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BRIEF

News Worth Knowing



Namibia moves to revive Rent Control Boards amid rental law overhaul

MONDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2026

MAIN STORY

Namibia moves to revive Rent Control Boards amid rental law overhaul

The revival of Namibia's Rent Control Boards has entered the procurement phase, with government preparing to appoint specialist consultants through an open national bidding process as part of broader reforms aimed at modernising the country's rental market framework.

Minister of Urban and Rural Development James Sankwasa told the National Assembly that the ministry is progressing with plans to re-establish Rent Control Boards, alongside a review of the Rents Ordinance No. 13 of 1977 and the drafting of new legislation aligned with current housing and rental market conditions.

"The matter is at procurement stage and will soon be advertised through Open National Bidding for consultants with expertise in property values, property law and rental matters to come on board," Sankwasa said.

The initiative forms part of government efforts to address longstanding regulatory gaps in Namibia's rental sector, where existing legislation has largely remained dormant since Independence.

Responding to questions on tenant deposits and enforcement mechanisms, Nekundi said the current rental market is regulated by the Namibia Estate Agents Board, which falls outside the mandate of the Ministry of Urban and Rural



Crucial Dates

- **Bank of Namibia Monetary Policy announcement dates:**
 - * 18 February 2026
 - * 22 April 2026
 - * 17 June 2026
 - * 12 August 2026
 - * 21 October 2026
 - * 02 December 2026
- **Namibia Oil and Gas Conference 18–21 August 2026 in Windhoek**

Development.

“Currently, the rental market is regulated by the Namibia Estate Agents Board, which does not fall under the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development but under the Ministry of International Relations and Trade,” he said.

He acknowledged that provisions under the Rents Ordinance — including limits on rental deposits — are outdated and largely non-functional. Section 25 of the Ordinance stipulates that rental deposits should not exceed 50% of one month’s rent.

“In other words, I fully agree that this law is completely outdated,” Sankwasa said.

The minister noted that there is currently no legal framework empowering the ministry to regulate rental prices, underscoring the importance of re-establishing Rent Control Boards to improve oversight and affordability within the housing market.

He added that rental pricing remains closely linked to property valuations, with the Ordinance defining reasonable rent as not exceeding 9.5% per annum of a property’s value, including land and improvements.

“As long as property values remain at current levels, rental prices will continue to remain high,” Sankwasa said.

He pointed to ongoing reforms within the valuation sector, including the establishment of the Namibia Council for the Property Valuers Profession under the Office of the Valuer General, aimed at strengthening oversight and improving consistency in property

valuations.

On housing supply, Nekundi said land servicing and housing delivery remain key priorities under National Development Plan 6, with government focusing on informal settlement upgrading, township establishment and expanding serviced land availability.

He confirmed that 572 housing units under the Mass Housing Development Programme are yet to be completed, while an additional 400 units will be constructed with grant funding from the People’s Republic of China. The Build Together Programme and annual support to the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia are also continuing.

Nekundi added that the ministry is drafting a new bill to replace outdated provisions in the Ordinance, including penalties that no longer reflect present-day economic realities.

“That means matters such as N\$200 fines were appropriate for the property market of that time. In today’s market, the time value of money must be considered,” he said.

However, he cautioned that reforms must be implemented carefully to avoid destabilising the property market, stressing that existing laws must continue to be enforced while new legislation is finalised.



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Namport secures AfDB and Korea backing for 10-year green port strategy

The Namibian Ports Authority (Namport) has secured technical and financial support from the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea to develop a comprehensive 10-year Green Port Strategy aimed at transforming Namibia’s port operations.

Speaking at the official signing ceremony

for the Green Ports Strategy Cooperation Letter of Intent on Monday, Namport Chief Executive Officer Andrew Kanime said the partnership will provide high-level technical assistance to develop a comprehensive Green Port Policy, a detailed Green Port Investment Plan and a Green Port Implementation Roadmap.

He said these instruments will guide infrastructure expansion, prioritise sustainable investments and provide a clear, phased framework for executing Namibia’s green port transition in a structured and measurable manner.

“The generous funding and technical partnership with the AfDB and the Korean government will enable us to translate our policy commitments into a comprehensive and implementable Green Port Strategy. It will help us move from vision to action, from commitment to measurable impact,” Kanime said.

Kanime added that Namibia’s selection as

NOTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Junior Baiano Industrial Consultants cc hereby gives notice to all potentially Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) that an application will be made to Environmental Commissioner in terms of the Environmental Management Act (No 7 of 2007) and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (GN 30 of 6 February 2012) for the following activity:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposed development and operation of a Desalination plant in Walvis Bay

PROJECT LOCATION: Eastern side of the town boundaries of Walvis Bay, in the vicinity of Walvis Bay Airport and the Military base at Rooikop on state land

PROponent: Southern Africa Desalination (Pty) Ltd

I&APs are invited to register with the consultant and give their comments and concerns in writing.

Kindly take note of the following:

PUBLIC MEETING
 Date: Friday 6 March 2024
 Venue: Protea Pelican Bay Hotel, Walvis Bay
 Time: 14:00 – 17:00

To register or request for documents please submit your name, contact information and interest in the project, in writing to:

Mr Nghiyolwa, Fredrich
 Tel: +264 (0) 81 147 2029 / 0812095996
 Email: juniorbaiano@gmail.com

The map shows the project location in Walvis Bay, Namibia. It includes a legend with categories like 'Industrial', 'Residential', 'Public Open Space', 'Water Body', 'Road', 'Railway', 'Agriculture', 'Protected Area', 'Other', and 'Other'. The map also shows the 'DEDESALINATION PLANT WILVIS BAY' and 'WALVIS BAY'. A scale bar indicates 0 to 1000 meters. The map is titled 'NOTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS'.

a flagship beneficiary under the International Port Development Cooperation Programme reflects growing international confidence in the country’s policy clarity, implementation capacity and commitment to sustainable economic development.

He noted that while maritime transport remains central to global trade and economic growth, the evolving global maritime landscape increasingly demands sustainability, responsible resource management and climate resilience alongside operational efficiency.

“As the custodian and steward of Namibia’s ports in Walvis Bay and Lüderitz, Namport is committed to advancing port operations that drive national development, connect Southern Africa to global markets and promote environmentally sustainable practices across the maritime services value chain,” he said.

Namport has already begun its transition towards greener operations.

In March 2022, the Namport Board adopted a strategic decision to transform both ports into fully fledged, future-proof green ports, leading to the development of the Namport Corporate Sustainability Policy.

The policy is anchored on four pillars: Corporate Social Investment, Environmental Stewardship, Economic Prosperity and Governance.

Kanime said the Environmental Stewardship pillar prioritises reducing operational emissions through the adoption of low- and zero-carbon fuels, improving air and water quality, strengthening infrastructure resilience against climate risks such as rising sea levels and extreme weather events, and protecting sensitive coastal and marine ecosystems, including the Walvis Bay Lagoon.

The strategy also focuses on habitat protection and improved management of ship-related waste to support sustainable port operations over the long term.

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Extensions Without End. Opportunities Without Arrival.



Namibia's public enterprises continue to extend contracts while a generation waits outside the boardroom door. Stability is cited. Transition is promised. Renewal never quite arrives.

The latest contract extension at a state-owned enterprise was explained in familiar language: continuity, institutional memory, the need to complete recruitment processes. The reasoning sounded careful and administrative, almost routine.

That is precisely the problem. When exceptional decisions become routine, they stop being exceptions. They become policy by habit.

Namibia's public enterprises are not short of procedures. They have retirement ages, fixed-term contracts and governance frameworks designed to balance stability with renewal.

Yet, time and again, those rules bend at the moment they are meant to take effect. Contracts expire but leadership remains. Retirement arrives but transition is postponed. The explanation is always temporary. The outcome is always the same.

The question is no longer about one executive or one institution. It is about a system that appears reluctant to let

leadership change happen.

The country invests heavily in education and professional development. Each year produces graduates, managers and specialists ready to assume responsibility. Many gain experience in the private sector, in regional institutions, or abroad.

Yet within public enterprises, leadership turnover moves cautiously, almost defensively, as though renewal itself carries risk.

But institutions that fear transition eventually weaken. Leadership pipelines do not develop through observation alone. They develop through opportunity.

If senior positions remain occupied through repeated extensions, emerging leaders cannot acquire the experience required to lead national institutions. Talent does not disappear overnight; it leaves slowly, quietly, for environments where advancement feels possible.

The argument for continuity is understandable. State-owned enterprises operate in complex sectors where abrupt leadership change can disrupt strategy.

Yet continuity without succession planning is not stability. It is dependency. Strong institutions are measured by how smoothly leadership changes, not by how long change is avoided.

There is also a governance cost. Policies lose authority when they are selectively applied.

Retirement ages and contract limits exist to protect institutions from becoming personalised.

When boards repeatedly override those limits, the message becomes unclear: rules exist, but only until they become inconvenient.

At the same time, Namibia faces another uncomfortable pattern — the circulation

of executives between public entities regardless of performance outcomes. Leaders who struggle in one institution often reappear in another recruitment cycle. Accountability becomes blurred, and renewal becomes cosmetic rather than substantive.

The consequence is subtle but serious. Younger professionals begin to see leadership not as a pathway earned through merit and performance, but as a closed circle extended through familiarity and caution. Over time, ambition shifts elsewhere. Public enterprises lose not only future executives but also the confidence of those meant to inherit them.

Namibia does not lack talent. It risks lacking trust in its own talent.

Leadership transition should not be treated as a disruption to be delayed but as a responsibility to be managed deliberately. Extensions may occasionally be necessary. Permanent transition delays are not.

A country seeking economic

transformation cannot rely indefinitely on yesterday's leadership to solve tomorrow's problems. Institutions grow when experience guides renewal, not when renewal waits indefinitely for permission.

The door to leadership in Namibia's public enterprises remains open in theory. In practice, it rarely moves.

And until it does, the question will persist – not whether the country has capable successors, but whether it is willing to let them lead.

** Briefly is a weekly column that is opinionated and analytical. It sifts through the noise to make sense of the numbers, trends and headlines shaping business and the economy with insight, wit and just enough scepticism to keep things interesting. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ARE NOT OUR OWN, we simply relay them as part of the conversation.*

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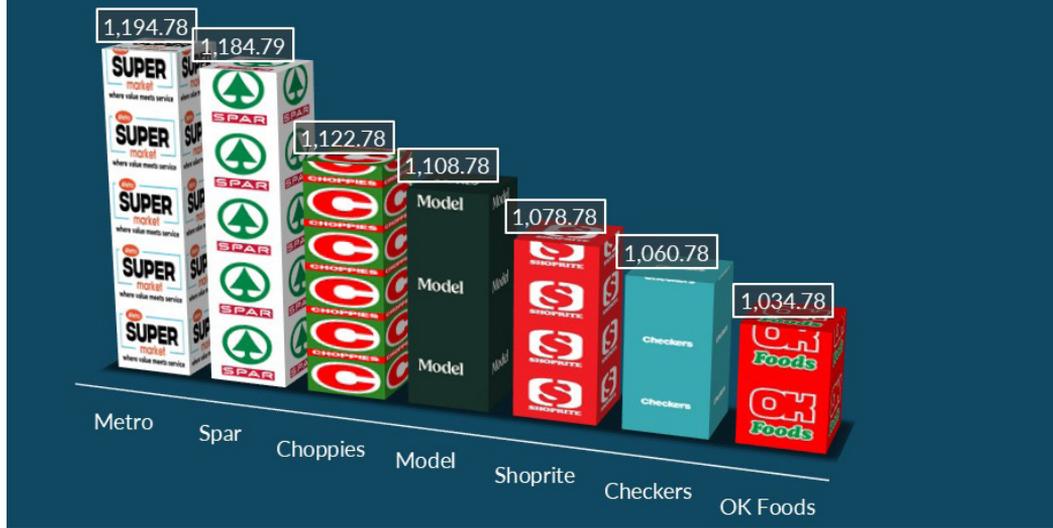
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RETAILERS GROCERY BASKET TOTAL COST (N\$) January 2026



OK Foods Leads on Retailers Price Competitiveness in January 2026

OK Foods led the retail market in affordability this January, recording the lowest total basket cost at N\$1,034.78. This was followed by Checkers (N\$1,060.78) and Shoprite (N\$1,078.78), both of which continue to show strong pricing consistency.

In contrast, Metro and Spar registered the highest costs, with baskets totaling N\$1,194.78 and N\$1,184.79 respectively. The data indicates that while food prices across the board remain competitive, the higher totals at Metro and Spar were largely driven by steeper margins on non-food essentials and cleaning products.

Category-Based Price Insights

1. Staple Foods (Bread, Maize Meal,

Rice, Sugar, Pasta, Oil) Staple food prices remained relatively stable across the retail sector in January 2026, though specific item variations persisted.

* Shoprite and Checkers maintained a consistent lead in the affordability of core essentials, particularly bread, sugar, and maize meal.

* Cooking Oil (2L): Checkers offered the most competitive price at N\$74.99, followed closely by Choppies at N\$76.99.

* Rice (2kg): Prices showed minimal fluctuation, with OK Foods and Model providing the market lows at N\$37.99.

Overall, Shoprite continues to be the most reliable low-cost provider for high-volume staples, playing a critical role in

supporting the purchasing power of price-sensitive households.

2. Fresh & Protein Items (Chicken, Mince, Eggs, Vegetables)

OK Foods emerged as the market leader in this segment, offering the most competitive rates for high-demand items:

* Chicken (1.5kg): Priced at a market low of N\$74.99 at OK Foods, while costs at Spar, Model, and Shoprite showed a sharp upward trajectory.

* Beef Mince (1kg): This remains the most volatile item in the basket, with an extreme variance ranging from N\$104.99 at OK Foods to N\$199.99 at Choppies, a nearly 90% price spread.

*Vegetables: Essentials such as onions, potatoes, and tomatoes were most affordable at OK Foods and Choppies. In contrast, Spar recorded significantly higher price points, particularly for potatoes.

Overall, OK Foods’ aggressive pricing strategy on perishables and proteins solidified its position as the most affordable choice for fresh grocery shopping in January 2026.

3. Cleaning & Household Products

Pricing for household and cleaning essentials—including toilet paper, detergents, and personal hygiene products

showed moderate variation across the retail landscape in January 2026. Model and OK Foods emerged as the market leaders in this category, offering the most competitively priced baskets and effectively helping to mitigate overall household costs.

4. Dairy & Processed Foods

* Long-life milk (1L) was the cheapest at Model and Choppies (N\$19.99).

* Butter prices were lowest at Choppies (N\$26.99).

* Canned foods (pilchards and corned meat) are most competitively priced at Choppies and Spar, supporting affordability for protein substitutes.

Conclusion & Consumer Takeaway

OK Foods secured the title of cheapest overall retailer for the month of January 2026, leveraging a clear price advantage in fresh produce and proteins. While Shoprite and Checkers remain the benchmarks for staples. Metro and Spar saw their basket totals inflated primarily by higher margins on household and cleaning goods rather than food prices. Significant price gaps in items such as mince, toilet paper, and vegetables highlights opportunities for consumers to mix-and-match retailers to minimize monthly household spend.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposed development and operation of a Sodium Potash plant in Walvis Bay

PROJECT LOCATION: Eastern side of the town boundaries of Walvis Bay, in the vicinity of Walvis Bay Airport and the Military base of Rooikop on state land

PROPONENT: Southern Africa Potash (Pty) Ltd

IAPs are invited to register with the consultant and give their comments and concerns in writing.

Kindly take note of the following:

PUBLIC MEETING
Date: Friday 6 March 2026
Venue: Protea - Pelican Bay Hotel, Walvis Bay
Time: 14h00 – 17h00



To register or request for documents please submit your name, contact information and interest in the project, in writing to:

Mr Nghiyowa, Fredrich
Tel: +264 (0) 81 147 2029 /0812095996
Email: juniorb2025@juniorb.com

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposed development and operation of a Chlor-Alkali plant in Walvis Bay

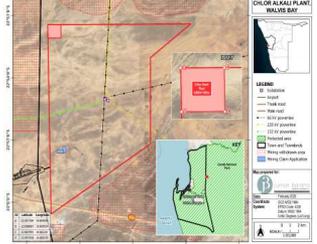
PROJECT LOCATION: Eastern side of the town boundaries of Walvis Bay, in the vicinity of Walvis Bay Airport and the Military base of Rooikop on state land

PROPONENT: Southern Africa Chlor-Alkali (Pty) Ltd

IAPs are invited to register with the consultant and give their comments and concerns in writing.

Kindly take note of the following:

PUBLIC MEETING
Date: Friday 6 March 2026
Venue: Protea - Pelican Bay Hotel, Walvis Bay
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To register or request for documents please submit your name, contact information and interest in the project, in writing to:

Mr Nghiyowa, Fredrich
Tel: +264 (0) 81 147 2029 /0812095996
Email: juniorb2025@juniorb.com

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INDUSTRIAL CONSULTANTS

Bank Windhoek appoints Deolinda Shikalepo as Head of Procurement

Bank Windhoek has appointed Deolinda Shikalepo as its Head of Procurement, effective 1 January 2026, as the lender moves to strengthen procurement governance and enhance operational efficiency.

The bank said the appointment reflects Shikalepo's extensive experience and strategic leadership in procurement across multiple industries, including financial services, manufacturing and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG).

Shikalepo brings more than a decade of procurement experience, spanning contract management, compliance oversight, supplier relations and tender administration. Over the course of her career, she has progressed from operational roles into senior leadership positions, where she managed high-value contracts and implemented cost-efficiency initiatives.

In her new role, she will be responsible for guiding Bank Windhoek's procurement strategy, governance framework and policy implementation. Her mandate includes ensuring procurement processes remain transparent, ethical and aligned with the bank's broader strategic objectives, while overseeing sourcing activities, regulatory compliance and supplier relationship management.

The bank said Shikalepo is expected to play a key role in strengthening procurement as a strategic function that supports organisational performance and long-term value creation.

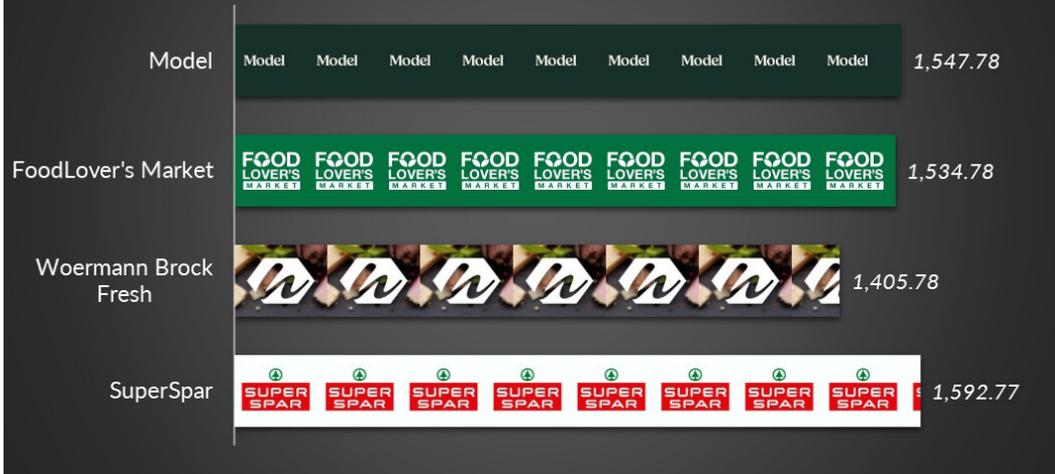
Shikalepo is currently pursuing a Master of Laws (LLM) in International Commercial and Technology Law and holds qualifications in both procurement



and law. She aims to position procurement as a value-adding function through collaborative leadership focused on accountability, compliance, supplier development and operational efficiency.



A STORES: Basket Total Cost (N\$) - January 2026



A-STORE Basket Shows Woermann Fresh Offers Best Value for Shoppers Cost in January 2026

In this month's A-STORE price comparison survey, Woermann Fresh recorded the lowest total basket cost at N\$1,405.78, positioning it as the most affordable retailer for the selected items. FoodLover's Market followed at N\$1,534.78, while SuperSpar's basket was comparatively higher at N\$1,592.77.

Total Basket Comparison

- Woermann Fresh: N\$1,405.78
- FoodLover's Market: N\$1,534.78
- Model: N\$1,547.78
- SuperSpar: N\$1,592.77

Woermann Fresh's basket was N\$186.99 cheaper than SuperSpar and N\$142.00 lower than Model, driven largely by competitive pricing on meat products, olive oil, and household cleaning items.

Store Performance Highlights

Woermann Fresh

Woermann Fresh secured the top position due to lower prices on high-impact

items such as chicken breasts, sirloin steak, olive oil, toilet paper, and auto washing powder. Given the weight of these items in household budgets, their pricing played a key role in reducing the overall basket cost.

FoodLover's Market

FoodLover's Market ranked second overall and remained highly competitive on fresh produce, including potatoes, onions, cucumbers, tomatoes, and apples. It also recorded the lowest prices for cheddar cheese and olive oil, helping offset higher prices in selected protein categories.

Model

Model placed third, offering relatively stable pricing across staple goods such as rice, pasta, bread, and sugar. While not the cheapest overall, Model maintained mid-range pricing consistency across most categories.

SuperSpar

SuperSpar recorded the highest total

Wholesaler	Total Basket Cost	Variance from Lowest
Windhoek C & C	N\$1,275.34	Market Leader
Metro	N\$1,288.92	N\$13.58
NAMICA	N\$1,301.92	N\$26.58
Wecke & Voigts	N\$1,411.78	N\$136.44

basket cost this month. Higher prices for items such as sirloin steak, olive oil, and auto washing powder contributed significantly to the overall total, although the store remained competitive on selected everyday staples.

Conclusion & Consumer Takeaway

As seen in this month's price comparison, there is no single retailer that is cheapest

across every category. Woermann Fresh offers the lowest overall basket cost, FoodLover's Market excels in fresh produce, and Model provides steady pricing on staples. This reinforces a key point for cost-conscious shoppers: mixing purchases across different stores based on item-specific pricing remains the smartest strategy for stretching your grocery budget.



A milestone worth celebrating. Namibia Mining & Energy has reached 50,000 followers on LinkedIn. Thank you to our readers, partners and industry stakeholders for being part of the journey. Continue to read, share and engage with us as we tell Namibia's mining and energy story.

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Namibia ranks 83rd globally in Innovators Business Environment Index 2026

Namibia has been ranked 83rd globally and 13th in the Africa and Middle East region in the 2026 Innovators Business Environment Index (IBEI), reflecting strong performance in taxation and market perception indicators.

Deputy Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sport, Arts and Culture Dino Ballotti said the ranking highlights ongoing efforts to strengthen the country’s innovation ecosystem and support entrepreneurship.

“Namibia is prioritising an

enabling environment for founders and innovators by widening access to funding, strengthening coordination, expanding digital services and deepening links to regional markets,” Ballotti said.

The country achieved a score of 100.000 for Dividend Tax Rate, significantly above the global average of 74.591, and received a top-tier assessment in Capital Gains Tax Rate, also scoring 100.000 compared to a global average of 64.000.

English proficiency contributed positively to Namibia’s performance, with

the country scoring 75.000 against a world average of 49.400.

Under the index’s pillar performance, Namibia recorded a global score of 39.563 in Business Incentives, ranking 90th; 51.847 in Market Perception, ranking 51st; and 50.246 in Ease of Operating a Business, placing 95th globally.

Namibia leads Africa under the Market Perception pillar and ranks second in Southern Africa overall in the index. The country also ranks first in Southern Africa in the Taxation Functional Category and third in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Global Mobility and Openness category, reflecting relatively favourable cross-border accessibility.

“As a country, our focus on sport and the creative and cultural industries is opening new pathways for enterprise growth. A sustainable economy requires continuous innovation, where we collectively build solutions across both established and emerging sectors,” Ballotti said.

The index notes that Namibia’s performance in the IBEI exceeds its ranking

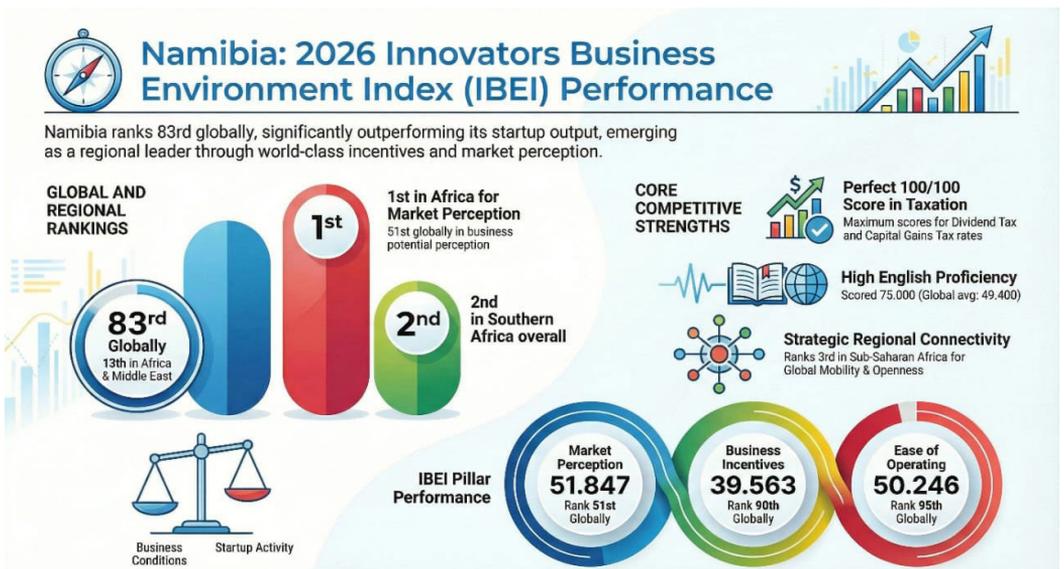
in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2025, suggesting that underlying business environment conditions are stronger than current startup output levels.

Namibia’s business environment is supported by stable institutions and predictable policy frameworks. Mining remains central to the economy, alongside growing activity in renewable energy, particularly green hydrogen development.

Infrastructure assets such as the Port of Walvis Bay, as well as regional integration through SACU and SADC, continue to support market access and trade flows.

However, the Access to Capital and Financial Infrastructure category remains an area requiring improvement, particularly in expanding credit availability and investment channels for entrepreneurs.

Covering more than 125 countries, the IBEI applies a consistent methodology across more than 30 measurable indicators, scoring national business environments on a 0–100 scale to assess accessibility, predictability and institutional support for innovators.



Beyond the budget statement: Citizens's guide to understanding what government is really saying

By Mally Likukela

Minister of Finance, Hon. Erica Shafuda announced last week that she will present the national Budget 2026-27 on Thursday, February 26.

For many Namibians, the Budget – as presented to parliament in a speech or statement often boils down to a handful of headline questions and key takeaways such as: Will income taxes change? Will fuel get cheaper?

Will spending on jobs, infrastructure, and welfare increase? While these are pertinent question to understanding the Budget, the real Budget story runs far deeper than the speech alone. The picture is much bigger than what is captured in the speech.

Beyond the technical speech to be delivered by the Minister, deep inside the text and numbers, there lies critical information that pertains to what the government is truly prioritizing in terms of "bread and butter" issues.

At a time when the nation is faced with high unemployment, lower growth, widespread poverty and inequality, decoding the message from one of the key budget documents is paramount.

If there was a time in the history of Namibia where decoding the subtle messages from the Minister's speech mattered, this is the time where decoding the messages beyond the speech really matters as much as listening to the speech itself.

Decoding the finance minister's budget speech is crucial for every citizen because



The Budget Speech together with other documents is aimed to explain the Government's plan for revenue, spending, borrowing and taxation down to the last dollar.

it will help them to understanding how government fiscal policy will impact their personal finances, business operations, and economic at large.

This article is a simple attempt to guide citizens on how to easily decipher the messages contained in the budget speech and accompanying document once tabled on the 26th of February 2026.

This guide will help citizens to decode the speech and be able to break down complex, jargon-heavy announcements into actionable insights, allowing citizens, investors, and businesses to digest the speech and plan for the upcoming financial year.

Once the speech has been decoded, citizens should be able to tell whether their living standards will improve, if taxes will increase, and where the "bread and butter" money will be being spent.

Understanding the Budget speech

First and foremost, citizens must

understand that the budget statement is not “The Budget” as is commonly known, but it is just one of the documents in a set of several other documents that the Minister presents (or tables) to Parliament.

The Budget Speech together with other documents is aimed to explain the Government’s plan for revenue, spending, borrowing and taxation down to the last dollar.

The Budget statement marks the beginning of the budget approval process which is done to obtain Parliament’s approval before the budget (Appropriation Bill) is approved and signed by the head of state to become the Appropriation Act.

Therefore, the Speech primary serves to act as the official, public-facing summary of the government's financial plan for the upcoming financial year. Delivered by the Minister of Finance, it basically highlights key spending priorities, revenue-generating measures (taxes), and the overall economic strategy to Parliament and the public.

While the budget speech covers the key points, the accompanied documents such

as the Estimates of National Expenditure, MTEF, Development Budget, Accountability Report as well as the Citizen’s Guide are more detailed are technical to provide the full breakdown of the financial plan.

Structure of the Budget speech

To be able to decipher the budget statement, citizens must read it in conjunction with the most recent previous statement. The structure matters as it controls the flow of the message and over the past, the budget speech has always assumed a structured policy statement format. Based on the Mid-Year Review Policy Speech for 2025/26 Financial Year, the upcoming statement is most likely to contain the following parts:

- Introduction and Policy Context (Page 2): The Minister will start with protocol, quoting the constitution, and setting the theme for the fiscal year (e.g., "A New Dawn: Beyond 35"). It highlights the economic, social, and fiscal context, including global and regional economic conditions.
- Global Economic context (Page 3 and 4): She will then move on to give an analysis of

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the global and domestic economic context, including GDP growth projections, inflation rates, and the impact of sectors like mining, agriculture, and tourism.

- **Fiscal Performance and Outlook (Page 5):** There after she will give a review of the previous financial year's revenue, expenditure, and budget deficit, including updates on public debt levels.

- **Revenue Proposals (Page 6):** The Minister will thereafter provide details on expected revenue, including tax changes, improvements in tax administration, and customs revenue from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU).

- **Budget Priorities and Expenditure Allocations (Page 7):** The Minister will then spend a substantial amount of time on the

core of her speech. Here she will highlight key expenditure priorities (e.g., education, health, infrastructure, social sectors) and specific allocations for ministries or "Votes."

- **Financing and Debt Management (Page 11):** Following the core presentation, the Minister will outline the strategy for financing the deficit through domestic and external borrowing.

- **Conclusion (Page 15):** Finally, she will give a summary of the budget goals, appreciation to the Budget Working Group and a formal tabling of the Appropriation Bill for approval.

Budget Headline

Budget speeches just like all Government speeches often focus on positive outcomes while the real picture on the ground remain

hidden in the text and numbers. Citizens must look at the specific figures to see the reality.

The best point to start is to look at the main priorities and headlines – the aggregates or totals of the key numbers, e.g. Total Revenue, expenditure, fiscal deficit, major allocations, etc.

From these numbers, one can quickly see where Government's priorities lays. These aggregate numbers can help citizens to quickly tell what kind of Budget it is: whether it is a Growth-focussed, consolidation-focussed, reform-focussed Budget, or a balancing act. To see what the government is really saying, citizens must simply look at these specific areas within the

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statement:

What to look out for in the Budget statement

In the Budget statement for the fiscal year to be tabled on the 26th of February 2026, it is important for citizens to look out for what the government will be signalling about critical issues that affects the economy in general and households in particular.

General observation

- Global and domestic developments: Start by looking at how Government view global and domestic developments (events) and their impact on growth, inflation, interest, and exchange rate risks. These variables are crucial because they serve as "barometer" of the status of the economy and sets the stage for how tax money will be collected and spent. At the time of the mid-term budget review, the world bank had forecasted that advanced economies were to decrease from 3.3% in 2024 to 3.2% in 2025 and further down to 3.1% in 2026.

- Revenue (Income): Citizen should understand where is the money coming from and how much has been collected? At the time of the last statement (mid-term budget review), government had indicated that the revenue outrun had reached N\$36.6 billion. Another pertinent question to ask is where this money is coming from. If it is mostly from taxes on individuals (income tax/VAT), the burden is on the citizen. If it is high in borrowing, the burden is on future generations.

- Expenditure plans: When it comes to the expenditure plans, citizens should check the Budget statement to see whether Government will continue with the fiscal expansion or it will tighten spending; if it tightens the budget – which sectors, or priority areas will be affected. At the time of the Mid-term budget review, the total expenditure remained at N\$89.4 billion.

- Capital/development spending: Citizens

should also assess also whether Government is going to prioritise long-term capital/development spending and which sectors it believes will shape Namibia's next phase of growth (energy, agriculture, education, etc.). Here it is particularly important to also check for government's deviations (if any) from its long-term development plans as contained in the Vision 2030, NDP(s), Harambee and even the political manifesto of the ruling party. At the time of the Mid-term budget review, government have reduced the capital budget from N\$9.6 billion to N\$8.8 billion.

- Fiscal stance: It is also critical to look at the statement and assess the fiscal stance or what is also commonly known as budget balance. From the statement one should be able to tell whether the Government plans to run a deficit, surplus, or balanced budget. According to the Mid-term budget review, budget deficit widened to 6.0% of GDP, up from the initial 4.6% forecasted. Given Namibia's notable Debt profile, the budget balance is a critical number to shed light on the country's debt sustainability plan. This number indicates how much the government must borrow to cover the financial shortfall.

- Public Debt Stock: Citizens should also look for the Public Debt Stock figures to check if the debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to rise, and if this happens to be the case, it could indicate long-term sustainability risks. These figures are usually less visible in the statement to most citizens yet are especially important - borrowing levels shape inflation expectations and interest rates that eventually influences the financial environment household's lives. Namibia's public debt stock was projected to rise to N\$177.1 billion (67.5% of GDP) by the close of the 2025/26 fiscal year, according to Bank of Namibia forecasts. The Mid-Year Budget Review indicates that rising interest

payments, estimated at N\$14.4 billion (15% of revenue), are driving the need for tighter fiscal management.

Specific Observations

Understanding the government's budget statement is beneficial for citizens because it provides essential insights into how these national or regional economic policies pronouncements will impact their bread-and-butter issues. The most important variables that have a direct impact on Citizens' well being to look out for in the statement includes the following:

- **Tax reforms:** Understanding the budget statement allows you to identify changes in income tax, VAT, property taxes, or duties on goods (like fuel or alcohol) that directly affect your disposable income. Changes to tax brackets or rebates directly affect take-home pay. For younger earners, this shapes monthly savings; for higher earners, it influences long-term investment and debt strategies.

- **Cost-of-living adjustments:** Through the Budget statement, government announces the cost-of-living adjustments. The speech reveals changes in government subsidies (Free tertiary education/Subsidy), grants (realisation of the adjustment to the social grants i.e. old-age pension), or social welfare payments that might impact your household budget and many other insights. Budget allocations towards social grant support, education and healthcare shape the broader cost of living and affect households both directly and indirectly.

- **Pro-employment budgeting:** The speech will also hint on planned infrastructure spending and how such spending will influence future job creation. Spending on infrastructure can signal future job creation and growth, especially relevant for young professionals building careers.

- **Business operations:** The speech also contains insights that affect the business

community at large. The speech often hints at economic trends affecting borrowing costs for mortgages and credit (Interest Rate & Inflation Signals). Citizens can pick up signals in the statement that hints at economic trends that would affect borrowing costs, such as home loans, car finance, or credit cards.

Red Flags in the statement

There are several red flags that citizens can easily flag out in the budget statement. These are warning signs that a government's fiscal policy is unsustainable, inefficient, or poses risks to economic stability that citizens should look out for in the speech.

- **Low Budget Implementation Rate:** Citizens to look out for low budget implementation. If a number of ministries that have been allocated funds fails to spend them (under-spending), it signals inefficiency, even if the planned spending looked good on paper.

In the Mid-term budget review for the 2025/2026, low-budget implementation, specifically regarding capital projects, was already identified as a critical issue. As of September 2025, the total expenditure and commitment excluding statutory had reached only N\$41 billion, which accounts for 39% of the budgeted spending for the fiscal year.

- **Rising Debt-to-GDP Ratio:** Citizens must look out for rising debt-to-GDP ratio. If this ratio is rising, it means that debt grows faster than the economy - this signals that the current spending level is unsustainable.

The Mid-term budget already hinted on the worsening Debt-to-GDP situation that had climbed to a cumulative amount of N\$176.3 billion by the end of September 2025.

- **High Debt Service Costs:** Linked to the previous red flag is the high debt service cost. If a sizeable percentage of revenue goes toward paying interest on loans, less

money is available for actual service delivery. The impact of which was already revealed in the previously mentioned statement, where interest payment totalled an amount of N\$6.8 billion, a substantial 6.4 percentage point increase compared to September 2024.

- **Low Development Expenditure:** Citizen should look out for misalignment in the budget. If the budget is entirely operational (salaries) with little for new infrastructure, the government is not investing in future growth. According to the Mid-term budget statement of 2025/26 government already reduced development expenditure by 9.38% to N\$8.8 billion, shifting funds toward operational costs amid slowing growth.

- **Negative Primary Balance:** Citizen should also check for the negative primary balance. If income minus non-interest spending is negative, the government is borrowing money just to keep the lights on, not for investment.

While in case of Namibia, the budget outlook indicates a narrowing primary surplus dropping to N\$915 million (0.3% of GDP) from an earlier N\$1.3 billion estimate, but the widening budget deficit remains a concern.

- **Unrealistic Revenue Projections:** Citizen should look out for unrealistic revenue projections in the statement.

If the government predicts high revenue growth in a failing economy, the budget may be inaccurate, leading to emergency cuts later in the year. The revenue pressure was already highlighted in the Mid-year budget statement of 2025/26 budget review where government reported a slower revenue collection rate, with N\$36.6 billion collected by September 2025, representing 40% of total estimates. Revenue collection fell 10 % points below the same period in 2024/25, highlighting a weakened revenue outlook amid a projected 3.3% economic growth.

- **High Allocation to Subsidies for State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs):** Citizen should look out for the subsidy trends towards SOEs. If the statement shows a high allocation to SOEs, this often indicates that public owned enterprises are underperforming and taxpayers are footing the bill for their losses. The Mid-Year Budget Review statement revealed continued significant financial support for SOEs despite overall efforts to manage fiscal sustainability.

The budget statement highlighted that subsidies and other current transfers increased by a notable 22.3% in the actual expenditure for FY 2024/25, a trend that continued to impact the 2025/26 fiscal space.

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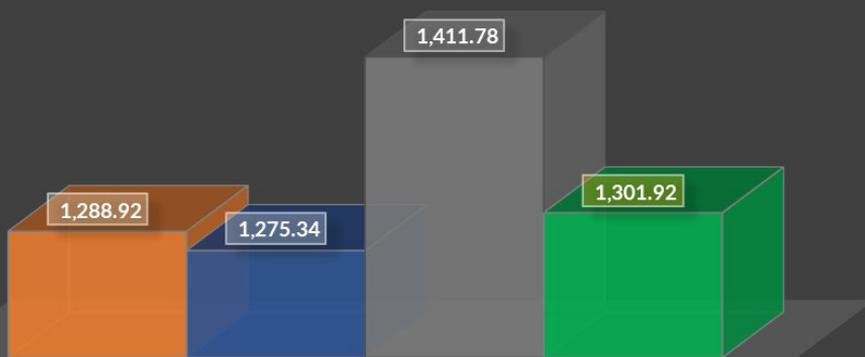


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WHOLESALE TOTAL BASKET COST (N\$) - JANUARY 2026



■ Metro ■ Windhoek C & C ■ Wecke & Voigts ■ NAMICA



Windhoek C & C Offers the Lowest Staple Basket Cost in January 2026

In January 2026, Windhoek C & C recorded the lowest total cost for the selected staple basket, making it the most cost-effective wholesaler for the month, while Wecke & Voigts was the most expensive, largely due to a significant price outlier in rice.

Tastic Rice (10kg) showed the greatest price volatility, ranging from N\$179.99 at Metro to N\$264.60 at Wecke & Voigts. In contrast, staples such as maize meal and sugar remained relatively stable across all wholesalers, with only minor price differences.

Price Analysis by Item:

- Cooking Oil (4L – Nola)
 - Cheapest at Windhoek C & C (N\$165.95)
 - Highest at Wecke & Voigts (N\$186.70)
- Top Score Maize Meal (10kg)
 - Minimal price variation across wholesalers
 - Prices range narrowly between N\$113.95 and N\$115.99, indicating stable pricing.
- Marathon Sugar (10kg)
 - Lowest price at Windhoek C & C (N\$192.95)
 - Other wholesalers uniformly priced at N\$199.99.

Chicken (4kg – Real Good/Kadila)

- Cheapest at Windhoek C & C (N\$211.99)
- Slightly higher prices at other wholesalers, peaking at Wecke & Voigts (N\$220.50).

Tastic Rice (10kg)

- Significant price dispersion observed
- Metro (N\$179.99) offers the lowest price
- Wecke & Voigts (N\$264.60) is substantially higher, driving up its total basket cost.

Macaroni Pasta (5kg – Polana)

- Cheapest at NAMICA (N\$118.99) and Windhoek C & C (N\$119.95)
- Higher prices at Metro and Wecke & Voigts.

Long Life Full Cream Milk (1L x 6 – Nammilk)

- Lowest at Metro (N\$131.99)
- Highest at NAMICA (N\$157.99).

Vetkoek Wheat Flour (10kg – Bakpro/Bokomo)

- Cheapest at NAMICA (N\$133.99)
- Slightly higher prices across other wholesalers.

Conclusion & consumer takeaway

Overall, January 2026 highlights continued price differences across wholesalers, with Windhoek C & C offering the most affordable staple basket, while higher prices at Wecke & Voigts, particularly for rice and milk, pushed total costs upward.

Although prices for core staples such as maize meal and sugar remained relatively stable, consumers and small retailers can benefit from comparing wholesalers and prioritizing lower-priced outlets, especially for items with high price volatility, to better manage food expenditure.



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Strikes in Namibia: When the law speaks, but dignity suffers

By John Kangowa

Namibia is once again confronted with a familiar but deeply uncomfortable reality: lawful strikes that leave workers financially devastated, employers exposed to reputational harm, unions under scrutiny, and the State struggling to balance neutrality with social responsibility.

The recent labour disputes at Namdock, Sinomine, Gendev, and Namib Mills have reignited a national debate, not about whether strikes are legal, but about whether our labour relations system is mature enough to handle them humanely, strategically, and sustainably.

This is no longer just a labour issue. It is a governance issue, a leadership issue, and ultimately a dignity issue.

1. Legal Reality vs Human Consequence

From a strictly legal perspective, the principle of “no work, no pay” is clear and well-established. When employees withhold labour during a protected strike, employers are not obliged to remunerate them. This principle is entrenched in Namibian labour jurisprudence and has been affirmed repeatedly by the courts. Yet legality is not the same as legitimacy.

When workers emerge from a prolonged strike with less than N\$1,000 in take-home pay regardless of how lawful that outcome may be, society must ask whether the system has achieved justice or merely complied with



Many employers approach strikes defensively, focusing on legal compliance, operational continuity, and cost containment.

procedure.

Labour law was never intended to operate in a moral vacuum. It exists to balance power, protect dignity, and promote industrial peace. When compliance with the law results in outcomes that undermine basic human subsistence, the law may have spoken but fairness has not been heard.

For Employee Relations professionals, this distinction is critical. Legal correctness does not automatically translate into sound employee relations strategy.

2. Employer Conduct: Winning Disputes vs Sustaining Businesses

Many employers approach strikes defensively, focusing on legal compliance, operational continuity, and cost containment. While these are legitimate concerns, they are insufficient on their own.

In the modern employment environment, how an employer manages a strike is often more consequential than whether the employer “wins” the dispute.

Employers who rely exclusively on no work, no pay without parallel efforts to mitigate hardship, maintain communication, or preserve dignity may satisfy the law but erode trust irreparably. Employees remember not just the outcome of disputes, but the manner in which they were treated.

There is a simple but uncomfortable truth I have always shared with my fellow ER practitioners: an employer who pays you less is often an employer who disrespects you and sustained disrespect eventually manifests as disengagement, resistance, sabotage, or attrition.

Employer organisations must therefore guide members beyond legal minimalism. Compliance is the floor, not the ceiling. Strategic ER leadership requires foresight, empathy, and reputational awareness. This is one disease amongst many CEO's who are blind to the reality and impact of ER. Professionals advise.

3. Union Responsibility: Power Without Preparation Is Dangerous

Unions are indispensable to collective bargaining and worker protection. However, the recent disputes expose a growing weakness, strikes that are politically loud but economically underprepared.

A strike is not merely a protest; it is an economic weapon. And like any weapon, it must be used responsibly. Unions have a duty to ensure:

- clear mandates from members,
- realistic and defensible demands,
- strike funds or contingency measures, and
- credible exit strategies.

Prolonged strikes without financial cushioning transfer the cost of industrial action directly onto workers, often the lowest paid and most vulnerable. Hunger, debt, and desperation weaken solidarity rather than strengthen it.

Union leadership must confront this reality honestly. Mobilising workers into

hardship without adequate protection is not empowerment it is exposure.

4. The State's Role: Neutral Arbiter or Passive Bystander?

The State is not merely a referee in labour disputes. Through the Office of the Labour Commissioner, the Labour Court, the High Court, and the Ministry of Justice and Labour Relations, it is a constitutional custodian of fair labour practices.

The Labour Commissioner's Office, in particular, carries a heavy burden. Its mandate is not limited to processing disputes once they escalate, but to actively promote conciliation, early engagement, and dispute prevention.

When disputes linger unresolved, when conciliation is delayed, or when parties perceive procedural inertia, frustration escalates and positions harden. By the time matters reach arbitration or judicial review, the employment relationship is often beyond repair.

For policymakers, this signals a need to strengthen institutional capacity, responsiveness, and credibility and not merely procedural compliance.

5. Ministerial Intervention and the Risk of Politicisation

Recent labour disputes have seen increasing public involvement by the Minister responsible for Justice and Labour Relations. While ministerial engagement can help de-escalate tensions, it must be exercised with caution.

Selective or inconsistent intervention risks politicising labour relations and undermining institutional independence. Employers and employees alike must have confidence that labour institutions operate predictably, impartially, and free from political pressure.

The Minister's role should be to strengthen systems, not substitute them.

6. ER Professionals at the Centre of the Storm

Employee Relations professionals stand at the fault line of these disputes. They are expected to:

- ensure legal compliance,
- protect organisational interests,
- maintain labour peace, and
- uphold human dignity, often simultaneously.

This is no small task. ER professionals must resist being reduced to procedural technicians. Their value lies not only in knowing the law, but in anticipating conflict, advising leadership honestly, and guiding organisations toward sustainable solutions.

Silence, avoidance, or over-reliance on legal technicalities weakens the profession and the system.

7. A Call for a More Mature Labour Relations Culture

The disputes at Sinomine, Gendev, and Namib Mills are not isolated incidents. They reflect a broader challenge: Namibia's labour-relations culture is still evolving.

We must move decisively:

- from confrontation to engagement,
- from legality alone to legitimacy,
- from reaction to prevention.

Strikes should always be the last resort, not the default expression of unresolved frustration.

Conclusion: Law Is Not Enough

Strikes are lawful. No work, no pay is legal. But dignity is not optional.

A labour system that satisfies the law

while leaving workers destitute, employers exposed, unions weakened, and the State reactive is not sustainable.

For ER professionals, policymakers, and institutional leaders, the message is clear:

we must build a labour-relations framework that balances power, protects dignity, and sustains business, not one that merely survives legal scrutiny.

Closing Call to Action

To employers: compliance alone is not leadership.

To unions: mobilisation without protection is not empowerment.

To the State: neutrality must be active, not passive.

To ER professionals: your voice matters use it.

Namibia's future competitiveness depends not on how cheaply we can labour, but on how wisely we govern work.

The question is no longer whether our labour laws work, it is whether our labour leadership does.

** John Kangowa is a Human Capital and Employee Relations professional specialising in labour law, organisational governance, and workplace ethics. He works at QKR Namibia Navachab Gold Mine (Pty) Ltd and has experience across mining, maritime, construction, education, and sports administration in Namibia.*

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ScaleUp Namibia platform launched to strengthen SME growth and innovation ecosystem

Namibia's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are expected to benefit from a more coordinated and strengthened national innovation ecosystem through the rollout of the ScaleUp Namibia (SUN) platform, an initiative aimed at supporting high-growth businesses and addressing structural barriers facing entrepreneurs.

Speaking at the launch of the initiative, Deputy Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sport, Arts and Culture, Dino Ballotti, said the platform was established to respond to persistent systemic challenges within Namibia's entrepreneurial landscape.

"SUN was established in response to the systemic challenges that entrepreneurs continue to face — not because they lack talent or ambition, but due to fragmentation within the country's support structures," Ballotti said.

He explained that the platform is structured around five strategic pillars — funding, infrastructure, brand awareness, ecosystem data and capacity development — designed to improve coordination, reduce duplication of efforts and ease pressure on government funding mechanisms.

"SUN promotes collaboration, equity and national connectivity to ensure that innovation efforts drive real economic transformation," he said.

The National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) Chairperson, Jacob Nyambe, said the initiative marks a shift from fragmented innovation support programmes towards an integrated national governance framework for innovation.

"All align around a common purpose, which is to strengthen Namibia's economic innovation system and enable our enterprises

to grow beyond survival,” Nyambe said.

He noted that SUN emerged from collaboration between NCRST and the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB), adding that innovation depends on coordinated systems and deliberate infrastructure — gaps the platform seeks to address directly.

With more than 18 innovation support hubs now connected under a single national framework, Namibia is moving towards a more coherent and efficient innovation ecosystem, he said.

Nyambe added that while starting a

business remains a challenge, scaling enterprises into sustainable and competitive operations has been an even greater obstacle for local entrepreneurs.

“SUN aims to bridge that gap by making the innovation value chain more accessible, from research and development through to commercialisation,” he said.

NIPDB Acting Chief Executive Officer Jessica Hauuanga said the platform also strengthens Namibia’s investment environment by improving access to entrepreneurial support and making opportunities more visible to investors.

“Global competitiveness is no longer defined solely by policy incentives. It is also about how easy it is to start and grow a business, how quickly entrepreneurs can access support, and how clearly investors can identify opportunities,” Hauuanga said.

By consolidating innovation hubs under a coordinated national structure, the platform is expected to reduce duplication, improve information flow and simplify navigation for both entrepreneurs and investors.

ScaleUp Namibia positions itself as a national mechanism to support SMEs, stimulate high-growth enterprises and ensure that innovation contributes more meaningfully to Namibia’s broader economic development objectives.



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