



MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

**BUDGET MOTIVATION
2021/2022 FINANCIAL YEAR**

**VOTE 29
BY
HON. DR PEYA MUSHELENGA, MP
MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

21 April 2021

Honourable Speaker

Honourable members of this august House,

I rise to present to this august House and motivate as well as seek your support for Vote 29 of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) for the 2021-2022 National Budget.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

The importance of ICT cannot be overemphasised. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, many institutions world over have adopted virtual mode of communication. The digital revolution is, thus, inevitable.

ICTs assist in more ways than one, not only to enable people to work from home, but also allowing them to communicate and access information they need to make informed decisions. These technologies further promote transparent governance and efficient dissemination of information as a public good to the masses.

The ICT Ministry has been hard at work and shall surely continue to leverage the vast potential of ICTs in transforming society and spurring both social and economic growth in the country. Our national development plans, recently launched Harambee Prosperity Plan II and Vision 2030, all inspire us to become a knowledge-based economy and ICTs remains the surest path to traverse to realise this vital developmental goal in order to improve the livelihoods of all Namibians.

In the previous financial year (2020/2021), MICT worked in tandem with the Ministry of Health and Social Services to set up the then Covid-19 Communication Centre (CCC) at which information related to the pandemic was relayed to the public to debunk and demystify the avalanche of misinformation and disinformation that were making rounds on social media at the time. Last year in October 2020, MICT oversaw the transition of the CCC into the Government

Information Centre (GIC) as per Cabinet decision number 7th /09.06.20/003. The Government Information Centre contributes to public education and awareness on government policies, programmes and activities by being a hotbed of thought-provoking and educational discussions.

Honourable Speaker,

The ICT Ministry received an allocation of **Three hundred and Fifty-Four Million and Fifty Thousand (N\$354 050 000.00)** from the 2021-2022 National Budget to carry out our core mandate of coordinating, managing and disseminating government information, promoting the use and development of ICTs infrastructures, policies and strategies, among others. A summary of the key programmes and allocations are outlined as follows:

Programme 1: Information and Communication Technology Development

An amount of **Eight million, Seven Hundred and Eleven Thousand, Eight Hundred and Twenty one** Namibia Dollars (**N\$8 711 821.00**) was allocated to this programme to among others formulate, review and assess the implementation of laws, policies and strategies pertaining to ICT. As such, the development of the **Digital Strategy** was approved by Cabinet last year and work has since commenced on the said strategy to propel Namibia to an informed society with a knowledge-based economy.

Furthermore, the review of various ICT policies and possible consolidation into a uniform National ICT Policy is on the cards. Work on the **Cybercrime Bill** and the **Data Protection Bill** that have been approved in principle by the Cabinet is underway and efforts to have them tabled in the National Assembly this Financial Year are underway.

It is also under this programme that the coordination of ICT infrastructure development is undertaken. To this end, it is evident that the importance of ICT infrastructural development cannot be overstressed, hence our continued efforts to improve the establishment of such infrastructure in partnership with private sector players.

Programme 2: Print Media Affairs

An allocation of **Thirty-Four million, Eight Hundred and Thirty-Six Thousand, Three Hundred and Three** Namibia Dollars (**N\$34 836 303.00**) has been made to this programme to facilitate unhindered access to government information and nurture a symbiotic relationship between the Ministry and the fourth estate through proactive liaison with both local and international media. Government programmes, initiatives and projects are popularised via publications for both public and media consumption under this programme.

Namibia, through MICT and in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), is hosting the global conference of the World Press Freedom Day 2021, coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration, from 29 April to 03 May 2021 in Windhoek. Preparations are in full swing for this year's conference that will adapt a hybrid modality (virtual/physical attendance) due to the pandemic.

Namibia continues to be a shining example with regard to press freedom in Africa and globally as witnessed in the 2021 World Press Freedom Index compiled by Reporters without Borders (RSF) wherein Namibia maintained the number 1 position in Africa. It is therefore fitting that we play host on the 30th anniversary of this declaration, to the international commemoration of WPFDD. No journalist has been arrested or subjected to violence in Namibia for doing their job; as it regards to freedom of expression and its inherent right of access to information.

Moreover, the Ministry is also seized with the finalisation of the review process for the **GRN Social Media Use Policy, Government Communication Plan and Crises Communication Plan**, through which all Public Relations Officers in all O/M/As, regional councils and local authorities are expected to proactively communicate information on government programmes, policies and projects to internal and external stakeholders timeously.

As such, the Ministry remains committed to upholding unhindered access to public information with the **New Era Publications Corporation (NEPC)** having been allocated an amount of **Ten Million** Namibia Dollars (**N\$10 000 000.00**), while the **Southern Times** newspaper, that

spearheads regional and continental information dissemination, got an amount of **Five Million Namibia Dollars (N\$5 000 000.00)**.

Honourable Speaker,

In addition, under this programme, the Nationhood and National Pride (NNP) Programme National Strategic Framework and its Implementation Plan for 2020-2025 were developed and officially launched by the Presidency at State House on 04 November 2020. The two policy documents aim at setting new national deliverables and targets for the NNP endeavours in areas of nation building and patriotism. An amount of **One Million Namibia Dollars (N\$1, 000,000.00)** is allocated towards this initiative.

Programme 3: Audio-Visual Media and Regional Offices

An amount of **One Hundred and Eighty-Seven Million, Nine Hundred and Eighty Thousand, Nine Hundred and Sixty Seven Namibia Dollars (N\$187 980 967.00)** has been earmarked for programme **Audio-Visual Media and Regional Offices**, under which government information is gathered and produced in audio-visual and digital formats for ease of consumption by the public. Among others, under this programme, Constituency and Regional profiles are produced and provides valuable developmental data for planning and would-be investors.

It is under this programme the Ministry aims to take its services closer to the people through the establishment of MICT regional offices in all the 14 regions of the country and 25 Rural ICT Centres across the country with two centres in each region. These centres aim to make ICT services and equipment accessible and usable to the rural communities to bridge the digital divide between the rural and urban areas. An ideal situation, resources permitting, would be to have a centre per Constituency and villages. In addition, MICT regional offices across the country offer sound and recording studio services via information sharing sessions and basic Internet Usage training workshops to the members of the public.

Furthermore, under this programme, an amount of **Three Million Namibia Dollars (N\$3 000 000.00)** is allocated to the Namibia Film Commission (NFC) to promote Namibia as a preferred filming destination and promote the local film production and industry.

This stands as a tiny drop in the ocean as more resources are needed for the development of filming studios to attract large films be shot within the country. Namibia needs an array of filming equipment for retention of revenue in the country and avert the current scenario, where we import every detailed item from South Africa.

The public broadcaster, Namibia Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) got an allocation of **One Hundred and Twenty-Nine Million, Seven Hundred and Three Thousand, Six Hundred and Seventy** Namibia Dollars (N\$129 703 670.00), whereas the Namibia Press Agency (NAMPA) got **Fourteen Million, Eleven Thousand, and Three Hundred and Thirty** Namibia Dollars (N\$14 110 330.00).

I do not need to elaborate the cardinal roles the two entities play in advancing their constitutional responsibilities towards entertaining, educating and informing our nation on all issues of national, regional and global news events and happenings as we move towards the realization of our development goals as highlighted in Vision 2030 and Harambee Prosperity Plan II.

Honourable Speaker,

Programme 4: Coordination and Support

An amount of **One Hundred and Eighteen Million, Seven Hundred and Sixty Three Thousand, Two Hundred and Twenty Eight** Namibia Dollars (N\$118 763 228.00) is allocated to this fourth and last Programme of **Coordination and Support**.

Under this programme, an amount of **Thirty-Seven Million, Seven Hundred and Sixty Three Thousand, Two Hundred and Twenty Eight** Namibia Dollars (N\$370 763 228.00) is earmarked for the Ministry's operational activities. Whereas an amount of **Eighty-one Million** Namibia Dollars (N\$81 000 000.00) will be utilised for the Ministry's development budget. Moreover, **Twenty-Three Million** Namibia Dollars (N\$23 000 000.00) is earmarked for the completion of the Ministry's regional offices being constructed at Nkurenkuru in the Kavango West Region and at Katima Mulilo in the Zambezi Region, as well as at Mariental in the Hardap Region.

The remainder of the development budget, amounting to **Fifty-Eight Million** Namibia Dollars (**N\$58 000 000.00**) will be made available to NBC for the refurbishment of their studio equipments and network upgrades for the national broadcaster to deliver quality content to the public.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

I therefore submit Vote 29 for this august House's favourable deliberation and subsequent endorsement.

I Thank You!

