



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**BY HON. EMMA THEOFELUS, MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

AT THE YEAR OPENING STAFF ENGAGEMENT

WINDHOEK COUNTRY CLUB RESORT

26 JANUARY 2026

**Director of Ceremonies,
Various Heads of ICT Public Enterprises,
MICT Management and Staff,
Members of the Media,**

At the onset, allow me to express profound new year's greetings and wish you all, as well as those who are not physically present with us today, a thriving and productive 2026. I recognise you all, as key role players in advancing Namibia's ICT journey. You all, including our ICT Public Entities, represent an important facet of our public service and deserve a standing ovation.

I particularly, congratulate Ms Linda Nandjila Nakale, on her appointment as Executive Director of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology as of 1 January 2026. Ms Nakale who has served at various managerial roles within the Directorate of Information and Communication Technology Development, comes with wealth of experience and a proven track record that is well fitted in advancing Namibia's digital transformation agenda and Government information management efforts.

Similarly, I would also like to commend Ms Emilia Nghikembua on her re-appointment as the Chief Executive Officer of the Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN), a position she has held since 2020.

As you all know, the Republic of Namibia's Constitution guarantees freedom of the press and as the Minister responsible for information and media, I would like to call for the continued protection of the press in the execution of their mandate, which has significantly contributed to access to information for all Namibians and made Namibia a household name across the world. May I kindly ask everyone to stand and recognise all Namibian media houses, journalists, and everyone who contributes to making Namibia's media industry function. I acknowledge you all because of your remarkable work done in 2025, ensuring that all Namibians followed key developments such as the inauguration of our first female President, hosting of regional council and local authority elections, inaugural Namibia Public-Private Forum, energy and oil engagements and parliamentary discussions, among other topical issues. I am confident and trust that this year you will do even better.

It is further my wish to call upon the media to continue contributing positively to nation building as an important element to national identity, unity and social cohesion. If we speak well about ourselves as a nation, even those among us who may not always act with good intentions will begin to believe that positive change is possible. As our late President, Dr. Hage G. Geingob, may his soul rest in peace, used to remind us: "*it is easy to break, but it is difficult to build*". Therefore, let Namibia always come first. Be thoughtful of your country – it is the only one we have.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Last year ended on a very high note for our Ministry. We worked tirelessly and achieved a number of milestones as per the marching orders given by H.E. Dr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah as per Her Excellency constantly reminds us that '*it is business unusual*'. True to this directive,

the Ministry of ICT and its Public Enterprises worked diligently with the resources advanced to us and we managed to make strides in a number of key initiatives as per the terms of references assigned to me. In the interest of time, I will mention only a few of these key achievements; the full details will be available in our Annual Report as we conclude the 2025/26 financial year.

The Government recognises the culture and creative industry as one of the key sectors requiring concerted development and investment as it has potential for meaningful contribution to the Namibian economy. We would also want to see creators receiving maximum benefits out of their talents and intellectual property. Therefore, skills development and the provision of facilities where for creatives is pertinent to ensure that they can thrive.

As such, I am proud to report that twenty (20) local and international film projects were approved, creating temporary employment opportunities for about 263 young people. In addition, through the Namibia Film Commission (NFC), and in partnership with the Creative Industries Institute Africa, we launched a *"Props and Costumes Warehouse"* in Windhoek. Funding was availed for the acquisition of some of the props and we donated the wardrobe collection from the liberation film *"Namibia - The struggle for Liberation"*, to this Warehouse.

Adding onto these efforts, the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) successfully disbursed funds to creatives recognised as freelancers within the broadcasting industry during the first two quarters of the financial year. These freelancers provide a range of specialised services essential to broadcasting and production excellence, including voice-over work, translation services, creative direction for on-site productions, scriptwriting, fashion design, performance artistry, and makeup artistry, among others. This continued commitment to supporting the local creative economy and empowering industry professionals further demonstrate the Government's unwavering support to the creatives.

Other notable milestones facilitated by the national broadcaster includes the introduction of a Drama School which enrolled 25 aspiring filmmakers for its current intake, launch of the localised documentary series and segments focused on entrepreneurial and vocational success stories and NBC's fulfilment of its responsibility to pay over royalties to the Namibian Society of Composers and Authors of Music (NASCAM) for music content broadcast across both television and radio platforms, ensuring that composers, artists, and rights holders are duly compensated for the use of their creative works in NBC's programming. I am reliably informed that as at the end of last year, NBC paid over a total of N\$1.4 million to NASCAM.

Indeed, we are well aligned to the National Development Plan Six which proposes for the culture and creative industry to contribute to employment creation, specifically for the youth, women and marginalised communities, including the country's Gross Domestic Product on a more significant level.

Moving on, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are faced with significant challenges as we take advantage of the digital age and its associated tools of engagement. The unethical and irresponsible use of social media, has led to moral decay of our society and risks breaking our hard earned freedom and independence, which was won through blood, sweat and tears. The continued breach of common human principles while being online leads to widespread mis- and disinformation, cyber bullying, crimes, data and personal privacy violations, and in some instances even death through suicides or direct intent. We have seen how people share sensitive and personal contents of others without consent or the slightest regard to the consequences.

On the other hand, the positive impact of social media in our society is undeniable as it builds trust, creates meaningful connections, promotes learning, encourages innovation and drives social change. It is on these digital platforms that the youth can make money through content creation, promote businesses and find jobs. Additionally, social media brings us closer to our friends, families, and communities despite the distances. However, the use of social media requires tact, critical thinking and a degree of media literacy skills, therefore join us as proponents for the creation of a safe, responsible and happy Namibia digital space as we engage online through supporting our campaign titled *“Ethical Use of Social Media Campaign”* which was launched in 2025.

As you know, legislation is an important instrument of governance to establish rule and order, and protect citizens. We also recognise that the public, industry and stakeholders have long waited critical ICT legislations to be passed. Though this process has proven to be longer than anticipated, and given the importance of these laws, it is important that due diligence is done to ensure that laws are well crafted, adhere to Constitutional principles and are fit for purpose. Thus concerted efforts are underway to ensure the enactment of the Cyber Crime and Data Protection Bills as a matter of urgency.

Therefore, we are due to resume stakeholder consultations on the draft Cybercrime Bill will commence on 2 February 2026. This Bill is particularly important as it will address technology-facilitated crimes, including gender-based violence such as doxxing, online harassment, cyberstalking, image-based abuse, deepfake exploitation, and coordinated digital attacks; especially against women in public office and female journalists. In line with this, we signed the United Nations Convention Against Cybercrime during the last quarter. Cybercrime knows no borders, and therefore requires an internationally coordinated response. Our Cybercrime Bill will be aligned accordingly.

I am proud to state that the Data Protection Bill has undergone various stages of consultation and drafting, with all input received incorporated and the Bill is ready for resubmission to the Cabinet Committee on Legislation for validation and further processing to Parliament.

Dear fellow public servants,

One of the most memorable highlights of the last quarter was the National Mega Hackathon, where young Namibians developed innovative solutions for government. This demonstrated our trust in the youth of Namibia. As you may recall, last year we hosted the Mega Hackathon instead of the National ICT Summit in order to focus on development while reimagining the

Summit. I am pleased to announce that the National ICT Summit will return this year in a redefined format, offering greater value to stakeholders, with the Mega Hackathon now forming part of the Summit.

When we speak about meaningful connectivity, we mean business. I am particularly proud of the work of the Universal Service Fund, which was capitalised by Government with N\$80 million in the last two years. Following Government's financial commitment for the construction of Radio Access Network (RAN), a total of 9 towers were constructed by MTC as a successful bidder under Phase One in rural areas of the Kavango East, Kavango West, Oshikoto, Ohangwena, and Kunene regions. We witnessed the launch of the first Universal Service Fund (USF) tower in the Epembe Constituency of the Ohangwena Region late last year. Notably, schools and clinics within the coverage of these towers receive free internet for seven years; that is access delivered for the benefit of our people. The project is ongoing and we are expanding to the most remote corners of the country. We extend our appreciation to CRAN for leading this project.

To further augment connectivity and complement central Government efforts, Telecom Namibia completed the installation of about 80 mobile sites for its Mobile Services Network Rollout project which now carries commercial live traffic and serving local communities. The project includes the construction of 61 new sites and the upgrade or modernisation of 33 existing sites. Modernising the existing sites is essential to replace legacy systems and ensure the network remains maintainable. In the meantime, its Fibre-to-Home Rollout project is at the customer connection stage, nearing completion.

CRAN conducted a nationwide Quality of Service audit covering speed, availability and user satisfaction to improve transparency and accountability in the telecommunications sector. Licensees were engaged to discuss the outcome of the audit and submitted remedial plans to improve the quality of service on their respective networks.

Follow our social media platforms and stay tuned to the news - within the next few days, we may be coming to your village with good news about connectivity. While we are still on meaningful connectivity I am sure we have all observed that MTC launched 5G in August last year, this is well aligned with the National 5G strategy and we hope that we see improved services.

The Ministry further continues to provide access to credible and factual Government information, products, services, programmes and activities through our social media platforms and Government Information Centre, which has been rolled to all 14 regions of the country. We have dedicated teams in all regions, reaching out to Constituency level, in effort to dig out issues facing everyday Namibians and bringing them to the fore to inform policy making. We believe in maximising on our resources and using best practices to ensure that Government resources are optimally used. As such, we have created strategic collaborative relationships with our Public Entities media where we share news stories, equipment, personnel and skills. We extend our greatest appreciation to the NBC, Namibia Press Agency and the New Era Publication Corporation for the continued imparting on knowledge to MICT technical staff, through capacity building and on-the-job collaborations.

Similarly, the Ministry appreciates the private media entities, who as watchdogs, contribute significantly to meeting the development information needs of society. Through you, we could communicate directly with citizens, create public awareness on topical issues and provide the much-needed economic and social support needed. As the Fourth Estate, we encourage you to continue walking by our side for the betterment of Namibia as we continue to uphold democracy.

Dear Colleagues,

On a disappointing note, the Ministry scored 44% in the 2025 Customer Service Charter Audit. This result is unacceptable. As the Ministry of ICT, our customer service standards must be exemplary. We are here to serve every Namibian at any given time within a reasonable time. We should take our responsibility as public servants with the utmost seriousness and commitment. I am pleased to note that, as of today, a team has been identified to pioneer customer service within the Ministry and will undergo the relevant training to ensure compliance to set customer service standards and promises. Dear ED, I expect tangible improvements upon their return and a better score in the 2026 Customer Service Charter Audit.

As a Ministry we strive for creating a conducive working environment for all our staff for optimal efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. I call upon each manager, to ensure that each MICT employee possesses the basic equipment and support to undertake their roles to the best of their ability. In the same breath, staff are encouraged to take care of Government assets and resources and minimise on wastage. You need to treat these resources as if they are your own, in a similar way you handle things within your own households. Unfortunately, Government cannot continue to replace vehicles, equipment and supplies due to avoidable negligence and disregard for operational standards. During 2025, we acquired a number of new vehicles to ease and improve mobility, however, it remains your responsibility to ensure that the next person can still enjoy the same comfort accorded to you.

At regional level, we continue with the construction of regional offices, since most of MICT regional staff have been operating from undesirable structures, which has become costly to maintain and rent. Our Hardap Regional Office will be opened this year, while feasibility studies to construct offices in Kunene and the //Karas Regions are soon to be conducted.

Today's workplace is highly demanding due to poor organisation work culture, lack of support, inadequate management, high stress-workload, and poor work-life balance. Therefore, I would also like to emphasise the importance of mental wellness, not only just at the workplace, but in our lives generally. Though we may not think so, our personal lives impact our professional conduct and productivity. We recognise that some colleagues may be facing personal or professional challenges, and we extend our sincere support and sympathy. Our doors, including the highest office; remain open to anyone who needs help. We cannot afford to lose a staff member, or a loved one, to suicide; there must always be another way out. As the saying goes, "**"kakuna omuru mbuhina omuțuru kira"**", meaning there is no hardship that does not have an end.

It is important that as we navigate work, we also create safe spaces for our staff, we exercise patience and restraint, we show empathy and understanding and provide the necessary support where we can. Our Wellness team did a commendable job last year when it held at least 2 Mental Health Awareness sessions which was facilitated by experts in the field. This culminated in the creation of a Wellness Corner at the premises of the MICT Head Office which offers staff with a quiet and safe space to ‘de-stress’ and ‘re-centre’ oneself when the going gets tough. Dear managers, you too are not immune to facing challenges as these, therefore, as the engines of our operations, I call upon you to also look after yourselves, so that you are able to provide the support and resources to all your subordinates. You should lead by example and provide soft landing spots for your staff and families. It is only when we are good that we can be there for others.

The Public Enterprises under this Ministry are expected to outperform themselves and maximise shareholder value. Beyond dividend declarations, Government wants to see real improvements in the lives of all Namibians. You come with a task to nurture economic growth, stimulate social welfare and ensure fair access to services. Ask yourselves: How can you make life easier for our citizens? Sometimes it may seem beyond your mandate, but small efforts can change generations. This year, I will visit all Public Enterprises resorting under the ambit of the Ministry of ICT, and what I want to see are motivated employees actively advancing the Government’s agenda and tangible results of your respective mandates.

I commend the New Era Publication Corporation and CRAN who religiously submit Annual Reports for tabling in Parliament, this shows commitment to corporate governance principles, that is an important aspect of running an organisation. The Ministry has requested for the submission of quarterly reports of your Integrated Strategic Business Plans and introduced quarterly engagements to track progress. To date, we recognise CRAN’s consistent commitment to these arrangements. I call on the rest to follow suit.

In line with existing government policies and our commitment to growing local industries, this Ministry and its Public Enterprises will prioritise locally produced goods and services in procurement. This is how industries grow and jobs are created. If you manufacture toilet paper locally and meet our quality standards, we will buy from you. If you produce fibre, t-shirts, electronics, or any required equipment locally, we will buy from you. Contractors sourcing materials locally, especially for capital projects such as the regional offices and the head office we are constructing; must be prioritised.

Local procurement must go beyond office refreshments. It must be intentional. All business units and Public Enterprises will therefore be required to report quarterly on local procurement.

Director of Ceremonies,

Today is a day of introspection of what was in 2025 and a reflection of what is to be in 2026. Let us move forward united and committed in the achieving of our mandate to develop ICT in Namibia and coordinate information management within Government. Let us take bold steps to ***Innovate*** in a ***Meticulous*** manner, being ***Proactive*** and ***Agile*** in the execution of our work, with ***Commitment*** to the highest standards of performance, maintaining ***Transparency***.

Abbreviated as **IMPACT**, these are indeed the *Core Values* of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology which will guide us as we deliver service to our stakeholders.

I thank you!