



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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**STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (MICT)**

DR. PEYA MUSHELENGA, MP

**AT THE
INAUGURATION OF MICT KAVANGO WEST REGIONAL
OFFICE**

30 AUGUST 2021, NKURENKURU

Director of Ceremonies,
Honourable Sirkka Ausiku, Governor of the Kavango West Region
Honourable Joseph Sikongo, Chairperson of Kavango West Regional
Council
His Worship, Mr Jafet Markus Muti, the Mayor of Nkurenkuru Town;
Honourable Regional and Local Authorities Councillors present;
Distinguished guests;
Representatives of media fraternity;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am indeed delighted to be here today as we celebrate another milestone in the efforts of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, of making information accessible to all parts of our vast country.

As a gateway to government information, the Kavango West regional office is an essential institution reinforce access of government information by the citizenry. We live in a society in which quality of life, as well as prospects of social change and economic development depend increasingly on information and its exploitation. Our living standards, patterns of work and leisure, education system and market place are all influenced by advances in information knowledge. These aspects of life have also changed recently with the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, not only on Namibia, but the world at large.

I wish to caution that while the completion of this office building is a cause for celebration, the full significance of what this building represents extends far beyond its physical structure. The importance of the building lies in the service delivery coming from it. This will be signified by, among

others, information dissemination to the public about government programmes and collecting information from the community to transmit to government decision-makers. The Kavango West regional office has a responsibility of promoting a society that makes the best possible use of ICT, thus the Ministry is therefore on a journey to continuously improve the lives of Namibians in terms of their ICT needs and more similar projects are in pipeline for other regions.

The Ministry of ICT has commenced with its decentralisation process of two key functions, which will be the core mandate of this regional office – these are the Audio-visual Media function, which comprises of videography, availability of a public address system, internet services, use of digital and broadcasting platforms, as well as a recording studio to allow for local artists to record music and related items. The second function to be delegated is the ‘Print Media’ function, which will allow the regional office to follow, cover and write stories on developmental issues in the region. Both these functions are key in that they feed the national broadcaster, NBC, with news items where they are unable to reach, as well as allowing for MICT Information Officers to write articles published in daily newspapers.

I encourage the public, especially the youth to optimally utilise services provided by this office in order to bridge the prevailing digital divide and enhance access to information. It is worth noting that provision of these services should be done in tandem with our Ministerial Customer Charter, which is our covenant to our customers and the general public.

As you may be aware, in the not so distant future, Namibia, like other countries will migrate from paper-based documents and records to digital format. Let us not forget that the sharing of knowledge and information process cannot function without communication. As a result, business companies cannot operate, and humanity will be drowned in the abyss of ignorance. The migration to digital format are making governments more responsive and making it easier for citizens to access public records, information, and Government services through the Internet. We thus intend to end the inconvenience of citizens having to travel vast distances as we encourage the optimal utilisation of our internet cafe.

In our quest to reach those on the peripheries, the Ministry of ICT has and continues to install internet to the 26 Rural ICT Centres established in the most remote parts of all 14 regions to lay a foundation in rural areas for e-governance. In the Kavango West region, the Rural ICT Centre is at Mpungu Constituency. I am happy with the commitment displayed so far by the community members to ensure that this centre does not become a white elephant. This is one of the centres that has been well managed by its volunteers, so much so that they are able to earn a small allowance from the income generated by the centre. This is indeed plausible.

The Mpungu centre that I just alluded to is certainly not enough and I appeal to the business sector in the Kavango West region to augment Government's efforts by supporting the establishment and sustenance of Rural ICT Centres in other remote areas. This will not only ensure equitable access to ICTs by all citizens including disadvantaged groups and rural communities, but improve their livelihood.

Director of Ceremonies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ministry of ICT constructed this regional office to the tune of Thirty Million, Seven Hundred and Forty-two thousand, Nine Hundred and Forty-One Namibian Dollars (N\$ 30,742,941-00). This is evidence that indeed the Government is doing its best to address our needs as a nation, and it is up to every one of us to make it work. We all have a stake in the government because the government is us. Greater things can be achieved when we all pull together, in the same direction. All we need is an attitude adjustment, like the saying goes that “*your attitude is your altitude*”.

I want to congratulate all of those who have been involved in helping to bring the construction of this building to a successful completion, and I hope you will all agree that the efforts have been worthwhile. Furthermore, I would like to commend my predecessor, Comrade Stanley Mutumba Simataa, who pioneered and guided plans for the construction of MICT regional offices, as well as the entire management and staff of the Ministry who kept this undertaking moving forward.

My gratitude is further extended to the Nkurenkuru local uthority for availing the land on which we are standing today to inaugurate the MICT Kavango West Regional Office.

In conclusion, I would like to remind the staff of this Regional Office that you have a huge task to provide first class ICT service. This is a calling that requires commitment and selflessness, especially now that ICT services are required more than before due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

With this, I have come to what we have all been waiting for — the official opening of our new home, the MICT Kavango West Regional Office – thus I declare the MICT Kavango West Regional Office officially opened.

I thank you!

