



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY,
HONOURABLE EMMA THEOFELUS, MP
AT THE HUAWEI PARTNER CONNECT GALA DINNER**

20 MAY 2025

WINDHOEK NAMIBIA

Her Worship Ndesihafela Larandja
Dr, Audrin Mathe – Executive Director MICT
Mr. Michael Zhang – MD Huawei Namibia
Honourable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to stand before you tonight at this esteemed Huawei Partner Connect Gala Dinner. I wish to begin by extending my deepest appreciation to the Managing Director of Huawei Technologies Namibia, Mr. Michael Zhang, for the kind invitation and the remarkable work Huawei continues to accomplish in Namibia and across Africa.

Tonight, we are not only here to celebrate partnerships — we are here to celebrate vision, innovation, and a shared commitment toward building a digitally empowered Namibia. Allow me to acknowledge the presence of esteemed leaders and stakeholders in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector. Your contributions, strategic insights, and relentless pursuit of progress continue to propel our nation towards a knowledge-based economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namibia is on a decisive path towards digital transformation. Guided by our national development frameworks; including Vision 2030 and the Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6), the Government of the Republic of Namibia has prioritised ICT development as a fundamental enabler of economic growth, social inclusion, and national competitiveness. We understand that an inclusive digital economy cannot flourish without robust infrastructure, a digitally literate population, and meaningful partnerships. It is precisely within this spirit of collaboration that I am pleased to highlight one of the most significant milestones in our Ministry's recent engagements: the signing of the Namibia LEAP Digital Talent Program 2024, between the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology and Huawei Technologies Namibia, on 1st August 2024 in Shenzhen, China.

This programme marks a bold and strategic leap forward for our nation's digital future.

What does this partnership entail? Through this partnership, we will cultivate local ICT talent, create new internship opportunities for students, and lay the foundation for a new generation of innovators, developers, and problem-solvers who will drive Namibia's digital transformation. The LEAP programme will focus not only on skill-building but also on empowering our youth with the confidence and exposure needed to thrive in a highly competitive global digital economy.

I envision moving a digitally illiterate young Namibian, to semi-digitally literate, to fully digitally literate, to being fully digitally skilled and then an expert all in one go. We know this is possible. It has been done, we only need to put the necessary resources towards ensuring young Namibians access this opportunity to do so and more importantly that they exploit it for Namibia's benefit. For all of our benefit.

We are incredibly proud of this partnership with Huawei, a global leader in technology and innovation. We recognise Huawei not merely as a technology provider but as a true development partner. Your commitment to human capital development, infrastructure expansion, and knowledge transfer is both commendable and inspiring.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us be clear — bridging the digital divide is not a task for the government alone. It necessitates collaboration with industry leaders, educational institutions, development partners, and indeed, the private sector.

To this end, I wish to reaffirm the Ministry's commitment to working hand in hand with Huawei and all ICT stakeholders in four critical areas that we have also outlined in our digital strategy, which has since been endorsed by the rest of government:

1. **Digital Literacy:** We must ensure that every Namibian, from rural communities to urban centres, has the opportunity to become digitally literate. Basic digital skills must become as fundamental as reading and writing.
2. **Connectivity Expansion:** We aim to accelerate universal access to high-speed internet, particularly in underserved and remote areas. Connectivity must not be a privilege, but a right — an enabler of education, healthcare, and economic participation. Hence the Universal Service and Access Fund which in this financial year has received 40 million to expand infrastructure to compliment the work of MNOs.
3. **Training and Capacity Building:** Through programmes like LEAP, and through ongoing collaboration with our partners, we seek to build a strong, skilled, and competitive ICT workforce. We welcome industry-led initiatives that complement our efforts in upskilling and professional development.
4. **Innovation Ecosystems:** We envision a Namibia where start-ups thrive, where innovation is supported, and where our youth perceive ICT not only as a field of study but as a field of opportunity. We call upon our partners to assist us in building incubators, innovation hubs, and centres of excellence.

Esteemed Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen,

The journey ahead is filled with both challenges and opportunities. However, with unity of purpose and partnership, we can ensure that Namibia is not left behind in the fourth industrial revolution. Tonight, as we celebrate the achievements and ambitions of Huawei and its partners, let us remember that technology is not an end in itself. It is a tool — a bridge — toward a more inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable society.

Let us leave this evening inspired to build stronger partnerships, design bolder solutions, and invest more deeply in the people who will carry our vision forward — the young women and men of Namibia.

Together, we can create a future where digital opportunities are accessible to all, where innovation flourishes, and where no Namibian is left behind.

I thank you once again for the opportunity to share these reflections, and I look forward to many more moments of collaboration, celebration, and collective progress.

Thank you for your kind attention. Enjoy the rest of the evening.

