

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**BUDGET SPEECH**

**BY HONOURABLE TJEKERO TWEYA, MP**

**MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

**VOTE 29**

**OF THE**

**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

**22 April 2015**

**DRAFT**

**Honourable Speaker,**  
**Honourable Members of the National Assembly,**

Good Afternoon, Mutozi cwanyi; Muauhara naua; Miture ; Mwauhalapo; Dumelang; Goeie dag; Sitenguko sosiwa; Guten tag; g//ansio; Okuyuhala;

I stand here today to present to this august House Vote 29 of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) for the 2015/16 financial year.

First and foremost I would like to congratulate and thank my predecessor, former Minister of ICT, Hon Joel Kaapanda for having laid the foundation for this institution to be where it is today.

Secondly, I would like to congratulate His Excellency President Dr. Hage G. Geingob, Deputy President Nickey Iyambo, Right Honourable Prime Minister Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila and Deputy Prime Minister Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah on their inauguration to the presidency and for being given the mandate by the Namibian people to lead them for the next five years. I would also like to congratulate the Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and all members of this august House for undertaking to represent the Namibian people.

When President Hage Geingob took oath on 21 March 2015 as the Third President of this country, he said in his inaugural speech and I quote “I take this oath on behalf of all Namibians and promise to serve all Namibians without exception. No Namibian must feel left out,” end of quote.

As per our mandate, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology pledges that we will make sure that no Namibian feels left out by improving the dissemination and coordination of government information to the citizens. We pledge that our ICT infrastructure and services are reliable and up to date with world ICT trends to facilitate economic development, competitiveness through innovation, research and development. And this we owe to the Namibian people, more especially now that the citizens' expectation is very high on improved service delivery.

In addition, we will make sure to provide rapid response to public queries and give factual information to the public on Government programmes and services.

**Honourable Speaker of the Whole House Committee,  
Honourable Members of this August House,**

I now ask for your indulgence as I reflect on the budgetary allocations to Vote 29 for the 2015/16 financial year.

The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology has been allocated an amount of **Six Hundred and Three Million, Nine Hundred and Seventy-Four Thousand Namibia Dollar (N\$ 603,974,000).**

In summary, I will briefly highlight how the allocation will be utilized to implement the development goals of the ICT sector through the following programmes:

The **First programme** relates to **Information and Communication Technology Development**:

An amount of **Eight Million Three Hundred and Forty-Two Thousand Namibia Dollars (8,342,000)** is allocated under this programme for Institutional Policy and Information Technology Infrastructure development.

The Ministry, together with ICT companies will host the annual National ICT Summit scheduled for August 2015, with the aim to provide a platform for the youth to showcase their innovative and creativity in the field of ICT, as well as to create awareness and networking of key stakeholders in the ICT industry. The Ministry will also continue to conduct DTT consumer awareness campaigns.

The Ministry drafted a legal framework for Electronic Transactions and Cybercrime Bill which is now with the legal drafters for finalization. Policy and legal frameworks relating to broadband connectivity, electronic waste, protection of data and the Namibian internet domain name system will be developed.

ICT infrastructure and improved service delivery remains a central focus. In order to ensure that adequate and modern ICT infrastructure are in place, the Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia is tasked with ensuring the activation and implementation of the Universal Service Fund.

The coordination and management of the Namibian country code top level domain name (.na) will be re-organized to ensure inclusivity, continuity, stability and resilience of the Namibian domain name system. The .na is considered a national asset and therefore needs to be transitioned into an inclusive multi-stakeholder model with Government oversight.

It is not a secret that the use of technology has and will continue to shape our socio-economic environment for the better and it plays a big role in poverty alleviation, provided people have access to technology. According to the recent World Bank Report, technology has improved access to financial services in developing countries and has the potential to lift millions of people out of poverty.

The *Global Information Technology Report, 2015* of the World Economic Forum, confirms that ICT is a vector for social transformation and an enabler for inclusive growth. Its Networked Readiness Index rankings indicate that Namibia has moved up to 102<sup>nd</sup> place (3 places upwards from 105 to 102 out of 143 countries). This put Namibia in the top five countries in SADC at 4<sup>th</sup> place together with Seychelles (44); Mauritius (45); South Africa (75); Namibia (102) and Botswana (104).

I therefore encourage all stakeholders including the telecommunication industry and financial institutions to avail themselves at the grassroots level, and ensure all our people have access to technology in order to fight poverty and improve their living standard.

We know for sure that the majority of Namibians use cellphones as part of technological advancement. However we must ensure inclusivity so that all Namibians have access to network coverage as this will help us in disseminating information that will assist people to fight poverty and diseases, and also to make decisions and right choices on issues affecting their lives.

Access to technology, coupled with access to information will also help our people to demand better service delivery.

### **Moving on to the second Programme: PRINT MEDIA AFFAIRS**

Under this programme, an amount of **Forty-Two Million Nine Hundred and Sixty Two Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$ 42,962,000)** is allocated for the 2015/16 financial year.

An amount of **Sixteen Million Nine Hundred and Sixty Two Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$16,962,000)** will be for the **Directorate of Print Media Affairs**, split equally between its two Divisions, namely the **Production Division** and **Media Liaison Services Division** each getting an amount of **Eight Million, Four Hundred and Eighty-one Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$8 481 000)**.

The two Divisions will use the money to undertake the directorate's usual activities as follows:

- Facilitate consultations, drafting and tabling of the Access to Information Bill;
- Review the Government Information Policy and Communication Strategy;
- Develop government's Social Media Policy;
- Develop a strategy for the marketing and distribution of government materials;
- Production and dissemination of publications;
- Coordinate and run National Campaigns such as the Nationhood and National Pride Campaigns and others as per stakeholder needs and Cabinet directives;
- Build a media monitoring strategy in order to gauge public understanding of government in the media thereby facilitate proper response to both public and media queries;
- Translate and publish the Namibian Constitution in all Namibian local languages;
- Translate and publish the Government Information Bulletins and other important government publications into local languages;
- Organize National events;
- Facilitate media accreditations and render assistance to international journalists visiting Namibia; and
- Organize and undertake workshops to build the capacity of government public relations officers.

The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology in conjunction with the Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM), the University of Namibia (UNAM), and the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) and other language experts have echoed the outgoing Minister of ICT's appeal for the establishment of an Indigenous Languages Institute in Namibia. Such an institute would address, among others the use of indigenous languages to promote democracy and cultivate the principle of good governance.

This initiative is aimed at creating a platform to assist those who communicate to citizens in their indigenous languages and strengthen the capacity of indigenous language translators for purposes of building One Namibia, One Nation.

The institute will promote public awareness on the importance of indigenous languages and culture in Namibia. This institute will conduct research on each indigenous language in Namibia and it will also teach indigenous languages, and further ensures that each indigenous language in Namibia gets serious attention.

The envisaged institute will similarly publish dictionaries, monographs, and other reading and reference materials in indigenous languages, to promote individual identities of indigenous communities, preserve heritage, and pass on the heritage to future generations in indigenous languages and to change attitudes and perceptions about indigenous languages.



Within this programme, provision is made for targeted subsidies towards print media institutions falling within the ambit of the Ministry of ICT. A total amount of **Twenty Six Million Namibia Dollars (N\$26, 000,000)** is set aside for both **New Era Publication Corporation** and the **NAMZIM project**.

**New Era Publication Corporation (NEPC)** is allocated an amount of **Thirteen Million Namibia Dollar (N\$ 13,000,000)** for its operational activities. I hereby urge all State-owned Enterprises and Governments Offices, Ministries and Agencies to make use of the services provided for by the New Era Publication Corporation, this will enhance their efforts to acquire their own printing press, saving on high printing costs currently incurred.

**NAMZIM** is equally allocated **Thirteen Million Namibia Dollar (N\$ 13,000,000)** to implement its operational activities including continuing to provide news, feature articles, analysis and opinion pieces from an African perspective as well as market the tourism and investment opportunities in the SADC region.

Additionally NAMZIM is in discussions with other SADC Member States to also come on board as partners with the aim of opening NAMZIM branches in each SADC country.

**Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Members,**

We now take a look at our third **Programme AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA and COPYRIGHT SERVICES** to which an amount of **Four Hundred and Thirteen Million, Two Thousand Namibia Dollar (N\$ 413,002,000)** is allocated to cover for the ICT roll-out implementation, production, sound management and dissemination of audiovisual information to the public.

The expected output would be the production and dissemination of multi-media content and dissemination thereof, on diverse platforms. This will enable citizens to make informed decisions and participate in national development.

The procurement of vehicles, Multi-media equipment and accessories and the construction of Regional Office buildings will enable a smooth transition for the soon to be decentralised 14 MICT regional offices.

The acquisition of staff and procurement of additional multi-media equipment and accessories for the twenty-six (26) remote rural multi-purpose community centres will complement the E-government project implementation.

The impact is envisioned to be based on the provision of access and encourage usage of diverse multi-media content and platforms towards the fulfilment of a knowledge-based society by 2030.

Within this programme lie the targeted subsidies for the **Namibia Film and Video Development, Namibia Press Agency and the Namibia Broadcasting Corporation.**

An amount of **Eight Million, Nine hundred and Twenty-Five Namibia Dollar (N\$8,925,000)** is allocated to the **Namibia Film and Video Development Fund** to market Namibia as a desired film and investment destination in the SADC region, develop the local film industry in order to contribute a greater percentage margin to the country's GDP.

Here we expect to uplift the local screen culture, consolidate the Namibian identity in our people and increase investment prospects for the country, as well as, the increment of foreign film productions in Namibia.

The film industry has the potential to educate our visitors about our country and as well as to contribute to nation building, therefore I call upon the private sector to meet government half way in investing in the local film industry in order to encourage film makers to tell the Namibian stories that not only educate and inspire the citizens but also the outside world.

The Namibia Film Commission Act (Act No.: 6 of 2001), is currently under review to reflect new realities and to act as a regulatory body to promote and regulate the film industry. All stakeholders will be consulted through stakeholders consultation workshops to be held in Windhoek, Swakopmund, Oshakati and Keetmanshoop, while Kunene, Otjozondjupa, Kavango East and Zambezi regions will be consulted remotely.

Under this programme, the **Namibia Press Agency (NAMPA)** stands to receive an amount of **Twenty Million Namibia Dollar (N\$ 20,000,000)**.

The news agency will continue to gather and provide credible local news contents to international, regional and local networks and vice-versa with an expected output to increase news features, news sourcing of stories, compilation of news bulletins and the production of news audio clips.

This confirms and consolidates the freedom of the press in our society and ensures that the people receive credible and reliable news without distortions, as well as, ensure the credibility of journalists locally and elsewhere.

**The Namibia Broadcasting Corporation** will this financial year receive an amount of **Three Hundred and Forty-One Million, Seven Hundred and Forty-Two Thousand Namibia Dollars (N\$341,742,000)** as a national / public broadcaster to inform, educate and entertain the nation via diverse platforms in order to promote peace, nation building and unity.

Namibia remains a DTT migration forerunner with Mauritius and Tanzania in SADC. Since the implementation of DTT, the NBC TV now offers viewers seven (7) television channels including NBC 1 (generic family entertainment), NBC 2 (Parliament and Current Affairs), NBC 3 (Sport and movies), One Africa TV, TBN, EDuTV as well as Namibian music channel, THIS TV, 9 radio stations running on 17 digital transmitters.

The expected output would be the conversion of analogue transmitters to digital ones (DTT), which would expand and diversify TV channels and local language and content, which will enable the broadcaster to establish more local TV language programmes. The impact would be a hundred percentage radio and TV coverage in remote and rural areas as soon as possible.

So far, the towns of Okahandja, Rehoboth, Windhoek, Arandis, Swakopmund, Walvis Bay, Henties Bay and the northern towns of Oshakati, Ongwediva, Ondangwa, Oshikuku, Elim, Oniipa and Onyaanya have been completely switched to DTT and the next switch off will be determined very soon.

We now offer a digital Terrestrial TV network covering at least 67% of the population (meeting the ITU target analog switch off deadline of the June 2015 deadline).

Having said that, I would like to emphasize that information is power that create a knowledgeable society and when people have no access to information, ignorance will give rise to social disharmony.

In our efforts to bridge information gap in our society, the Ministry will ensure that the programmes and activities up to the constituency level are highlighted and stories from the grassroots level are told and shared in order to inspire each other as a nation as we march together on our road to prosperity.

This will of course be done through information gathering and dissemination by MICT regional offices, government media such as NBC, New Era and NAMPA, as well as by engaging private media to tell real Namibia stories with the aim to educate, inform and inspire our people in all corners of the country.

The media is also encouraged to tell our stories to visitors so that they know more about our country.

We have also identified a gap in telling Namibian stories abroad and therefore, we will start reporting about the programmes and activities of Namibian Missions abroad in order to inform and educate our people what our missions do and also tell Namibian stories to the world. This is how then in the 1970s the SWAPO Party rose from just having an observance status to the United Nations to being accepted and recognized as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people by comprehensively telling the Namibian story to the world.

As we all know that of recent Namibia has been hailed as not only a champion of democracy and good governance, but has also inspired the world in other areas including environmental conservation, therefore we must continue telling the world inspirational stories about our country.

We shall also give extensive reportage to government capital projects as this will act as a tool to not only expose opportunities in terms of job creation in order to fight poverty, but also to promote accountability, good governance and improve service delivery.

On access to Data Services (both fixed and mobile) for all citizens countrywide, both MTC and Telecom Namibia are at advanced stages of planning to realize this goal. All Namibians have the right to information and our SOE's responsible for providing these services will focus all their energies on accelerating access for all our people in all corners of this beautiful country.

**Last, but not least is Programme 4 which caters for COORDINATION AND SUPPORT within the Ministry.**

Under this programme, **an amount of One Hundred and Forty One Million, Eight Hundred and Eight Thousand (N\$141, 808,000)** is allocated for current and capital projects, as well as for policy supervision.

These funds will be used towards the construction of the Ministry of ICT's Headquarters in Windhoek. Phase two of this project will be the completion of earthworks which has been advertised and the Ministry is expecting the earthworks to be finalized by October 2015 in order for the construction to resume during November 2015.

Regional Office constructions for the Oshana, Oshana-Namaland, Erongo and Kavango East Regions are also in the pipeline. All of these constructions have an estimated practical completion date ranging from August to September 2015, except for the Erongo and Kavango East Regional Offices, which is estimated for completion in March 2016.

This is due to the fact that these sites were only handed over during February 2015.

In our effort to expand and provide a conducive working environment for our staff, the Ministry is also planning to construct regional offices in Zambezi, Kavango West and the Hardap Regions. Advertising for the tender for construction in these regions is expected to be done by June 2015 by the Ministry of Works and Transport.

**Honourable Speaker, Honourable members;**

In light of the above, I humbly submit Vote 29 to the amount of **Six Hundred and Three Million, Nine Hundred and Seventy-Four Thousand Namibia Dollar (N\$ 603,974,000)** for your endorsement.

I thank you!