

**REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF NamRA**

**by**

**Sam SHIVUTE  
COMMISSIONER**

**NamRA**

**07 April 2021**

**Director of Proceedings, Mr. Penda Ithindi**

**Your Excellency Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of  
Namibia and Madam Geingos,**

**Your Excellency Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President of the Republic  
of Namibia**

**Right Honourable Dr. Saara Kuugongelwa, Prime Minister of the  
Republic of Namibia**

**Honourable Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International  
Relations and Cooperation**

**Hon. Sophia Shaningwa, Secretary General of the SWAPO Party**

**Hon. McHenry Venaani, President of PDM**

**Cabinet Ministers**

**Dr. Gabriela Geier, Head of Cooperation, Germany Embassy;**

**Ms. Paulina Elago, Secretary General of SACU**

**Ms. Anna Kawana Nakale, Chairperson of the NamRA Board and all  
NamRA Directors**

**All distinguished special invited guests,**

**Colleagues from NamRA and Ministry of Finance;  
Captains of Industries  
Members of the Media**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good morning to you all.

This is the Day that the Lord has made, and we shall rejoice and be glad in it. In the Tax Administration space, this Day is commonly referred to as Day 1. Since the initial announcement of the possible establishment of a semi-autonomous Revenue Agency in 2013, many people including the staff of the Department of IRD and Directorate of Customs & Excise have been eagerly and patiently waiting for Day 1 of NamRA.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, the Minister of Finance gave notice in the Government Gazette and determined the commencement date of NamRA as 6 April 2021. Cde President, ladies and gentlemen, this legal action practically means that NamRA is here. NamRA is the future. The future is now. We are committed to build a World Class Revenue Agency, serving with passion to positively impact the livelihood of every Namibian.

**Director of Proceedings.**

When I was future pacing and reflected on what should be covered in my remarks today, I got a signal that I should focus on three points. These three talking points are:

1. Gratitude;
2. Strategic Preparatory Activities leading to Day 1
3. NamRA's Vision and Strategic Objectives

## **1. Gratitude**

Firstly, let me give all thanks and Glory the Almighty, the King of Kings for making this event possible. Secondly, I would like to thank the President of the Republic of Namibia, His Excellency, Dr. Hage G. Geingob, his entire leadership team, the Minister of Finance, the NamRA Board, the NamRA Ministerial Task Team under the leadership of Mr. Penda Ithindi and the interviewing panel for the confidence and trust bestowed upon me to be the founding Commissioner of NamRA. Finally, I would like to thank my family, colleagues, friends, Bank of Namibia, GIZ, IMF and my entire support system for their continued support and prayers.

Isaac Newton once said " If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants." I must admit that I have been standing and I will continue standing on many of your' shoulders for guidance, mentorship and support. I shall forever be grateful for your continued support.

When my appointment was announced by the Minister of Finance on 24 September 2020. I indicated that over the next few months, we will be pre-occupied with the execution of preparatory activities for the readiness and commencement of NamRA as provided by the NamRA Act. I will now move on briefly to touch on some of the strategic preparatory activities leading to Day 1.

## **2. Strategic Preparatory Activities leading to Day 1**

1. Developed a unified Vision and Values for NamRA.
2. Established a Change Management Committee and appointed Change Champions in all Region to assist with the change process and driving NamRA's Transformation Agenda.
3. Established an Efficiency Committee which investigated and documented all inefficiencies in our processes, systems and in our operations and recommended action plans to address the inefficiencies.

4. Fast tracked the recruitment process to ensure that executive positions are filled. The following positions are currently filled, 1. Head of Domestic Taxes, 2. Chief Legal Officer, 3. Chief Information Officer, 4. Director: Border Control and Operational Compliance, 5. Chief Human Capital, Director: Regional Operations. A number of other positions have been interviewed and will be filled soon after the vetting outcome.
5. Ensured the approval of relevant policies.
6. Business Processes documentation and improvement for NamRA with the support of GIZ.
7. Facilitation of a smooth secondment of IRD and DCE staff in such a manner that there is no disruption to revenue collection and facilitation of legitimate trade.
8. Development of NamRA's Strategic Plan for 2021/2022-2023/2024
9. Engagement with some of our stakeholders such ICAN, NIPA, GIZ, IMF, NAPWU just to mention a few.
10. Facilitation of the bringing the NamRA Act into operation.
11. Preparation to build a World Class Revenue Agency.

### **3. NamRA's Vision and Strategic Objectives**

Together with the Board, we have developed a unifying Vision for NamRA. NamRA's vision is to be a World Class Revenue Agency, serving with passion to positively impact the livelihood of every Namibian.

To achieve this vision, we will be guided by our values of Integrity, Diversity, Efficiency, Fairness and Agility.

Of our five core values, integrity leads in importance. It means for us that we have set high ethical standards in the execution of our duties and will strive to do what is right in all circumstances.

We will ensure that these values are embraced by all staff and influence all their actions.

We build this future on the solid work over recent years of the two departments that are the foundation of NamRA – the Customs and Excise Directorate and the Inland Revenue Department. Without this solid base, our work would be so much more challenging. We will build on the strengths of the past as we develop innovative approaches to our work for the future.

It was important for us (executive, the Board and Change Champions) that we had an initial strategic plan in place from this very first day of our operations. If you will permit, I would like to just give you a snapshot of this plan as it conveys what we think is important in this first generation of NamRA's evolution.

***We know we must improve voluntary compliance.*** We need to make it easier for taxpayers to comply by tailoring programs to their real needs and to this end, we will develop a taxpayer/trader charter. We must be consistent and fair in our application of the law. Future versions of this strategic plan will be subject to broad consultation with the business community to be sure we understand and respond to the burden that their legal obligations to us pose and how we can make it easier to comply.

***We must optimize revenue collection.*** Note that we do not say maximize—our aim is to collect the fair amount of tax and duties owed to the state and no more. To this end, we will strengthen our risk management capacities so that we can focus on taxpayers and traders that pose the highest risk of non-compliance while leaving honest taxpayers and traders to carry out their business. We must understand the tax gap and to improve the overall financial position of the state, take concerted efforts to collect arrears. As much as we want to support our clients to the extent possible, we will not hesitate to use our full enforcement powers to target those who try to cheat the system. They cheat not only the system but each and every

honest Namibian who pays what they owe. This approach also extends to dealing with the cash economy.

***We will invest in NamRA and our people.*** We are a new institution and while enormous work has been accomplished to get us to this Day One, much more remains. We will work to recruit and retain the most talented staff and to develop their full leadership potential. As noted already, we will build a culture that promotes and values integrity and to this end, we will develop an anti-corruption program and plan. Finally, we are responsible for the proper financial management of our budget and will ensure that proper governance is in place. Performance management will underpin all that we do and we will report on key indicators so that our successes – and our failures – are in the public light.

***A culture of innovation will be our watchword.*** We will encourage the development of new ideas and position NamRA to be at the leading edge of emerging technologies. We will move to integrated account management so that we have a whole view of the taxpayer or trader and make their lives easier.

***We will enhance trade facilitation.*** This means that we will reduce the burden faced now at the border for clearance requirements and benchmark ourselves against international best practice. Customs reform and modernization has been at the front of our minds for some time and this will continue.

***Our final goal focuses on organizational efficiency, customer centric, service delivery and cost effectiveness.*** We will optimize technology and ensure that we have secure facilities – both physical and electronic – while respecting the environment. We will be customer centric and continuously improve on our service delivery to ensure that our customers are provided with the excellent service that they deserve. We will carry out our operation in a prudent and cost effective measure.

Now the work begins and we will report regularly on our results. We at NamRA are all keenly aware that we touch the lives of every Namibian and that we are privileged to carry out our work every day. We commit to you that we will focus on the client – our taxpayers and traders – and ensure that there is a level playing field for all citizens.

To the media and all stakeholders, please help us in spreading the message and educating the Namibian people and those doing business in Namibia about the importance of paying their fair share of taxes. We all owe it to our country to ensure that as a country we collect sufficient revenue for our Government. NamRA's work is government's work. Our work enables Government to build a capable State to foster economic recovery, sustainable growth and social development for the best interest of all Namibians.

NamRA is ready. NamRA is the Future. The Future is Now. We are ready to serve with Passion.

I thank you.