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COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS,
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Distinguished colleagues,

Fellow government communications officers and partners in public service,

It is my privilege to address you today as we gather to explore one of the most critical challenges facing modern governance: "Strengthening Government Communication for Transparency and Impact". I have witnessed first-hand the transformative power of effective communication in building trust between government and citizens, enhancing accountability and driving meaningful development outcomes.

We live in an era where information travels at the speed of light, where citizens expect immediate access to government services and real-time updates on policy developments, and where transparency is not merely a democratic ideal but a fundamental requirement for effective governance. The question before us today is not whether we should embrace this new communication paradigm, but how quickly and effectively we can adapt our practices to meet the evolving expectations of the Namibian people.

Director of Ceremonies;

Transparency in government communication is not merely an ethical obligation—it is a strategic imperative that enhances government effectiveness, builds public trust and strengthens democratic institutions. The Access to Information Act empowers citizens to make informed decisions and enhances accountability within both public and private institutions. However, legal frameworks alone are insufficient; we must develop communication practices that proactively share information and engage citizens in meaningful dialogue.

Effective transparency requires us to move beyond compliance with disclosure requirements to embrace a culture of openness that permeates all aspects of government communication. This means providing information in formats that citizens can understand and use, ensuring that communication reaches all segments of society, and creating mechanisms for citizens to provide feedback and hold government accountable for its commitments. The development of our Harmonised Government Communications Strategy represents a critical opportunity to embed these transparency principles into all government communication activities.

Director of Ceremonies;

Technology serves as a powerful enabler of both transparency and impact in government communication, but only when deployed strategically and inclusively. Our vision to be a catalyst for universal and equitable access to information requires us to leverage technology in ways that bridge rather than widen existing divides.

The single gateway portal envisioned in our National Digital Strategy represents more than a technical achievement. It embodies our commitment to citizen-centred service delivery. Social media platforms, mobile applications and digital communication tools offer unprecedented opportunities for real-time engagement with citizens, providing life-saving information during emergencies and enabling continuous dialogue for responsive policy development.

However, we must recognise the challenges that technology presents. Digital divides can exclude vulnerable populations from important communications, misinformation can spread as quickly as accurate information and cybersecurity concerns demand that we balance openness with the protection of sensitive information and citizen privacy.

Director of Ceremonies;

Building effective communication capacity requires investment in both people and systems across multiple dimensions. Our communications officers must develop technical skills for digital platforms and data analysis tools, strategic communication skills for designing impactful campaigns and cultural competence to navigate Namibia's linguistic and cultural diversity whilst maintaining consistency in core government positions.

Traditional approaches to measuring government communication have focused primarily on outputs: the number of media releases issued, social media posts published or events organised. Moving towards outcome-based measurement requires us to define clearly what we hope to achieve and develop metrics that assess progress towards those objectives, whether increased citizen awareness, improved public understanding, enhanced trust in institutions or changes in citizen behaviour and democratic participation.

Regular evaluation and adaptation based on measurement results must become standard practice. This means establishing baseline measurements before launching new initiatives, conducting regular assessments during implementation and using evaluation results to refine and improve our approaches continuously.

Director of Ceremonies;

Effective government communication requires coordination and collaboration across Office, Ministries and Agencies and all public entities. Citizens experience government as a single entity that should provide coherent, consistent and complementary services and information. Our role in the Ministry of ICT includes coordinating information management within government, but this function must extend beyond technical systems to

encompass communication strategies, messaging frameworks and citizen engagement approaches.

This coordination challenge is particularly acute in crisis situations, where multiple agencies may be involved in response efforts and where conflicting or inconsistent messages can undermine public confidence and response effectiveness. Developing robust coordination mechanisms for both routine and emergency communication must be a priority for all government communications officers.

Director of Ceremonies,

Strengthening government communication for transparency and impact is not merely a technical challenge. It is a democratic imperative that requires commitment, creativity and collaboration from all of us. The Namibian people deserve government communication that is transparent, accessible, timely and effective. They deserve to understand how government decisions affect their lives, to have opportunities to participate in policy development and to hold government accountable for its commitments.

I challenge each of you to leave this workshop with specific commitments to strengthen your communication practices. Whether that means adopting new technologies, developing new skills, improving coordination with colleagues or simply listening more carefully to citizen feedback, every improvement contributes to our collective success.

Thank you for your commitment to public service and your dedication to excellence in government communication. I look forward to our continued collaboration in strengthening transparency and impact across all government communication efforts.