



Talking Points

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**Business contributions to Sustainable Development Goals
(SDGs)**

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Vice Chancellor of the Namibia University of Science and Technology

Members of the Private Sector

Young Entrepreneurs

Distinguished invited Guests

Members of the Media

It gives me great pleasure to be here today.

Since independence, Namibia has logged many successes in its development trajectory towards becoming an Upper Middle Income Country, one of six on the African continent.

- It has effected one of the fastest reductions in poverty on the continent (from 69% to 18%); Namibia is ranked number 5 in Africa by the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (2016 IIAG)¹;
- It ranks #1 in Africa in the provision of education²; ranks #4 in Africa in terms of gender parity in parliament³; #1 in Africa in terms of press freedom⁴.
- Namibia has an open economy with good quality infrastructure and has managed to reduce inequality while growing its gross national income (GNI)⁵.

The UN, Namibia's long standing and trusted partner is conscious and appreciative of the role that private sector has played in situating Namibia, where it is today.

¹ 2016 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG, Oct 2016).

² 2016 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG, Oct 2016).

³ Inter-Parliamentary Union "Women in national parliaments as at 1 August 2015"

⁴ UNAids, 2017.

⁵ World Income Inequality database (last dat av 2010).

Private sector has contributed through its innovation, skills and investment enabled productivity, increased employment and accelerated development in Namibia.

Why the SDGs

In 2015, the world agreed a new set of goals: more ambitious in their scope, set to be achieved by 2030, and designed to change the world for the better.

Agenda 2030 with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals is an agenda to end poverty; save the planet; and ensure prosperity for all.

The SDGs are unique as they focus on economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection as interconnected dimensions of development.

Arriving at this agenda was a bottom up and consultative process where over 7 million people, institutions (including private sector) were consulted. The SDGs therefore represent the aspirations of the world and its people. Namibia played an active role in crafting these goals.

I am here to urge you to step forward to embrace the new global agenda to address the remaining challenges of poverty and inequality, and ensuring prosperity for all.

SDGs relevance to Private sector

Namibia officially launched the domestication of the SDGs in June of 2016 and has now mainstreamed the SDGs into the NDP5.

The private sector in Namibia has a clear role to play in turning the SDGs from an aspirational wish list to an inclusive and transformative approach to economic development.

The Goals, and their targets, speak to many development challenges that Namibia faces today from: achieving food security (SDG 2) to ensuring access to energy (SDG 7) and building resilient infrastructure (SDG9).

These goals resonate well with Namibia's War on Poverty and the 4 pillars of NDP5: economic progression, social transformation, environmental sustainability and good governance.

New partnerships will need to be forged if progress is to be made on this global, and indeed Namibia's development agenda. We need to foster a new era of collaboration through partnerships. (SDG 17)

Today doing business is not just about the 'bottom line' it's also about 'doing good'. World over companies are demonstrating that they can effectively incorporate development (SDGs) into their strategic planning.

Examples abound of how entrepreneurship has help lift millions of people out of poverty. Whether this was through a shift to a market based economy in China, (lifting nearly 800 million people out of poverty); the garment manufacturing industry in Bangladesh (on which some 20 million people are dependent); or the cut flower industry in Kenya (that helped to diversify its export base).

Corporate Social Responsibility has broadened in scope and does contribute to development. For example, the Rossing Foundation works closely with the government to strengthen the capacity of teachers and to support learners especially in the fields of Mathematics and Science.

The SDGs provide an excellent opportunity for the Namibian business sector to scale up contributions and accelerate the country's development trajectory.

Moving forward

As we reflect on how together (the private sector with government, academia and development partners) we lift the remaining 18% of Namibians out of poverty, reduce the high levels of inequality and skill the 66% of the population that is young, I would like to take this conversation one step further and explore a concrete strategy to maximise the contribution of the private sector to realise Vision 2030 and NDP5.

With less than 5000 days remaining to realise the SDGs, we have work to do. But the good news is that we have the knowledge, technology and the resources to do so. What is needed is renewed partnerships across different stakeholders and strengthened coordination.

I thank you!