongside maths and science?

What if every community identified and nurtured young innovators before they reached high school?

What if business leaders adopted schools not simply to donate resources but to mentor future entrepreneurs?

What if the government viewed entrepreneurship education as essential infrastructure rather than an optional enrichment activity?

What if we intentionally built ecosystems where ideas could travel from classrooms to boardrooms?

Imagine the South Africa that could emerge. The kind of country Silinyana is trying to build.

We often speak about preparing children for jobs that may no longer exist. Perhaps we should spend equal energy preparing them to create jobs that do not yet exist. The future belongs to those who can think differently. Artificial intelligence will replace certain tasks. Automation will transform industries. Entire professions will evolve.

However, creativity, ethical leadership, empathy, imagination and problem-solving will become even more valuable. These are precisely the capabilities we should be nurturing while the clay is wet.

That is the wisdom behind Le ojwa le sale metsi. It reminds us that waiting is expensive. Every year we delay investing in children's leadership, innovation and confidence is another year of potential quietly slipping away. **-Mail&Guardian**

Capacity Building

with

Diamond Training Institute

Diamond of the Month: July 2026 Celebrating Namibian Excellence

Diamond Training Institute proudly recognises Ndayola Ulenga as the Diamond of the Month for July 2026, celebrating her creativity, artistic leadership and growing contribution to the development of Namibia's performing arts.

Ndayola Ulenga

Ulenga is an actress, singer, playwright, performance artist and theatre-maker whose work explores identity, memory and lived experience. Her journey into the arts began at an early age through music, ballet and school drama. She later studied drama as part of a Bachelor of Social Science degree at the University of Cape Town before completing a postgraduate qualification in management and marketing. After working in marketing and advertising, she eventually committed herself fully to building a career in the arts.

Her commitment was recently recognised when she received the Best Director in Theatre Award at the 2026 Namibian Theatre and Film Awards for The Wasp.

The production, originally written by British playwright Morgan Lloyd Malcolm, was directed, co-produced and performed by Ulenga through NU Theatrics, the theatre company she co-founded with fellow actress Gloria Del Mar Ndilula.

First staged for Namibian audiences in 2024, The Wasp follows two former school friends who reunite after 15 years and are forced to confront unresolved pain, inequality and the very different paths their lives have taken. The production received praise for its powerful performances, thoughtful direction and ability to hold audiences through an intense and psychologically complex story.

Ulenga's influence has also extended beyond Namibia. In 2026, she was selected to participate in the prestigious Theatertreffen International Forum in Berlin, Germany. The programme forms part of one of the world's leading theatre festivals and brings together theatre professionals from different countries for workshops, artistic exchange and critical discussion on contemporary performance.

Her selection represented an important moment for Namibia's theatre community and increased the international visibility of Namibian creative talent.

Her semi-autobiographical production, Koko, further demonstrates her ability to transform personal experience, memory and Namibian identity into meaningful theatre. Through such work, Ulenga is helping to create space for local stories while showing that Namibian productions can engage audiences both at home and internationally.

By honouring Ndayola Ulenga, Diamond Training Institute celebrates an artist whose courage, discipline and imagination are strengthening Namibia's creative sector. Her journey reminds us that the arts are not merely entertainment; they are powerful instruments for reflection, dialogue and social connection.

Ulenga represents a new generation of Namibian creatives confidently telling their own stories and carrying the country's artistic voice onto the global stage.

OBSERVER LIFESTYLE

A supplement of the Windhoek Observer publication

FRIDAY
31 JULY
2026

Oprah Winfrey to close her school for girls in South Africa

US talk-show host Oprah Winfrey says the school for girls that she launched in South Africa nearly 20 years will close next year.

At the end of the 2027 academic year, the expansive boarding school campus near Johannesburg is to be handed over to local education authorities as per the original agreement, her statement says.

Students enrolled at the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls (OWLAG) who will not have graduated when it closes will be offered full scholarships elsewhere.

More than 1,000 girls have graduated from the school aimed at those from under-privileged backgrounds and inspired after Winfrey met anti-apartheid icon and former South African President Nelson Mandela in 2002.

Since opening its doors, the elite school - built at a cost of $40m (£20m) and located in the village of Henley-on-Klip south of Johannesburg - has not been without scandal, sparking rumours about the reason for its closure.

But a PR consultant working for the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy Foundation denied online speculation it was closing because of mismanagement

The foundation said Winfrey intended to continue with her education project by funding in a scholarship programme for academically talented girls from communities across the country to go to leading schools.

"The dream was never simply to build a school," Winfrey, 72, explained in a statement.

"It was to invest in the limitless potential of young women. That mission doesn't end with one campus. It continues in every girl whose future can be transformed through education.

"I'm excited that this next chapter will allow us to reach even more young women across South Africa and continue the promise that began more than 20 years ago."

It is not known what the OWLAG campus will be used for once it is returned to the local authorities, but Gauteng province's education department says it is "committed to preserving and advancing the academy's legacy".

"We will ensure that this exceptional institution continues to serve the people of Gauteng while honouring the vision upon which it was established," it said.

When the school opened in 2007, some commentators criticised its lavish campus - it reportedly had two theatres, a yoga studio and a beauty salon.

They questioned whether the money spent on it could have been better used to help more students around the country.

Then months after OWLAG opened, some students accused a former staff member of abuse. She was later cleared on all charges.

There are currently 281 students enrolled at the school.

According to the US star's Oprah Daily website, many of the school's graduates have become doctors, lawyers, engineers, artists, executives and entrepreneurs.

It quotes Andronica Klaas, a graduate of 2012 and now a senior engineering lead at tech giant Meta, as saying: "Every corner of the campus was filled with so much love and care and detail.

"OWLAG convinced me that preparation, character and purpose mattered more than where I came from." **-BBC**

The first group of students graduated from Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in 2012

CLASSIFIEDS

CALL FOR REGISTARTION AS INTERESTED & AFFECTED PARTIES

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED MINERAL PROSPECTING ON MINING CLAIMS 70986, KUNENE REGION

1. PROJECT SITE AND DESCRIPTION

Mr. Rotty M. B. Uarira (the Proponent), intends to apply to obtain an Environmental Clearance Certificate for their proposed prospecting activities in respect to **Semi-Precious Stone, Base and Rare Metals and Industrial Minerals,** on a combined area approximate area of **17.3 Ha** in the Kunene Region. The key component of the proposed activity entails geological mapping and survey and manual sample collection for laboratory analysis, and small-scale mining operation. Access to the sampling or survey sites will be by existing tracks and on foot where vehicle access is limited.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Enviro-Leap Consulting invites all Interested and Affected Party (I & AP) to register and receive Environmental Assessment (BID, Scoping and EMP) documents relating to the proposed project for their comments and input. Interested and Affected Parties are herewith request to register by writing to us at the address below no later than **28 August 2026.**

3. COMMENTS AND QUERIES

Please register and direct all comments, queries to:
Mr. Lawrence Tjatindi, Environmental Assessment Practitioner
Email: eap.trigen@gmail.com

ENVIROLEAP CONSULTING cc

CALL FOR REGISTARTION AS INTERESTED & AFFECTED PARTIES

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED MINERAL PROSPECTING ON MINING CLAIMS 70984 KUNENE REGION

1. PROJECT SITE AND DESCRIPTION

Mr. Rotty M. B. Uarira (the Proponent), intends to apply to obtain an Environmental Clearance Certificate for their proposed prospecting activities in respect to **Semi-Precious Stone, Base and Rare Metals and Industrial Minerals,** on a combined area approximate area of **17.5 Ha** in the Kunene Region. The key component of the proposed activity entails geological mapping and survey and manual sample collection for laboratory analysis, and small-scale mining operation. Access to the sampling or survey sites will be by existing tracks and on foot where vehicle access is limited.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

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ENVIROLEAP CONSULTING cc

CALL FOR REGISTARTION AS INTERESTED & AFFECTED PARTIES

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED MINERAL PROSPECTING ACTIVITIES ON EPL 10922, KARAS REGION

1. PROJECT SITE AND DESCRIPTION

SG Mining cc (the Proponent), intends to apply to obtain an Environmental Clearance Certificate for their proposed prospecting activities in respect to **Base and Rare Metals, Dimension Stone, Industrial Minerals and Precious Metals** on a combined area approximate area of **94151.54 Ha** in the Karas Region. The key component of the proposed activity entails geological mapping and survey and manual sample collection for laboratory analysis. Access to the sampling or survey sites will be by existing tracks and on foot where vehicle access is limited.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Enviro-Leap Consulting invites all Interested and Affected Party (I & AP) to register and receive Environmental Assessment (BID, Scoping and EMP) documents relating to the proposed project for their comments and input. Interested and Affected Parties are herewith request to register by writing to us at the address below no later than **28 August 2026.**

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ENVIROLEAP CONSULTING cc

CALL FOR REGISTARTION AS INTERESTED & AFFECTED PARTIES

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED MINERAL PROSPECTING ON MINING CLAIMS 70989, KUNENE REGION

1. PROJECT SITE AND DESCRIPTION

Mr. Rotty M. B. Uarira (the Proponent), intends to apply to obtain an Environmental Clearance Certificate for their proposed prospecting activities in respect to **Semi-Precious Stone, Base and Rare Metals and Industrial Minerals,** on a combined area approximate area of **18.3 Ha** in the Kunene Region. The key component of the proposed activity entails geological mapping and survey and manual sample collection for laboratory analysis, and small-scale mining operation. Access to the sampling or survey sites will be by existing tracks and on foot where vehicle access is limited.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Enviro-Leap Consulting invites all Interested and Affected Party (I & AP) to register and receive Environmental Assessment (BID, Scoping and EMP) documents relating to the proposed project for their comments and input. Interested and Affected Parties are herewith request to register by writing to us at the address below no later than **28 August 2026.**

3. COMMENTS AND QUERIES

Please register and direct all comments, queries to:
Mr. Lawrence Tjatindi, Environmental Assessment Practitioner
Email: eap.trigen@gmail.com

ENVIROLEAP CONSULTING cc

CALL FOR REGISTARTION AS INTERESTED & AFFECTED PARTIES

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED MINERAL PROSPECTING ACTIVITIES ON EPL 10927, OTJOZONDJUPA REGION

1. PROJECT SITE AND DESCRIPTION

SG Mining cc (the Proponent), intends to apply to obtain an Environmental Clearance Certificate for their proposed prospecting activities in respect to **Base and Rare Metals, Dimension Stone, Industrial Minerals and Precious Metals** on a combined area approximate area of **21777.62 Ha** in the Karas Region. The key component of the proposed activity entails geological mapping and survey and manual sample collection for laboratory analysis. Access to the sampling or survey sites will be by existing tracks and on foot where vehicle access is limited.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Enviro-Leap Consulting invites all Interested and Affected Party (I & AP) to register and receive Environmental Assessment (BID, Scoping and EMP) documents relating to the proposed project for their comments and input. Interested and Affected Parties are herewith request to register by writing to us at the address below no later than **28 August 2026.**

3. COMMENTS AND QUERIES

Please register and direct all comments, queries to:
Mr. Lawrence Tjatindi, Environmental Assessment Practitioner
Email: eap.trigen@gmail.com

ENVIROLEAP CONSULTING cc

CALL FOR REGISTARTION AS INTERESTED & AFFECTED PARTIES

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED MINERAL PROSPECTING ACTIVITIES ON EPL 10931, KARAS REGION

1. PROJECT SITE AND DESCRIPTION

SG Mining cc (the Proponent), intends to apply to obtain an Environmental Clearance Certificate for their proposed prospecting activities in respect to **Base and Rare Metals, Dimension Stone, Industrial Minerals and Precious Metals** on a combined area approximate area of **94151.54 Ha** in the Karas Region. The key component of the proposed activity entails geological mapping and survey and manual sample collection for laboratory analysis. Access to the sampling or survey sites will be by existing tracks and on foot where vehicle access is limited.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Enviro-Leap Consulting invites all Interested and Affected Party (I & AP) to register and receive Environmental Assessment (BID, Scoping and EMP) documents relating to the proposed project for their comments and input. Interested and Affected Parties are herewith request to register by writing to us at the address below no later than **28 August 2026.**

3. COMMENTS AND QUERIES

Please register and direct all comments, queries to:
Mr. Lawrence Tjatindi, Environmental Assessment Practitioner
Email: eap.trigen@gmail.com

ENVIROLEAP CONSULTING cc

PUBLIC NOTICE

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) AND CONSENT APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED LODGE ESTABLISHMENT ON PORTION 3 OF FARM KRISTALL NO. 208, OMARURU

Notice is hereby given to all potential Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) that the proponent intends to apply for Consent from the Omaruru Municipality and for an Environmental Clearance Certificate from the Environmental Commissioner, in terms of the Environmental Management Act (Act No. 07 of 2007), for the following activities:

Proposed Activities: Establishment and operation of a Lodge facility

Location: Portion 3 (A Portion of Portion 1) of the Farm Kristall No.208, Omaruru

Proponent: Ms. J.R. Rodriguez Spitzbart

Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP): Green Gain Consultants cc

Description: Construction and operation of a lodge facility on Portion 3 of Farm Kristall No. 208, Omaruru, for eco-tourism activities, including accommodation, a campsite, and relaxation facilities.

I&APs are hereby invited to register, request for Background Information Document (BID), and submit comments for consideration to eia@greengain.com.na on or before **21 August 2026.**

The need for a public meeting will be communicated to all registered I&APs.

For more information

+264811422927 or jkondja@gmail.com

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A BULK STORAGE FACILITY ON PORTION 5 OF FARM 38, WALVIS BAY, ERONGO REGION.

Notice is hereby given to all potential Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) that an application for an Environmental Clearance Certificate will be submitted to the Environmental Commissioner in terms of the Environmental Management Act (Act No. 7 of 2007) for the following activities.

Proposed Activities: Construction and operation of a Bulk Storage Facility

Location: Portion 5 of Farm 38, Walvis Bay, Erongo Region

Proponent: Stealth Investment Group (Pty) Ltd

EAP: Green Gain Environmental Consultants cc

Description: Construction and operation of a bulk facility for the storage, handling, and logistics of general, industrial, and potentially hazardous cargo for Namibian and Southern African clients.

I&APs are hereby invited to register, request the Background Information Document (BID), and send their comments to eia@greengain.com.na on or before **21 August 2026.**

The need for a public meeting will be communicated to all registered I&APs.

For more information

+264811422927 or jkondja@gmail.com

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE AND REZONING OF ERF B/PORTION 1 FROM STREET TO BUSINESS 3.0, ONETHINDI EXTENSION 2, ONIIPA, OSHIKOTO REGION

Notice is hereby given to all potential Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) that an application for an Environmental Clearance Certificate will be submitted to the Environmental Commissioner. This application is made in terms of the Environmental Management Act (Act No. 07 of 2007) for the following activities:

- Subdivision of the Remainder of Portion 1, Onethindi Extension 2 (Street) into Erf B and the Remainder.
- Subsequent permanent closure and rezoning of Erf B (a portion of Portion 1 of Onethindi Extension 2) from "Street" to "Business" with a Bulk Factor of 3.0.

Location: Oniipa, Oshikoto Region

Proponent: Moses Auala Private School

Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP): Green Gain Consultants cc

I&APs are hereby invited to register, request the Background Information Document (BID), and submit their comments to eia@greengain.com.na on or before **21 August 2026.**

The need for a public meeting will be communicated to all registered I&APs.

For more information

+264811422927 or jkondja@gmail.com

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) FOR THE PROPOSED REZONING OF ERF 7881 FROM GENERAL RESIDENTIAL TO BUSINESS, KUISEBMOND EXTENSION 10, WALVIS BAY, ERONGO REGION.

Notice is hereby given to all potential Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) that an application for the Environmental Clearance Certificate will be submitted to the Environmental Commissioner in terms of the Environmental Management Act (Act No.07 of 2007) for the following activities.

Proposed Activities: Rezoning of Erf 7881 from “General Residential” to “Business”

Location: Kuisebmond Extension 10, Walvis Bay, Erongo Region

Proponent: Grow More Investment cc

EAP: Green Gain Environmental Consultants cc

Description: The proponent intends to apply for the rezoning of Erf 7881, Kuisebmond Extension 10 from “General Residential” to “Business” for the purpose of constructing and operating a commercial supermarket.

Potential I&APs are hereby invited to register, request for Background Information Document (BID), and send their comments to eia@greengain.com.na on or before **21 August 2026.**

The need for a public meeting will be communicated to all registered I&APs.

For more information

+264811422927 or jkondja@gmail.com

OBSERVERSPORTS

A supplement of the Windhoek Observer publication

FRIDAY
31 JULY
2026

www.observer.com.na PARAGON MEDIA

Winners Spain were one of six European teams to reach the quarter-finals of this summer's World Cup

Uefa to boycott World Cups if Fifa plans approved

European football's 55 member associations have voted to boycott World Cups if the sport's governing body proceeds with a plan to sell stakes in its competitions to private investors.

The decision was made at an emergency meeting ca\lled to discuss the proposal announced earlier this week by Fifa, which oversees world football.

Uefa, which governs European football, had already made its opposition clear by releasing two damning statements - and that strength of feeling has been reaffirmed.

"The World Cup cannot be treated as an investment product," it said on Thursday.

"It is one of football's greatest sporting legacies. It has been built over generations by players, national teams and supporters across every continent. No part of it should ever be surrendered to private investors. The World Cup is not for sale."

Uefa's boycott would cover all Fifa competitions, including the men's and women's World Cups and Club World Cup, and be triggered if Fifa president Gianni Infantino's proposals are voted through by member associations.

The first time this stance will be tested at a senior tournament is in October, when the Women's World Cup play-offs are due to be held.

It is understood FA chairwoman Debbie Hewitt and chief executive Mark Bullingham were among those to speak during Uefa's meeting, with the atmosphere described as venomous, such was the strength of feeling against the proposals.

Despite being one of eight Fifa vice-presidents, Hewitt had no knowledge of the discussions that Infantino had been having regarding the proposals.

Concacaf, which governs football in North and Central America and hosted this year's World Cup, also met on Thursday and said its 41 member associations have "rejected" Infantino's proposal.

Sources say the 41 Concacaf nations are losing faith in Infantino.

What are Infantino's plans?

Fifa wants to create a commercial subsidiary to run its main events, including its World Cups, and external investors will be able to buy stakes in it.

It said it would "invite third parties to make minority, non-controlling investments" in a new subsidiary - Fifa Forward Enterprise (FFE).

The plan needs to be passed by a vote of Fifa's 211 members.

Infantino needs 106 votes in favour for the proposal to go through. Uefa and Concacaf members combined make up 96 associations, who appear set to vote against.

Infantino has written to Fifa members saying they will receive \$40m (£30m) if they back his controversial proposal. He has set a deadline of 19 September for federations to accept his plans if they want to access an initial \$20m (£15m).

In a video released by Fifa on Wednesday, Infantino defended the plans, calling them "an offer, not an obligation".

If approval is granted, Fifa says Thrive Eternal is expected to lead the proposed investor group for FFE.

Thrive is an American venture capital firm founded by Joshua Kushner - the brother of US President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared.

Fifa sources have told BBC Sport there has been no discussion over Infantino, or anyone else, becoming chief executive of FFE.

The White House said it had "nothing" to say on Infantino's proposals "at the moment".

How has Uefa reacted?

In a statement released after Thursday's meeting, which was held virtually and chaired by president Aleksander Ceferin, Uefa said it and its 55 member associations "stand as one".

"We unanimously and unequivocally reject Fifa's proposal to transfer ownership interests in the World Cup and other Fifa competitions to private investors," it said.

On Wednesday, Uefa had accused Fifa of using football "to enrich themselves and their friends".

Its statement on Thursday was even more damning, calling it "irresponsible and indefensible that a proposal of such significance for football was conceived in secret" and "without any meaningful consultation" with those who steward the game.

It added: "This is not merely a profound failure of leadership, but an abdication of Fifa's duty as the custodian of world football.

"National associations around the world are now presented with an ultimatum: accept the irreversible capture of football's greatest competitions or bear the consequences.

"This is not a 'democratic decision', but governance by intimidation - an act of coercion unworthy of an institution entrusted with the stewardship of the global game."

While Uefa only accounts for a quarter of Fifa's membership, it does include most of the world's most successful teams.

Six of the eight quarter-finalists - including winners Spain - at this summer's World Cup were European. In the 2022 and 2018 editions, the figures were five and six respectively.

Of the 23 World Cups to have taken place to date, 13 have been won by European countries. The other 10 have been won by South American sides.

Uefa vice-president Laura McAllister said Fifa's proposals posed a "genuine existential threat to the game".

The former Wales international told BBC Radio Wales she hoped boycotts would not happen, adding: "I feel optimistic they won't, because the reality is the powerhouse of world football is Europe."

Speaking to Radio 4's PM programme, McAllister said there was "real unity" among Uefa members and an "easy consensus over the need to take the strongest possible action given the existential threat that the Fifa proposal poses to our sport".

She added: "The reality is we had no choice other than to issue a threat commensurate with this dreadful, catastrophic proposal that has been rushed through with no due diligence, no proper governance and no consultation."

What have others said?

A Football Association spokeswoman said England stood "shoulder to shoulder" with its European colleagues and "fully support the collective view".

She added: "We oppose Fifa's plans - the Fifa World Cup belongs to football and always will."

The Scottish FA added its support, saying its board "agrees unequivocally with the concerns raised by all members over the manner in which these proposals have been issued, and deadline set, without a full consultation process or consideration to good governance".

Scottish FA president Mike Mulraney is also the chair of Fifa's finance committee.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy said: "This is a principled decision that we strongly support. Football belongs to the fans, not billionaire investors. Enough is enough. It's time to take a stand to protect our game."

UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham criticised the plans on Tuesday, saying going ahead with the idea would mean Fifa had "sold out".

Ronan Evain - executive director of Football Supporters' Europe - told the BBC that Uefa's stance was "very impressive" and a "proper show of force".

He added: "It is the response that football needed - it is the response Gianni Infantino deserved."

The Asian Football Confederation said it was "disappointed" it had not been consulted before the plans entered the public domain.

The Confederation of African Football said its president Dr Patrice Motsepe would host a meeting of its executive committee next week to "assess and evaluate" the proposals.

The World Leagues Association (WLA) asked Fifa to withdraw its project and the Premier League, which is a WLA member, said it "wholeheartedly endorses" that view.

-BBC

GOSSIP

Everton, Leeds United and Nottingham Forest are monitoring English forward Liam Delap, 23, who Chelsea value at up to £40m. (The i), external

Manchester City are in advanced talks with Lille for 18-year-old Morocco midfielder Ayyoub Bouaddi, who has also attracted interest from Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool and Bayern Munich. (Talksport), external

Mamadou Sangare's move to Brentford is imminent, with the 24-year-old Mali midfielder leaving Lens' pre-season tour of Italy. (L'Equipe - in French,), external

Fulham have agreed deals to sign Spain forward Gonzalo Garcia, 22, and 21-year-old midfielder Cesar Palacios from Real Madrid for a combined £43m. (Athletic), external

Manchester City are eyeing Marseille and Argentina goalkeeper Geronimo Rulli, 34, as a replacement for James Trafford. (ESPN), external

Manchester United are preparing a bid for Newcastle and England defender Lewis Hall, 21, with Spanish 19-year-old Jorge Salinas of Racing Santander a possible alternative. (Teamtalk), external

Coventry City are finalising an agreement with Brighton for 25-year-old English goalkeeper Carl Rushworth, who spent last season on loan with the Sky Blues. (Sky Sports), external

Hull City have held positive talks with Augsburg's German midfielder Mert Komur, 21. (Florian Plettenberg on X), external

Manchester United have held talks with San Lorenzo and Paraguay goalkeeper Orlando Gill, according to the 26-year-old's agent. (DSports via Metro), external

Swedish defender Genesis Antwi, 19, is set to join Chelsea's sister club Strasbourg on loan. (Football Insider)