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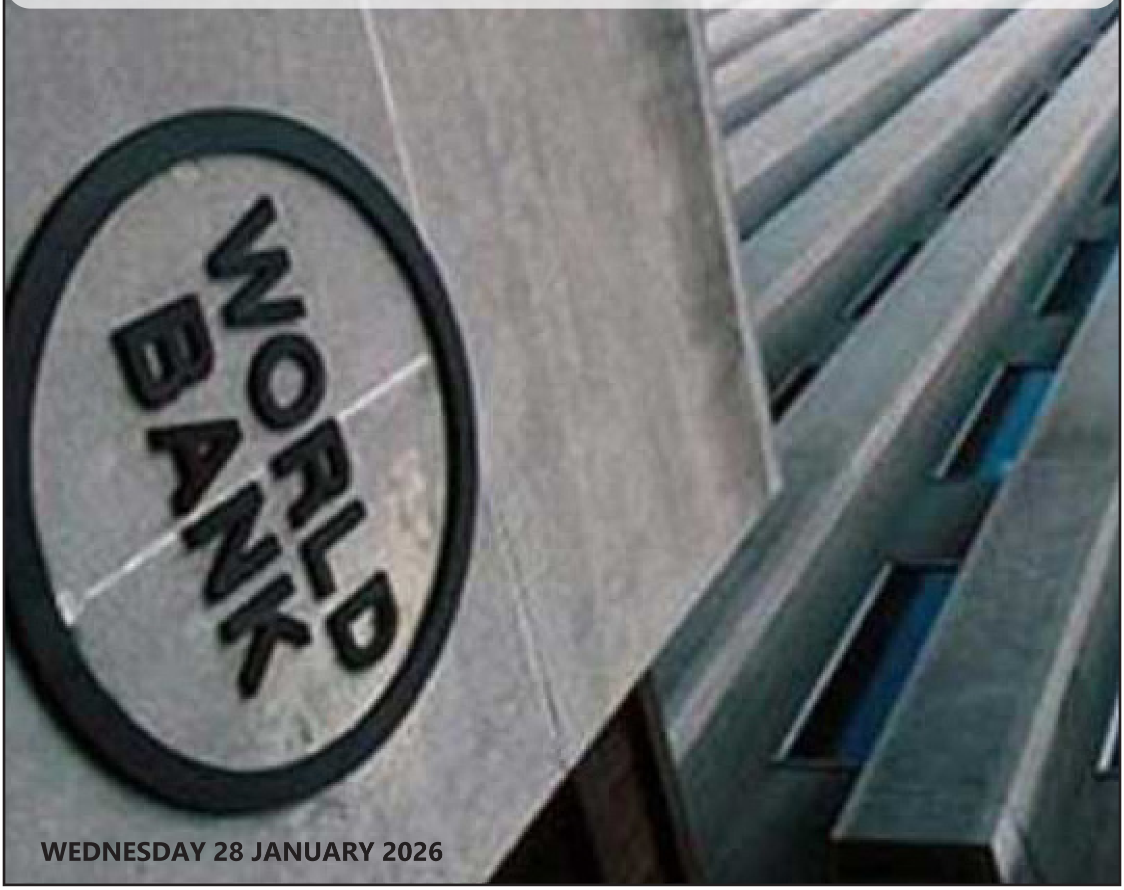
THE
BR/EF
News Worth Knowing

World Bank forecasts 3.5% GDP growth for Namibia in 2026



WEDNESDAY 28 JANUARY 2026

MAIN STORY

World Bank forecasts 3.5% GDP growth for Namibia in 2026

Namibia's real gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to grow by 3.5% in 2026, a slight upward revision of 0.1 percentage point from the World Bank's June forecasts, according to the lender's latest Global Economic Prospects report released this month.

The World Bank said growth is forecast to accelerate further to 3.8% in 2027, as economic activity across Sub-Saharan Africa strengthens. Regional growth is projected to reach 4.3% in 2026.

Namibia's outlook follows a period of relatively strong performance, with economic growth of 4.4% in 2023 and 4.0% in 2024. Growth in 2025 is estimated at a more moderate 3.1%, reflecting a temporary slowdown before the expected recovery in subsequent years.

World Bank Chief Economist Indermit Gill said growth among commodity-exporting emerging market and developing

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**

economies is expected to improve modestly over the 2026–27 period.

"Growth in commodity-exporting EMDEs is expected to accelerate modestly over 2026–27, to an average of 3.2%, up from 3% in 2025," Gill said.

"The expected pickup reflects rising net exports among energy exporters in 2026 as oil production rises alongside the unwinding of OPEC+ production cuts."

The World Bank's forecast broadly aligns with recent domestic projections. The Bank of Namibia said in its December 2025 economic outlook update that growth in 2026 was expected to accelerate to 3.9%, following an estimated slowdown to 3.0% in 2025.

In October, the Ministry of Finance revised its growth outlook downward to an average of 3.6% for the 2025/26 period, from a previously projected average of 4.3%.

As a commodity-exporting economy, Namibia remains sensitive to global demand and industrial activity. The World Bank cautioned that global trade growth could weaken in 2026 as the effects of inventory stockpiling fade and tariffs weigh on trade flows. However, the report said domestic factors are expected to provide some buffer for economies in the region.

The World Bank attributed the broader improvement in Sub-Saharan Africa's outlook to ongoing economic reforms in some large economies, which are expected to support private investment and foreign direct investment inflows.

A gradual easing of inflationary pressures is also expected to boost domestic demand, while solid domestic investment is projected to remain a key driver of growth through 2027.

"Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa is forecast to firm to 4.3% in 2026, supported by ongoing reforms in some large economies, solid domestic investment growth and a continued easing of inflation," Gill said.

He added that fiscal consolidation efforts across the region are being driven by constrained fiscal space, elevated public debt and rising debt-servicing costs.

Despite the improved outlook, the report warned of downside risks, including escalating trade tensions, volatility in commodity prices and the need for many emerging markets to strengthen fiscal frameworks to manage debt pressures.

For Namibia, the World Bank said sustaining growth momentum will depend on navigating these global risks while continuing to advance domestic structural reforms and maintaining resilience amid shifting international trade conditions and market sentiment.

Namibia set to generate N$370m from new Proflight Zambia and Edelweiss flights

Namibia is expected to generate more than N$370 million in direct tourism spending from the planned Proflight Zambia and Edelweiss Air routes, according to estimates by Air Connect Namibia chairperson and Namibia Airports Company Chief Executive Officer Bisey Uirab.

Uirab said the estimates are based on projected passenger numbers, load factors and operating periods for the two services, which are expected to operate between

2026 and 2027.

The Proflight Zambia route, linking Lusaka, Livingstone and Windhoek, is expected to generate between N$119 million and N$160 million in direct tourism spend, with a midpoint estimate of N$140 million over a 12-month period from March 2026 to February 2027.

The service is expected to operate three times a week, with passenger numbers estimated at between 9,000 and 12,000.

The Edelweiss Air service between Zurich and Windhoek is projected to generate between N$250 million and N$337 million in direct tourism spend.

The midpoint estimate places expected spending at about N$294 million over a 10-month operating period from June 2026 to October 2027. The route is expected to operate twice weekly, with passenger numbers estimated at between 16,000 and 22,000. Combined, the two routes could generate more than N$370 million in direct tourism expenditure, underlining the economic impact of expanded international air connectivity on Namibia's tourism sector.

Air Connect Namibia is a multi-stakeholder initiative involving players across aviation, tourism, hospitality, government and investment, including the Namibia Airports Company, Gondwana Collection, the Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Namibia Tourism Board, the Walvis Bay Corridor Group, the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board, the City of Windhoek and the Federation of Namibian Tourism Associations.

Uirab said improved air connectivity has opened access to new markets, strengthened Namibia's competitiveness as a destination and supported longer-term opportunities linked to tourism and investment.

The visit was the headline. The delays are the story

BRIEFLY

It should not take an unannounced Presidential visit to expose how slowly the machinery of government moves.

When President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah walked into the One Stop Centre at the Business and Intellectual Property Authority, the optics were striking. But the substance mattered more. Her warning was not subtle. Delays, weak communication and indifferent service delivery are eroding Namibia's credibility as a place to do business.

This was not a critique of policy. It was a verdict on execution.

Government has spent years designing frameworks to attract investment. The One Stop Centre itself was meant to be proof that the state understood the problem. Fragmented approvals. Endless referrals. Unclear timelines. It promised coordination, speed and predictability.

Yet for many Namibian business owners, the lived experience remains unchanged.

Trade marks take months longer than advertised. Business registrations stall without explanation. Systems go offline so often that entrepreneurs now plan around failure rather than functionality. Emails

> Delays, weak communication and indifferent service delivery are eroding Namibia's credibility as a place to do business.

go unanswered. Phone calls lead nowhere. Applicants are left guessing whether their paperwork is still being processed or quietly forgotten.

This is not inefficiency at the margins. It is a pattern.

The President's comment that an investor should not wait a week for a yes or no cut to the heart of it. Silence is not neutral. It signals disinterest. In a competitive region, it sends capital elsewhere. More damaging still, it tells local entrepreneurs that their time carries little value.

The irony is that the burden falls hardest on small and medium enterprises. Large investors can escalate. They can hire intermediaries. They can absorb delay. A start-up waiting for a trade mark approval cannot. A small firm trying to formalise cannot. Delay becomes a cost. Uncertainty becomes risk.

The state often speaks of partnering the private sector. But partnerships require mutual respect. That includes respecting timelines, communication and basic operational reliability.

Capacity constraints are frequently cited. Limited space. Staffing pressures. System upgrades.

These explanations may be accurate, but repetition has drained them of credibility. Constraints explain short-term disruption. They do not justify permanent dysfunction.

Leadership changes are coming. Ainna Kaundu steps into the chief executive role at BIPA from January. Expectations will be high, and rightly so. But leadership alone cannot carry reform if the institutional culture beneath it remains untouched.

The deeper issue is consequence. Delays carry no cost inside the system. Missed timelines are normalised. Outages are shrugged off. Accountability is diffuse. As long as this holds, reform will remain cosmetic.

The President warned that without effective implementation, commitments remain words. That line deserves to linger. Namibia does not suffer from a lack of vision. It suffers from tolerance of underperformance.

The visit to the One Stop Centre should not become another well-quoted moment that fades into routine. If it does, it will confirm the very concern the President raised. That the country is better at explaining reform than delivering it.

Ease of doing business is not proven by new offices or fresh mandates. It is proven when systems work, responses arrive on time and entrepreneurs can plan without fear of administrative silence.

Until then, the visit was the headline.

The delays remain the story.

** **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.***

Pension reform for Namibia's informal economy- Lessons from Kenya, India, and Rwanda

By Vincent Shimutwikeni

Namibia's Social Security Act of 1994 (Act No. 34 of 1994) provides a legislative foundation for the establishment of a National Pension Fund (NPF), intended to offer income protection during old age to all Namibians.

Since some 30 years ago, various attempts have been made by the Social Security Commission (SSC) to come up with a broadly acceptable and viable policy and legal framework for the operationalisation of the NPF.

In the meantime, formal sector employers and their employees have started to contribute between 12% to over 20% of employee salaries to pension saving arrangements.

The country's existing occupational and private pension funds governed under the Pension Funds Act 24 of 1956 and regulated by NAMFISA have amassed significant assets under management and continue to serve as key institutional investors in the national economy.

These retirement funds, primarily accessible to formal sector employees, support both long-term savings and macroeconomic stability through investment in infrastructure, government bonds, and capital markets.

Most formal sector employees have employer-sponsored retirement funds, but without the NPF, no pension system exists for most low-income, regulated-wage industries, and informal sector workers.

They remain excluded from contributory or occupational pensions. A well-designed national pension strategy legally clear, fiscally sustainable, and interoperable can promote both social justice and economic stability. The change should be integrative, not disruptive.

> **"Since some 30 years ago, various attempts have been made by the Social Security Commission (SSC) to come up with a broadly acceptable and viable policy and legal framework for the operationalisation of the NPF.**

The urgency of reforming Namibia's pension landscape is heightened by its youth-dominated demographics. According to national statistics, nearly 70% of Namibia's population is under the age of 35, and many are already engaged in informal economic activities without social protection.

As this generation ages, the absence of a safety net will deepen poverty and widen inequality. To move forward, Namibia can learn valuable lessons from countries that have made notable strides in designing pension solutions tailored to the realities of informal workers. These include Kenya's

Mbao Pension Plan, India's Atal Pension Yojana, and Rwanda's Ejo Heza long-term savings scheme.

As Namibia charts the path toward a universal pension framework, it must adopt an approach that balances inclusivity with structural continuity.

Crucially, any new social pension or contributory national scheme must not displace or dismantle the existing voluntary pension system, which has taken up an integral role in domestic capital formation, financial market development, and contributes meaningfully to GDP.

Reform experiences in countries like Kenya, India, and Rwanda demonstrate that it is possible to expand pension coverage to informal sector workers through parallel mechanisms, without abolishing or undermining formal pension systems.

Kenya's Mbao Pension Plan, launched in 2009 and officially known as the Blue MSMEs Jua Kali Individual Retirement Benefits Scheme, is a voluntary pension scheme designed specifically for informal sector workers.

Members contribute a daily minimum amount of KES 20, hence the programme's slogan, usitupe mbao, "do not throw away 20 shillings". The plan leverages mobile money platforms such as M-Pesa and Airtel Money to allow members to contribute as little as KES 20 per day, making it both accessible and flexible.

By 2018, the scheme had about 100,000 contributors, despite the Jua Kali Association representing 12 million informal workers. It allows flexible, penalty-free contributions and lump-sum withdrawals after three years, with funds managed by professionals under Retirement Benefits Authority oversight.

While it promotes saving and financial literacy, it faces low coverage, limited awareness, administrative issues, and frequent early withdrawals, which undermine its pension role.

In contrast, India's Atal Pension Yojana (APY), launched in 2015, represents a government-backed effort to provide guaranteed pensions to informal workers.

The scheme is targeted at all Indian citizens between the ages of 18 and 40 who are not covered by any statutory social security scheme and are not income taxpayers.

Subscribers choose a guaranteed monthly pension amount (ranging from INR 1,000 to INR 5,000) that they will begin receiving at the age of 60. Contributions are made monthly and vary depending on the age of entry and the desired pension amount.

One of the notable features of APY is the government's co-contribution for eligible low-income workers up to 50% of the contribution or INR 1,000 per year, whichever is lower for a period of five years for early enrollers.

The scheme is administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) and operates through India's National Pension System (NPS) architecture. Importantly, APY requires 100% annuitisation at retirement, ensuring a steady monthly income for life. In the event of the subscriber's death, the pension is transferred to the spouse, and eventually, the pension corpus is paid out to the nominee. Although early exit is restricted, exceptions are made in cases of death or terminal illness. The scheme has grown steadily due to its clear design, compulsory savings logic, and government guarantees, which build trust among low-income populations.

Rwanda offers another compelling example through its Ejo Heza Long-Term Saving Scheme, introduced in 2017. Ejo Heza, meaning "better tomorrow," is a voluntary, defined contribution savings scheme open to all Rwandan citizens and residents, including informal workers, salaried employees, and even children through guardian-linked accounts.

Administered by the Rwanda Social Security Board, the scheme is linked to an individual's national ID and operates primarily through mobile technology making registration and contributions seamless and widely accessible.

Unlike traditional pension schemes, Ejo Heza emphasizes flexibility: contributors decide how much and how often they save daily, weekly, or monthly. It promotes a savings culture, financial inclusion, and social security access, even to those previously excluded from such protections.

What makes Ejo Heza particularly innovative is its tiered government co-contribution incentive based on socio-economic vulnerability. For example, individuals in the lowest income categories (Ubudehe 1 and 2) receive a 100% match on savings up to a certain amount, while higher tiers receive proportionately less.

Additionally, members who save above a set threshold become eligible for life and funeral insurance benefits funded by the government. These measures encourage long-term saving while offering immediate social protection.

Namibia's path toward a national pension system must balance inclusion with stability. Lessons from Rwanda, India, and Kenya show that success lies in designing flexible, accessible, and incentive-driven schemes particularly for informal workers. Mobile integration, government co-contributions, and national ID-linked systems are key enablers.

With legal clarity, fiscal prudence, and coordinated governance, Namibia can build a future-facing, inclusive pension system that protects all its citizens regardless of how or where they work while maintaining the strength of its current retirement funding sector.

Vincent Shimutwikeni; Manager, Legal Support Services at RFS Fund Administrators. This is his personal opinion.

OPM clears N$28m drought relief payments owed to livestock producers

The Office of the Prime Minister has settled N$28 million owed to livestock producers under the 2024/25 Drought Relief Programme, ending delays in payments to farmers who supplied animals during last year's drought.

The Meat Corporation of Namibia said the funds were released by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform on 27 January 2026, clearing outstanding obligations to producers who participated in the government's drought support programme.

The meat processor said the payments relate to livestock procured to support food security during one of the most severe droughts in recent years.

Meatco said the settlement was made under the leadership of the Office of the Prime Minister and welcomed the intervention as timely relief for affected producers, particularly those in vulnerable communal areas.

"The settlement of these outstanding payments is not only an important financial milestone for producers, but also a confidence-building measure for the broader red meat value chain," said Meatco Interim Chief Executive Officer Albertus Aochamub.

He said the payments reinforce trust at a time when restoring credibility and predictability is central to Meatco's recovery efforts.

Aochamub said Meatco is implementing its board-approved turnaround plan through to 2027, with rebuilding trust among producers, government, financiers and trading partners identified as a key priority. He said timely settlement of producer obligations remains central to stabilising the company and the wider livestock industry.

Meatco said it will continue to work with government and stakeholders to support communal and commercial producers and strengthen the resilience of Namibia's red meat sector.

21st Centaury organisational learning and development at the backdrop of industrial-organisational psychology

By Leena N. Shimpanda

> **"Our traditional reliance on natural resources is no longer sufficient.**

Across Namibia, from boardrooms in the capital to mining operations in the Erongo region, a silent crisis is unfolding alongside a tremendous opportunity.

The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2023 states that 44% of workers' core skills will be disrupted in the next five years.

For a country like ours, with a vibrant youth population of 71.1% as per the 2023 Population and Housing Census, and an economy poised for diversification, this isn't a distant forecast, it's a present-day strategic ultimatum.

Our traditional reliance on natural resources is no longer sufficient. The most valuable asset in the 21st century is not in the ground, it is the potential within our people.

The imperative for Namibian organisations is clear, transform Organizational Learning and Development (L&D) from an administrative afterthought into the central engine of corporate and national strategy.

This is a leadership mandate as postulated in the recently launched national development plan (NDP) 6 and Vision2030 which concludes in less then 5 years, this is unfortunately not an HR initiative.

The data paints a stark picture. A 2023 World Bank report on Namibia consistently highlights a critical mismatch between the skills output by the education system and the demands of the modern labour market.

This skills gap stifles productivity, innovation, and our global competitiveness. It also explains why unemployment hovers at 36.9% nationally, and a staggering 44% for young people, despite the fact that new opportunities are emerging in oil and gas, green hydrogen, digital finance, and agribusiness.

Conversely, the upside is immense. Companies that excel at internal mobility retain employees for nearly twice as long as those that struggle with it, according to LinkedIn's 2023 Workplace Learning Report.

Furthermore, their research shows that organisations with robust learning cultures have a 15% higher employee retention rate and are 52% more productive.

In a global war for talent, a culture of learning is our most powerful weapon for retention and attraction, especially for the younger generations who prioritise growth over all else.

To build this culture, leaders must understand the distinct yet complementary roles of two critical functions, Industrial-Organisational (I-O) Psychology and L&D.

I-O Psychology is the science of work, call it the architect. It provides the evidence-based foundation. It diagnoses organisational health through data such as engagement surveys, performance analytics, and competency frameworks. It answers the critical why and what questions. For example, why is productivity lagging in a specific division? what are the non-negotiable competencies for our future leaders? And how do we design a fair and efficient hiring process?

L&D is the art of growth, lets call it the gardener. It is the dynamic engine that builds capability. It answers the imperative how questions. Such as how do we reskill our accountants to leverage AI-driven analytics? how do we cultivate the leadership pipeline identified as a critical risk? and how do we embed a mindset of agile innovation?

The leader's role is to force this symbiosis. Data without action is futile, action without data is reckless. An I-O psychologist's analysis of a technical skills gap must directly inform the L&D professional's design of a targeted upskilling programme. They are strategic partners in executing a people strategy, not rivals for budget.

This is not theoretical. The evidence is visible from Otjiwarongo to Oslo. The quintessential example is Microsoft. Under CEO Satya Nadella, the company shifted from a culture of "know-it-alls" to "learn-it-alls." He empowered employees to spend time on curiosity-driven learning and made continuous development a core tenant of strategy. This cultural shift, centred on L&D, is credited with revitalising the tech behemoth and catapulting its market value to new heights.

Cultivating this ecosystem cannot be delegated. It must be owned by the C-suite and embodied by every leader. The command-and-control model is obsolete. The modern leader is a coach and chief learning officer.

Our path must be uniquely Namibian. Our L&D strategies must be inclusive, accessible, and directly tied to our national economic goals as informed by Vision 2030 and the National Development Plan (NDP6). This requires unprecedented collaboration between private enterprise, public policy, and academic institutions like UNAM and NUST to ensure curricula are aligned with market needs.

The conversation must change. We must stop asking, "What is the return on investment for learning?" and start asking, "What is the cost of stagnation?"

The organisations that will lead Namibia into the next decade understand that their ability to learn and adapt is their only sustainable competitive advantage. They are the ones who see their people not as costs, but as potential waiting to be cultivated. The future of our economy will be forged not just in new mines or policies, but in the classroom, the workshop, and the digital learning platform. It is time for Namibian leaders to make that investment.

CIRRUS FUND MANAGERS — ROYALE WEALTH MANAGEMENT — NORTHSTAR ASSET MANAGEMENT

THE ASSET ALLOCATION VIEW: IN COLLABORATION WITH NORTHSTAR AND CIRRUS

	GLOBAL		SA		Namibia	
	CURRENT	TREND*	CURRENT	TREND*	CURRENT	TREND*
EQUITIES	Average	Average	Average	Good	Average	Average
BONDS	Average	Average	Average	Good	Concern	Concern
CASH	Average	Concern	Good	Average	Good	Good

ASSET ALLOCATION SNAPSHOT
AS AT 12 JANUARY 2026

Source: Northstar Proprietary Research and Cirrus Fund Managers. Royale, Northstar and Cirrus reserve the right to amend this information, data and views presented. This document does not constitute advice.

*3 Year View

Concern Average Good

	CURRENT	TREND
GLOBAL EQUITIES	AVERAGE It was a quiet month for equities at the index level, wrapping up another strong year. Under the surface, sector rotation favoured cyclically exposed Financials, Materials, and Industrials, suggesting optimistic economic growth expectations for 2026. Emerging markets continued to outperform on the back of dollar weakness and precious metal strength.	AVERAGE Valuations remain elevated at the index level, pricing in strong growth expectations. Volatility may return amid concerns of Fed independence and veracity of US economic data, while AI investments face a 'prove-it' year for enterprise adoption. Positive for stock pickers, growth and returns should continue to broaden out buoyed by supportive fiscal and monetary policy – provided inflation stays contained.
LOCAL EQUITIES	AVERAGE South African equities delivered a strong finish to the year with the JSE all share index gaining 4.4% in December driven by Banks and Basic Materials up 9.4% and 5.7% respectively over the same period. Improving inflation dynamics, declining interest-rate expectations, a well-received medium-term budget speech and South Africa's exit from the FATF grey list supported sentiment and valuation re-rating, particularly within banks and insurers. However, following a strong rally across 2025, parts of the market now appear fully priced in the near term, with performance becoming more selective and retailers continuing to lag.	GOOD On a medium-term basis, our valuation work continues to support our constructive view on South African equities. Valuations across several sectors, excluding pockets of recent outperformance, remain attractive relative to history. While upside remains within select cyclical names, high-quality defensives appear increasingly attractive on a medium-term horizon offering earnings visibility and balance sheet robustness amid heightened global macro uncertainty.
GLOBAL BONDS	AVERAGE Murky economic data, varying labour market opinions and a growing divergence amongst FOMC members has kept yields elevated and rangebound.	AVERAGE Sticky inflation, stable labour dynamics, rising growth forecasts and questions over Fed independence in 2026, should keep yields elevated with the long end most vulnerable to these pressures,
LOCAL BONDS	AVERAGE Local bonds have rallied strongly over the course of 2025, especially after MTBPS and inflation target change. Most points across the curve have moved past their current fair value points and look expensive.	GOOD On a medium term view, positive structural elements are falling into place. Inflation is low and appears to be stabilising, fiscal dynamics have improved and the reform outlook is gaining credibility.
GLOBAL CASH	AVERAGE Real rates have been narrowing as inflation remains sticky but with interest rates declining over 2025. This causes cash to lose its relative appeal vs other asset classes.	CONCERN The Trump government is adamant on cutting interest rates and are looking to nominate a Fed Chair that will deliver on this. Strong and swift interest rate reductions, in the face of lingering inflationary concerns, will be negative for cash real returns.
LOCAL CASH	GOOD Real rates remain elevated as the SARB attempts to drive inflation expectations lower. Current cash rates on offer are well above the inflation rate.	AVERAGE As inflation expectations move credibly lower over the medium, the SARB will become less restrictive and real rates will narrow, causing cash to become less competitive.
NAM EQUITIES	AVERAGE The asset class performed very well over recent years, driven by a noticeable lift in local market sentiment and helpful factors like interest rate cuts, easing inflation, lower tax rates and a civil servant wage increase. However, many of those tailwinds were short-lived boosts, providing temporary relief to consumers rather than structural changes. With these now fading and concerns around government's fiscal health arising, we're likely to see momentum cool through 2026. In this environment, we favour more defensive tickers on the NSX, such as financial tickers and other reliable high-dividend options.	AVERAGE Namibian Equities remain attractively valued but need a friendly investment climate to do well. Therefore, we believe it is important to actively deviate from the benchmark and select quality companies with growth prospects and high-quality management teams.
NAM BONDS	CONCERN Namibian bonds are expensive. We expect upward pressure on Namibian Government debt as government's fiscal position comes under significant pressure. Underweight long duration bonds and overweight short duration bonds.	CONCERN The Namibian Government has a saturated maturity profile with sizeable upcoming redemptions, which is expected to increase funding pressures and place upward pressure on yields.
NAM CASH	GOOD Real rates remain attractive, averaging around 4.0%, well above the long term average of approximately 2.6%. Additionally, Namibian TBs are trading on average 0.45% above South African TBs, offering an attractive yield pick-up on a relative basis.	GOOD South Africa's lower inflation target is expected to ripple through to the Namibian market and with funding pressures anticipated locally, Treasury bill rates are likely to remain elevated, offering attractive real returns.