



**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**

**30 March 2016**

**Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee**  
**Honourable Members of the National Assembly,**

I am excited in taking the stand this afternoon, Honourable Chairman, in this august assembly, to present Vote 29 of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology for the Financial Year 2016/2017 which coincides with the first anniversary of our new Government under the able leadership of His Excellency, Comrade Dr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia.

Let me take this opportunity, Hon. Chairperson and Hon. Members, to congratulate the Minister of Finance Comrade Calle Schlettwein and his dynamic team of professionals at the Ministry of Finance for developing a comprehensive Budget for 2016/2017 Financial Year.

Allow me to give a snapshot about the status quo of the industry that falls within the ambit of the Ministry I am responsible for as its political head. Commercial ICT service providers only deploy telecommunication and ICT services to areas considered as financially strong and viable for investment purposes.

These financial strong and viable areas are predominantly located in urban areas and those along the mainstream of our national road networks. All these world class and state-of-the-art ICT infrastructure deployed in Namibia to date are invested at the expense of the poor and disadvantaged Namibians, located in rural sparsely populated and remote areas where most of these citizens earn less than the living wage or depend 100% on individual family members who are in all likelihood the sole bread-winners for relatively big families.

The distances to provide telecommunications, ICT and Internet services to the financially strong and viable areas are relatively marginal. Most of the sparsely populated areas are agricultural by nature with a big impact on food production potential for local and export markets and to subsequently mitigate the risk of importing food, but instead rendering uncompromising support and assistance towards the noble ideals and objectives of the Namibian Food Bank.

To transform this unacceptable status quo of our ICT sector, I am pleased to inform you, Hon, Chairperson, and Hon Members that the Ministry is working around the clock to increase the ICT footprint by making Internet network available to all corners of the country within a 14 to 18 months timeframe.

The Ministry intends to deliver to every Namibian a reliable and sustainable telecommunication network infrastructure providing satellite, General Packet Radio Service ( GPRS) 2G/3G/4G, Internet, Television and Radio services by the deadline I have just alluded to. And this is no mean task.

While I take cognizance of the amount of hard work and dedication lying ahead of us in the Ministry, I would like to acknowledge and commend the Namibian media industry for the effort that went into growing the industry. By the same token, I wish to pay tribute to the Namibian Government for the conducive media freedom guaranteed in the Namibian Constitution. I need to say this, Hon. Chairperson that Namibia is ranked as the 14<sup>th</sup> country in the World and the No. 1 in Africa in terms of media freedom. This is an excellent rating which we can still improve.

**Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,**

**Honourable Members of this August House,**

The Budget Allocation to the Ministry amounts to **Four Hundred and Ninety Four Million, Nine Hundred and Eighty Thousand (N\$ 494, 980, 000.00)** for the 2016/2017 Financial Year, which constitutes a reduction difference of 14% from the previous allocation last year.

Allow me to briefly summarize how the allocation will be committed for the implementation to achieve the development goals of the ICT sector for the following programmes:

**1: Information and Communication Technology Development**

**Thirteen Million and Seventy Two Thousand (N\$13, 072, 000)** is earmarked for this programme to facilitate Institutional Policy and Information Technology Infrastructure development.

The Ministry of ICT will expand the creation of an enabling environment for the ICT Sector and, by the same token, develop and review relevant laws and policies and ensure that ICT laws and policies regulating the industry are implemented.

**With regards to TELECOM NAMIBIA,** despite the ongoing challenges, the company, however, recorded improvements in its cash flow collection which exceeds N\$1, 5 billion, and an indication that it continues to strive for an improved network coverage and service delivery to all. However, Telecom is still challenged by strategic risks from ongoing theft and vandalism to fix infrastructure and ongoing weakening exchange rate. During this Financial Year, Telecom envisages, amongst other things to:

Expand its fiber optic backbone network by constructing fiber optic transmission routes in underserviced areas across the country to bring high speed and reliable telecommunication services to the people.

Transparency and legitimacy in government is significant in maintaining the nation's faith in its elected leaders. In order to uphold the image of government and that of the country, the Ministry intends contributing the media agenda, by providing accurate and adequate information on Government's priorities, programs and activities.

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

Under this programme, an amount of **Fifty Million, Seven Hundred and Six Thousand (N N\$ 50 706 000)** is allocated for the 2016/17 financial year.

Information is power, and as a component of the ICT development sector, government deems it fit to educate the Namibian public, thereby creating a knowledgeable society as envisioned in the policy of “Harambee Towards Prosperity for All” in order to achieve the targets of the country’s Vision 2030.

A total amount of **Thirteen Million, Six Hundred and Fifty Thousand (N\$13, 650, 000)** is allocated for **New Era Publication Corporation (NEPC)**.

I am glad to inform this august House, Hon. Chairperson, Hon. Members that New Era continues to improve its news coverage in attempting to make the publication representative countrywide.

By the same token, Honorable Chairperson, Hon. Members, the President is the front-runner of public transparency, openness and the free-flow of information through the media to the public. Classic examples are the SMS page which allows ordinary citizens to pose question for which Minister and those holding public office are to respond.

**For NAMZIM, an amount of Thirteen Million, Six Hundred and Fifty Thousand (N\$ 13 650 000)** is allocated to implement its operational activities including news, feature articles, analysis and opinion pieces from an African

perspective as well as to market the tourism and investment opportunities in Namibia and the SADC region.

In order to move at par with the ever-changing technology, a digital edition of Southern Times Magazine as well as an E-Paper will be introduced during this financial year.

During the 2016/2017 financial year NAMZIM will, amongst others, host a SADC Founding Fathers Summit. The Summit is scheduled for November 2016 will be held in Windhoek and will be attended by the three remaining Founding Fathers in SADC region who are Dr. Sam Nujoma, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda and President Robert Mugabe.

**Honourable Chairperson, Honourable Members,**

I want to divert your focus to our next **PROGRAMME AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA AND COPYRIGHT SERVICES** for which **Sixty Three Million, One Hundred and Seventy One Thousand (N\$63, 171, 000)** is committed to cover for ICT roll-out implementation, production, sound management and dissemination of audiovisual information to the public.

The Ministry will continue to translate speeches delivered by the President as well as State of the Nation Addresses and other important Government announcements in vernacular languages. This initiative ties in neatly with the concept of the President that nobody should be left out from the Namibian house.

**An amount of Nine Million, Three Hundred and Seventy One Thousand (N\$9, 371, 000) is earmarked for the Namibia Film Development Fund.**

The Namibia Film Commission established the first-ever incubation program for entrepreneurs in the filmmaking sector. This program intends to nurture and grow

small businesses while providing mentorship in film production. Through this program, successful filmmakers will be awarded seed funding to grow their businesses and a mentor will be attached to provide mentorship.

**Hon.Chair Person, Two Hundred and Fifty Two Million, One Hundred and Seven Thousand (N\$252, 107, 000) is allocated to the Namibian Public Service Broadcaster, the NBC.**

NBC still has unfinished business with its Digital TV to complete and migrate the remaining 28 sites. Several new high-power transmitter sites are planned as part of the DTT master plan to provide coverage in several uncovered but highly densely population areas of are Onesi, Eenhana, Omuthiya and Eiseb 10.

NBC is also hard at work to increase the TV programme with the introduction of a program called: “Public Corner” to enable Government and its public enterprises to present its programme in the right Namibian context. Various Ministries are not aware of the existence of this programme and the MICT invites all other Ministries to take note of this programme and utilize the allocated slot to provide the public with credible information.

Furthermore, I would like to commend the NBC TV News and Current Affairs for increasing its TV News Broadcast from one daily edition to three editions per day to enable everyone to have an opportunity to see and follow news developments in the country. TV News is broadcast at 20H00, 22H00 and midnight and this is good for people with very busy work schedules. Well-done NBC.

**Namibia Press Agency is allocated an amount of Twenty One Million (N\$21, 000, 000) for this financial year.**

The Namibia Press Agency (NAMPA) continues to play a pivotal role in its unwavering commitment to provide local and international news to Namibians and foreign national living in Namibia.

NAMPA feeds local and international news as it breaks. It provides news to almost all media houses highlighting the government's development programmes, projects including the private sector achievements and capital developments.

NAMPA, with its eight regional offices, ensures that news from the regions is received and disseminated to its 18 local media houses that subscribes to its news bank.

#### **4. lastly is COORDINATION AND SUPPORT within the Ministry**

Under this programme, an amount of **Thirty Two Million Four Hundred and Fifty Seven Thousand (N\$32, 457, 000)** is earmarked for the construction of the Ministry's Head Offices and Regional Offices.

**Honourable Chairperson, Honourable members;**

Before I submit and seek the Ministry's Budget for the consideration and endorsement by this **Honourable House, Hon. Chairperson**, I will fail in my duty if I do not give credit where and when it is due.

I would, therefore, like to commend and applaud the Namibian media, both print and electronic, those of the State and privately-owned, for a job well-done in living up to their public expectations in investigating, reporting and broadcasting news,



documentaries and feature stories about the Government, its political office-bearers, branches of Government and public enterprises.

The media have reported without fear and favor on news events as they broke. And we in Government, especially the **Ministry of Information and Communication Technology**, the custodian of all media appreciates the media freedom maintained and respected by Government and I quote “ stop teaching a leopard how to climb a tree”

While I appreciate the good work of the media; media houses have requested the Minister of Information and Communications Technology to develop a law that compel Government and to whom it may concern to release information by law as per request and enquiry of the media. I initially had my doubts about this request; but on second thought, I have considered this favourably and I will return to this august house with a Bill on **Access to Information** for debate and discussion in this house.

However, the media also need to play its part in regulating how they report about government, about public enterprises, about elected leaders and various other business people where most of these people are insulted and ridiculed by the media in their news stories. The Government since 1990 has requested the media that they start regulating themselves and create a Media Body to monitor irresponsible journalism applied by reporters. Most media houses rejected the request by Government and most did not want to be part of the Journalism Association of Namibia as they did not want to be regulated. Let quote from one famous author from Tanzania “When a stupid man becomes educated a wise man finds himself in difficulties” end of Quote.

Going forward, the **Ministry of Information and Communication Technology** will insist and drive the agenda that a statutory body be created as a matter of necessity and urgency to ensure that the media are held responsible in the event they abuse their power to write, report and broadcast and damage people's characters in public and get away with murder. This tendency must unfortunately come to an end. It is true as they say in Ghana: Education enlightens the minds to improve man's usefulness.

Let me thank all MICT staff members for all their contribution most importantly the launching of the Ministries Customer service charter which be availed to Hon Members.

On this note of positive media reporting going forward, **Hon. Chairman** and **Hon. Members**, I now have the distinct honor and pleasure to humbly submit Vote 29 for the amount of **Four Hundred and Ninety Four Million, Nine Hundred and Eighty Thousand (N\$494, 980, 000)** for your favorable consideration and endorsement.

I thank you; Matumero, Tangi unene; Okuhepa tjinene; Baie dankie; Kaise Ai-os; Vielen dank; Mpandu; Ke a leboga; Lu i tumenzi ahulu.