



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

**OPENING STATEMENT BY
HON. EMMA INAMUTILA THEOFELUS
DEPUTY MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

**ON THE OCCASION OF
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WORKSHOP
AT
HILTON HOTEL, WINDHOEK
28 MARCH 2023**

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed guests, it is an honor to be here today as the keynote speaker at the Namibia Digital Transformation Workshop. We are gathered here at yet another platform for dialogue and one might wonder why we are quick to organize speaking platforms.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is important to have many conversations around digital transformation because it is a complex and multifaceted process that requires collaboration and input from a variety of stakeholders. Digital transformation involves integrating digital technologies into every aspect of an organization or society, which can have far-reaching implications. Therefore, it is important for us to be here today as having these conversations will help us better understand the complexity of the process, stay up-to-date with rapidly evolving technology, bring together diverse perspectives, manage change effectively, and promote transparency.

The opportunities for digital transformation are vast, and we must seize them. The rise of digital technologies has created new industries, new products, and new ways of working. By embracing these changes, we can create jobs, increase productivity, and drive economic growth.

Allow me to acknowledge the elephant in the room – **unemployment**. It is a pressing issue that has been affecting our country for far too long. However, I am confident that digital transformation can be the key to unlocking opportunities for Namibians to create their own jobs and businesses.

We should recognize that one of the biggest challenges facing digital start-ups and ICT entrepreneurship is access to finance. We need to develop alternative avenues to finance digital start-ups, as well as support ICT entrepreneurship. This is where collaboration between the government, private sector, and other stakeholders becomes crucial.

I am proud to inform you all that Namibia is preparing itself to be the world-preferred destination for the offshoring of ICT services. This is an exciting development, and we welcome everyone to join us on this journey. The opportunities are immense, and together we can make it happen.

Namibia is currently drafting and reviewing the following legislation and policies to accelerate ICT development, access and innovation

- Cybercrime Bill
- Data Protection Bill

- Amendment of the Communications Act
- Review of ICT Policies and consolidation into a National ICT Policy
- National Digital Strategy Concept note

This presents the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology with an opportunity to develop laws and policies that will make Namibia an attractive destination for doing business in ICT. The world should feel safe to have its data, stored and processed in Namibia. The world should be confident of our ability to do business in the digital space. Namibia's cyberspace should be the freest and safest world over. The task is humongous but it can be achieved if we all pull our weight.

Director of Ceremonies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We cannot ignore the gaps that still exist, hindering digital transformation in Namibia. These gaps range from infrastructure challenges to affordability. The activation of the Universal Service Fund will help Namibia overcome some of these challenges.

Digital literacy is crucial to the success of digital transformation in Namibia. We must employ alternative mechanisms to increase digital literacy in Namibia, as we may all be aware that the Ministry of Education will not be able to do it on its own in a good time for Namibia to reap the benefits of digital transformation. Therefore, we need to think of new ways, for example, we can introduce coding and programming classes in after-school programs and community centers and provide digital skills training to those who are unemployed. The Ministry of ICT has already begun with efforts of this nature and calls upon all stakeholders to get involved in order to achieve a 100% digital literacy rate by 2030.

Finally, distinguished guests, digital transformation is a powerful tool that can help us address the unemployment crisis in Namibia and make Namibia a global player in the ICT space. We must work together to develop alternative avenues to finance digital start-ups and ICT entrepreneurship, reduce the gaps hindering digital transformation, and increase digital literacy. Let us embrace these changes and work towards a brighter, more prosperous future for Namibia.

Thank you.