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THE

BRIEF

News Worth Knowing



Tunga Real Estate Fund reaches N\$650m, delivers N\$265m to GIPF

FRIDAY 19 JUNE 2026

MAIN STORY



Tunga Real Estate Fund reaches N\$650m, delivers N\$265m to GIPF

The Tunga Real Estate Fund has reached N\$650 million in committed capital, with the Government Institutions Pension Fund (GIPF) accounting for 99% of the investment.

The fund has distributed N\$265.43 million to GIPF to date, reflecting progress in capital deployment, portfolio management and asset exits. The latest dividend distribution of N\$21.6 million was handed over on Friday.

Crucial Dates

- Bank of Namibia Monetary Policy announcement dates:
 - * 12 August 2026
 - * 29 October 2026
 - * 10 December 2026
- Namibia Oil and Gas Conference 18–21 August 2026 in Windhoek

ince inception, the fund has mobilised significant capital into Namibia's property sector, with more than N\$650 million committed by GIPF.

Tunga Real Estate Fund Chairperson Sara Katiti said the fund has mobilised significant capital into Namibia's property market while generating returns for investors.

"Since inception, the fund has mobilised significant capital into Namibia's property sector, with more than N\$650 million committed by GIPF. Along this journey, it has delivered distributions, completed key exits and continued to enhance the value of its remaining portfolio," Katiti said.

Old Mutual Investment Group Namibia Managing Director Sepo Haihambo said the fund's performance demonstrates the potential of alternative investments to deliver both financial returns and economic impact.

"Alternative investments are inherently long-term and require both skill and strong governance to ensure the viability of those investments and their alignment with, and contribution to, national development priorities," Haihambo said.

She added that the fund's investments have supported a range of developments across the property sector, including retail centres, office developments and residential housing projects. "Our platform continues to demonstrate progress in capital deployment, portfolio management and exits, with

measurable distributions that reinforce confidence in unlisted investments in the country," Haihambo said.

GIPF Chief Executive Officer Martin Inkumbi said the fund's development mandate aligns closely with Namibia's housing needs and broader economic objectives.

"Since its establishment in 2011, the fund has grown to N\$650 million in committed capital, with GIPF as the 99% anchor investor and Old Mutual Investment Group Namibia serving as fund manager and a 1% co-investor. The fund has consistently delivered sustainable financial returns alongside meaningful developmental impact," Inkumbi said.

He said the fund's focus on affordable housing demonstrates how institutional capital can be deployed to address national development challenges while generating returns for pension fund members.

The fund's investments in housing, commercial property and retail developments have contributed to job creation, supported local businesses and expanded economic activity, reinforcing the role of private capital in supporting Namibia's development agenda.

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Namibia removed from FATF Grey List

Namibia has been removed from the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) list of jurisdictions under enhanced monitoring, commonly known as the grey list, after addressing all 13 strategic deficiencies identified in its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing framework ahead of schedule.

Finance Minister Ericah Shafudah said the FATF confirmed the country's removal from the grey list following a successful on-site assessment conducted in Windhoek on 23 and 24 April 2026.


Namibia was placed on the FATF grey list on 23 February 2024 after the global watchdog identified 13 strategic deficiencies in the country's anti-money laundering, combating the financing of terrorism and combating the financing of proliferation (AML/CFT/

CPF) framework.

Shafudah said Namibia was subsequently issued with an action plan requiring the deficiencies to be addressed by May 2026.

According to the Minister, the country demonstrated a high level of political commitment from the outset to remedy the shortcomings and meet the FATF's requirements.

She said that between July 2024 and November 2025, the National Focal Committee, led by the Financial Intelligence



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The Namibia Industrial Development Agency (NIDA) is established by the NIDA ACT, Act No. 16 of 2016 to effectively lead the industrialization agenda of Namibia, and make meaningful contributions to, amongst others, employment creation and economic growth.



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Centre (FIC), submitted one voluntary and four mandatory progress reports to the FATF.

"During this period, the FATF found that Namibia had largely addressed all 13 action items ahead of the May 2026 deadline and recommended the country for an on-site assessment," Shafudah said.

The assessment was conducted in April and culminated in the FATF's decision, announced at its latest plenary meeting, to remove Namibia from enhanced monitoring.

"I wish to acknowledge the unwavering support of Cabinet throughout the grey-listing process and express my sincere appreciation to the National Focal Committee for its tenacity and commitment in steering Namibia through the process," Shafudah said.

The Minister said Namibia's exit from the grey list reflects the successful implementation of reforms aimed at strengthening the country's financial crime prevention framework and marks the completion of the FATF action plan ahead of the prescribed deadline.

She added that the development is expected to enhance Namibia's international reputation, strengthen investor confidence and reinforce the integrity of the country's financial system.

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The youth walk faster but the elderly know the road

By Junias Erasmus

In every generation, there is a natural difference between youth and old age. Young people are often energetic, ambitious, creative, and eager to move forward.

They are willing to take risks, embrace change, and challenge traditional ways of doing things.

Older people, on the other hand, may move more slowly, but they possess something equally valuable: wisdom gained through years of experience. This reality is perfectly captured in the saying, “The youth walk faster, but the elderly know the road.”

Today, we live in a world that celebrates speed. Technology allows us to communicate instantly, access information within seconds, and complete tasks more quickly than ever before.

As a result, many people have come to believe that faster is always better. However, life continually teaches us that speed alone is not enough. Knowing the right direction is often more important than moving quickly.

Many young people are eager to achieve success as soon as possible. They want immediate results in their careers, businesses, relationships, and personal goals.

There is nothing wrong with ambition. In fact, ambition is necessary for progress. However, ambition without wisdom can lead to costly mistakes. Moving quickly in the wrong direction only takes a person further away from their destination.

The elderly have travelled roads that young people are only beginning to explore. They have experienced successes and failures, victories and disappointments, opportunities and setbacks.

Through these experiences, they have learned lessons that cannot be found in



Technology allows us to communicate instantly, access information within seconds, and complete tasks more quickly than ever before.

textbooks, classrooms, or online courses. Their knowledge comes from living through life's challenges and finding ways to overcome them.

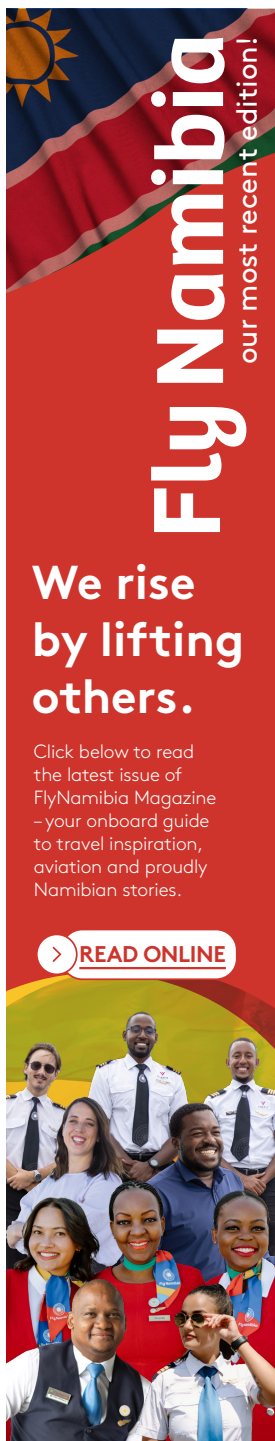
One of the greatest mistakes young people can make is believing that they know everything. Knowledge gained from education is important, but experience remains one of life's greatest teachers.

A university degree may teach someone how to perform a job, but experience teaches them how to navigate difficult situations, manage relationships, and make sound decisions under pressure.

In Namibia, as in many other countries, there is often a growing gap between generations. Some young people view older individuals as outdated or disconnected from modern realities.

At the same time, some older people may struggle to understand the aspirations and challenges facing today's youth. Yet society functions best when both generations work together rather than against each other.

The energy of youth and the wisdom of age should complement each other. Young people bring innovation, creativity, and fresh perspectives.



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Older people bring guidance, experience, and historical understanding. When these strengths are combined, families, organisations, and communities become stronger.

Many successful people can point to a mentor, parent, teacher, or elder who guided them at a critical moment in life.

Often, a few words of advice from someone who has travelled the road before can save years of frustration and prevent costly mistakes. Wisdom has the power to illuminate paths that are not immediately visible to those who are still learning.

This lesson is particularly important in today's fast-changing world. While technology continues to evolve, human nature remains largely the same.

Challenges such as leadership, financial management, relationships, integrity, and resilience have existed for generations. Older people have valuable insights into these issues because they have lived through them.

At the same time, the elderly should also recognise the value of youth. Progress requires new ideas and fresh energy.

Every generation builds upon the work of those who came before it. Just as young people need guidance, older people need the enthusiasm and innovation of younger generations to move society forward.

The future belongs not to one generation alone, but to both working together. The youth

may walk faster, but the elderly know the road.

When speed is guided by wisdom, and wisdom is supported by energy, remarkable things can happen. Communities prosper, organisations grow, and individuals reach their full potential.

As we move through life, let us learn to respect both youth and age. Let young people remain teachable and willing to learn from those who came before them.

Let older people continue sharing their knowledge and encouraging the next generation. In doing so, we create a society where experience and innovation walk side by side.

After all, there is little value in walking fast if you are heading in the wrong direction. The greatest success comes when youthful energy follows the guidance of wisdom. The youth may walk faster, but the elderly know the road.

*** Junias Erasmus is an Interdisciplinary Scholar, Philosopher, and Legal Researcher, with recognised expertise in Artificial Intelligence grounded in a Multidisciplinary foundation in Management Science. He is also a Motivational Speaker. This article is authored in his personal capacity. For enquiries, he may be contacted at Junias99@gmail.com.**

Nandi-Ndaitwah urges stronger Namibia-Ghana trade ties under AfCFTA

President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah has called for stronger economic cooperation between Namibia and Ghana, urging African businesses to seize opportunities under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) while identifying agriculture as a top development priority for the continent.

During her visit to Ghana, where she attended a high-level discussion on the transatlantic slave trade and engaged with the Namibian community and business leaders, Nandi-Ndaitwah reaffirmed Namibia's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and advancing economic diplomacy.

She said Namibia remains committed to forging strategic partnerships that support the objectives of the AfCFTA, highlighting agriculture, sport and the creative industries as key sectors for collaboration.

Addressing African business leaders, the President stressed that the continent's economic transformation must be driven by Africans themselves.

"I am one of those who believe that Africa can only be developed and economically liberated by Africans," she said.

Nandi-Ndaitwah noted that continental



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initiatives such as the AfCFTA have created new opportunities for African entrepreneurs and innovators by opening markets across the continent.

"We are opening the whole continent to all of us. And I think with the skills that we are having, we can even put up our own terms of trade," she said.

Calling for greater economic self-determination, she added: "Africa must have its own voice. If we are not getting onto that table, let us create our table, and if we really make that table strong,

we will hear them knocking on our doors so that they can join us at the table."

The President invited African investors to participate in Namibia's development agenda, saying the country would prioritise partnerships from within the continent.

"Namibia is part of Africa and Namibia is open to Africans to come and be part of our journey to economic independence. Our country is open for investment and we will give Africa priority," she said.

Nandi-Ndaitwah emphasised that while Namibia attained political independence 35 years ago with the support of other African nations, achieving economic independence remains an ongoing objective.

She identified agriculture as the country's foremost development priority, arguing that Africa has the resources required to feed itself.

"We have agriculture. We need to feed ourselves as a continent," she said.

Referring to a past African Union study, the President noted that the continent has sufficient water resources to achieve food security if managed effectively.

"The water we have in Africa can feed the whole of Africa. We just need to manage it properly and, for Namibia, agriculture is our number one priority," she said.



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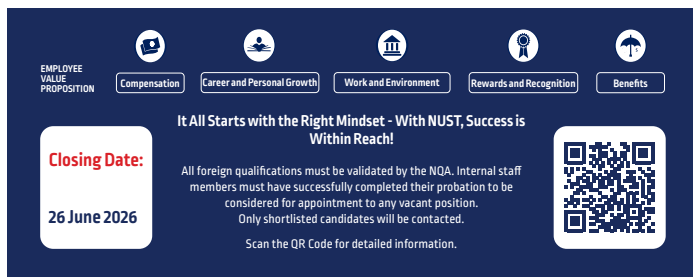
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Sky's the limit: Q-Kon and partners launch fully compliant Eutelsat-OneWeb Leo Satellite services in Namibia

Today marks the official launch of Eutelsat's OneWeb high-speed Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite services in Namibia, introducing a major upgrade to business broadband and connectivity infrastructure.

Scoped specifically for the African continent by satellite engineering enterprise, Q-KON, as their Twoobii-OneWeb LEO Smart Satellite Service, this cutting-edge service is being rolled out to the local market by licensed channel partners Echo Namibia and Oblixx Communication Networks (OCN).

The launch follows a rigorous evaluation process by the Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN), positioning the service as a fully compliant, authorised LEO solution designed to bridge the digital divide for schools, government facilities, and remote locations in the banking, mining,

medical, retail, hospitality and tourism sectors.

Navigating a Booming Global Satellite Landscape

The commercial launch arrives during an unprecedented boom in the "NewSpace" sector. While mega-constellations like SpaceX's Starlink initiated this technology boom, the market has expanded significantly.

Currently, there are 36 active and planned global LEO communication constellations - including high-profile programmes such as Amazon LEO (previously known as Project Kuiper), China's SpaceSail, and the European Union's IRIS² network.

When expanded to include regional setups, Earth observation imaging, and small-satellite IoT networks, the global NewSpace Index tracking system now lists over 450 unique LEO constellation projects in various

stages of deployment.

In this crowded and fast-evolving international landscape, African regulators face the immense task of protecting national interests while enabling innovation. CRAN's diligent and thorough framework has ensured that the OneWeb service enters the country under a sustainable, legally sound architecture.

A Three-Year Journey of

Collaboration

The official launch is the culmination of an arduous three-year journey that began in June 2023. Bringing a global constellation into full compliance required extensive adaptation from the global operator to align with Namibia's unique legal and market prerequisites.

"We are incredibly proud, humble, and excited to officially bring Twoobii-OneWeb services to Namibia," says Dr Dawie de Wet, Group CEO of Q-KON.

"Technology by itself is meaningless; the goal is to harness it to open new markets, improve quality of life, and uplift society. The journey to get here was complex, often frustrating, and always challenging. We can absolutely attest to the diligence of CRAN's process in ensuring the Namibian public is best served, and we salute them for their regulatory leadership."

Dr. de Wet also highlighted the crucial role played by Eutelsat, and their local channel partners, citing the iconic African proverb: 'If you want to walk fast, walk alone. If you want to go far, go together.' "It has been a tedious and uphill journey since 2023, and I am deeply grateful to Eutelsat, Echo Namibia and OCN for standing by this vision."

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regional teams engineered custom service delivery models that fit the socio-economic realities of the region.

Deploying global LEO technology successfully required navigating specific regulatory conditions that did not always align with standard global blueprints.

To meet CRAN's high compliance standards, Eutelsat adapted its service delivery structures, ensuring that the global OneWeb network integrates seamlessly with local operational frameworks to deliver a reliable, enterprise-grade solution.

Redefining Enterprise Operations

The Twoobii-OneWeb service delivers enterprise-grade satellite connectivity with speeds of up to 100 Mbps and capacities reaching up to 2TB per site.

Its low-latency performance ensures seamless integration with legacy corporate IT systems and SD-WAN architectures, allowing businesses to easily incorporate LEO satellite links into their existing network routing and failover strategies.

Having previously secured their official operating licences following CRAN's approvals earlier this year, Echo Namibia and OCN are already deploying the technology. The service provides a vital lifeline to off-grid communities and functions as a failsafe, high-speed backup option for urban enterprises looking to secure their operations against terrestrial network outages.

About Q-KON:

Q-KON is a leading satellite engineering enterprise and established managed service provider with more than 35 years of experience in providing innovative connectivity solutions across the African continent. Through its flagship service, Twoobii, Q-KON delivers advanced hybrid satellite broadband that integrates both

GEO and OneWeb LEO technologies to provide scalable, high-speed, and low-latency internet access. By leveraging a fully integrated "as-a-Service" model, Q-KON empowers sectors such as banking, healthcare, and government to bridge the digital divide in even the most remote locations.

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About Echo Namibia:

Echo Telecommunications (Pty) Ltd t/a Echo Namibia is an Information & Communications Technology (ICT) provider offering connectivity (fibre, wireless, satellite), cloud, managed networks (SD-WAN, VPN), cybersecurity, and IT services for small, medium and large enterprises. Echo Namibia is known for its turnkey solutions, vast skillset, expanding network plans, first to deploy LEO VSAT. Echo Namibia started in 2016 under the name Witel Service Provider, becoming part of the Echo Africa group in 2022, and evolving into a key player in Namibia's digital infrastructure drive.

For me information, go to: <https://echosp.net/NA>

About Oblixx Communication Networks (OCN):

Oblixx Communication Network (OCN) is a Namibian broadband provider dedicated to bridging the digital divide by delivering high-speed internet to underserved communities. They offer fixed wireless, fibre, and LEO satellite solutions with speeds ranging from 10 Mbps to 400 Mbps. OCN emphasizes reliability, accessibility, and customer satisfaction, positioning itself as a key player in expanding next-generation connectivity across Namibia.

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Planning your retirement: Decisions that shape your income

By Aimee Langford

Many people spend time planning short-term decisions but give far less attention to retirement, even though the financial consequences are long lasting.

As the football World Cup kicks off, fantasy league participants carefully consider player performance, risks and alternatives. Retirement requires the same level of planning, yet many people reach it without a clear strategy.

A well thought through retirement plan can reduce stress and provide a practical framework for making important financial decisions.

Planning how to use the lump sum

One of the first decisions at retirement is whether to take part of your savings as a cash lump sum. While there may be tax benefits, the lump sum often works best when it is used to support your retirement over time.

A plan should consider:

1. Keep money available for emergencies

Unexpected costs can arise at any time. These may include a car repair, medical expenses or a large municipal bill. Having funds readily available can help avoid the need for expensive short-term borrowing

2. Plan for known future expenses

Some costs are predictable, even if they occur irregularly. These may include



One of the first decisions at retirement is whether to take part of your savings as a cash lump sum.

home maintenance, car services, travel or supporting family commitments. Setting money aside for these expenses can make retirement more manageable

3. Use the lump sum alongside an income plan

Monthly retirement income may be fixed, increase annually or depend on investment performance. In each case, there is a risk that income may not keep up with your needs. Using the lump sum as part of a broader plan can provide flexibility and help manage inflation and unexpected costs

Thinking about these factors upfront can help ensure the lump sum becomes a useful financial tool rather than a source of pressure later.

Understanding annuity options

The next key decision is how to convert the remaining savings into a regular income.

Many people focus on the annuity that provides the highest starting income.

However, different annuities protect against different risks.

In Namibia, retirees generally consider three main types of annuities:

1. Fixed guaranteed annuity

This provides a fixed income for life. The income will not run out, regardless of how long you live. However, it does not increase, which means inflation reduces its buying power over time

2. Increasing guaranteed annuity

This provides an income that increases at a fixed rate each year. It offers some protection against rising costs, although inflation may still outpace the increases

3. Living annuity

With a living annuity, your savings remain invested and you choose how much income to draw within allowed limits. This provides flexibility but also introduces risk. If withdrawals are too high or investment returns are low, the capital may reduce over time

A living annuity may leave remaining capital to beneficiaries. Guaranteed annuities usually stop at death unless additional benefits were selected at the start.

Choosing between income and protection

Selecting an annuity is about more than the monthly income quoted. It involves understanding your priorities and financial circumstances.

Important questions include:

- Will anyone depend on my income after I die and do I want to leave money to family
- How long may I need my retirement income to last
- How much flexibility do I need from year to year
- Do I have other income or assets if my pension does not keep up with inflation
- Am I comfortable making investment decisions during retirement

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trade-off between higher income today and protection against future risks. Understanding this balance is key before comparing annuity options.

Planning for changing income needs

Before making decisions, it is useful to define three levels of income:

- the income needed to maintain your current lifestyle
- the income needed for a more modest lifestyle
- the minimum income needed to cover basic expenses

This provides a practical basis for comparing options and understanding how much flexibility you may need.

This approach is particularly important for a living annuity, where both investment performance and withdrawal rates affect long-term outcomes.

For example, spending may need to

adjust if investment returns fall below expectations. A plan could reduce spending to a more modest level if returns are lower, and further to essential expenses if conditions worsen. If performance improves, income can be reviewed again.

Making smaller adjustments early can help avoid larger reductions later and reduce the risk of running out of savings.

Retirement decisions require balancing immediate income needs with long-term financial security. Taking time to understand your options and the risks involved can help avoid difficult adjustments later.

A clear plan, supported by informed decisions, can make retirement income more predictable and less stressful.

** Aimee Langford – Head of Actuarial at Alexforbes*

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Josephat Mwatotele steps down from Stimulus Investments board

Stimulus Investments Limited director Josephat Mwatotele has resigned from the company's board after serving for almost 11 years, marking the latest change to the leadership of the NSX-listed investment company.

The company announced that Mwatotele stepped down as a non-executive director with effect from 12 June 2026 after reaching the maximum allowable term under Stimulus' director appointment and succession policy.

"Mr Mwatotele has served as a director of the Company since September 2015 and, having served the maximum allowable term, is retiring in accordance with the Company's director appointment and succession policy," Stimulus said in a notice to shareholders.

His departure comes amid a broader refresh of the company's board.

In May, Stimulus appointed legal practitioner Namene Shejavali as an independent non-executive director, while former board chairperson Peter Koep resigned after serving as both chairperson and director.

Independent non-executive director Chuka Okafor subsequently assumed the role of board chairperson with effect from 1 June 2026.

The latest board changes come as Stimulus continues to reshape parts of its investment portfolio and pursue growth opportunities.

In May, the company announced the sale of its 50% stake in Khomas Solar Saver to fellow shareholder Sedgeley Solar Management for N\$155.7 million following approval from the Namibian Competition Commission. The transaction is expected to become effective in June 2026.

For the financial year ended 28 February 2026, Stimulus reported profit after tax



of N\$22.7 million, while net asset value attributable to each preference share increased to N\$176.24 from N\$165.31 a year earlier.

The company said its portfolio companies delivered satisfactory growth during the year, helping lift assets under management by 9%.

Stimulus holds investments in several Namibian businesses, including Cymot Group, Neo Paints Group, Plastic Packaging Group, Polyoak Namibia, Walvisbay Stevedoring, Khomas Solar Saver and Desert Trade Investments.

The company said it remains focused on creating value through its portfolio of unlisted investments while evaluating future opportunities and potential portfolio exits where commercially justified.

Stimulus Investments Limited (SIL) is a private equity investment company established in 2004 to make private equity investments in the Namibian market. The company is licensed by the Namibia Financial Institutions Supervisory Authority (NAMFISA) and invests in a diversified portfolio of unlisted businesses across multiple sectors.

Saving vs Investing: Appreciating the difference

By Rebekka Tuukondjele

We often use saving and investing interchangeably as if they mean the same thing. However, while both are essential tools for building wealth, they serve fundamentally different purposes.

Understanding the difference is one of the most important steps you can take toward building long-term financial security.

Using an oversimplified analogy, think of your money like a houseplant. Saving is like giving the plant just enough water to stay alive, while investing is the fertiliser that allows it to grow and thrive over time.

Saving is best suited for short- to medium-term goals and focuses on:

- Keeping your money safe
- Easy access (liquidity)
- Minimal risk

Savings accounts and similar products are ideal for emergency funds, short-term purchases, or planned expenses in the near future. Investing, on the other hand, is designed for long-term growth. The goal with investing is to grow your money over time. This can however mean:

- Accepting some short-term ups and downs (market volatility)
- Taking on more risk in exchange for higher potential returns
- Limited liquidity

Why saving alone is not enough

Saving is essential but it's not a long-term solution on its own.

Why, you ask? The main reason is inflation, the steady rise in the cost of living. Over time, inflation erodes the buying power of your money. If your savings earn 3% per year



Saving is essential but it's not a long-term solution on its own.

but inflation is running at 5%, you're effectively losing 2% of your wealth annually even though your account balance appears to be growing.

This is where many people unintentionally fall behind. By relying on savings products for long-term goals like education, buying a home, or retirement, your money may not grow fast enough to keep up with rising costs.

The Real Risk to Avoid

Many investors shy away from investing because of uncertainty and short-term market fluctuations. While this hesitation is understandable, the greater risk over time is failing to grow your capital sufficiently over the long haul. Money you'll need in 5, 10, or 20 years must work harder. Investing gives your capital a chance to outpace inflation and support your future goals.

Bottom Line

- Save for short-term needs and peace of mind:

- Invest for long-term goals and real growth:

A strong investment strategy does not choose one over the other, it balances both, based on an investor's needs. Saving protects you today, while investing helps secure your tomorrow.

**Rebekka Tuukondjele, is the Client Service Consultant and Compliance Officer at Namibia Asset Management*



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Universities as drivers of employment creation, innovation and national development

By Hasekiel Johannes

Reflecting on the Role of Universities in National Development

As I step into my role in Innovation and Resource Mobilisation at Welwitchia University, I find myself reflecting on a journey that began more than thirteen years ago.

During my early years in higher education and innovation development, I witnessed firsthand the transformative role that universities can play in addressing societal and economic challenges.

Today, that responsibility has become even more critical as Namibia seeks sustainable solutions to unemployment, poverty and economic diversification.

For many years, universities were viewed primarily as institutions responsible for teaching and producing graduates. While this remains a core function, the modern university has evolved into something much more significant.

Universities are now expected to be centres of innovation, entrepreneurship, research and community engagement. They are increasingly called upon to develop practical solutions that address national priorities while contributing directly to economic growth and job creation.

Universities as Job Creators, Not Just Graduate Producers

Namibia continues to face the challenge of youth unemployment despite producing thousands of graduates annually. This reality calls for a shift in how higher education



Universities are now expected to be centres of innovation, entrepreneurship, research and community engagement.

institutions prepare students for the future.

Universities must move beyond producing job seekers and begin nurturing job creators. Through entrepreneurship education, innovation programmes, business incubation and industry collaboration, students can be empowered to transform ideas into sustainable enterprises that create employment opportunities for themselves and others.

Research remains one of the most powerful tools available to universities in contributing to national development. Quality research generates knowledge that can solve pressing challenges in healthcare, agriculture, education, technology, renewable energy and environmental sustainability.

However, research should not end with publication alone. Research must be translated into practical applications, products, services and policies that create measurable social and economic impact. This requires universities to strengthen the link between research, innovation and commercialisation.

Intellectual Property and Research Policy: A Foundation for Innovation

In this regard, Namibia’s National Intellectual Property Rights framework and the national policies governing research, science, technology and innovation provide important opportunities for higher education institutions.

Intellectual property protection ensures that innovations developed by researchers, academics and students are recognised, protected and potentially commercialised. Strong intellectual property systems create incentives for innovation while opening pathways for partnerships, investment and revenue generation.

Universities that effectively manage intellectual property are better positioned to transform research outcomes into marketable solutions that contribute to economic development.

Policy Implementation Challenges and the Need for Reform

While Namibia has made significant progress in establishing policy frameworks that support research, innovation and intellectual property development, there is a growing need to review the effectiveness of these policies and their implementation.

The original National Policy on Research, Science and Technology was adopted in 1999 and remained in force for more than two decades before being revised into the National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (NSTIP) 2020–2030.

The lengthy period between reviews highlights

the importance of ensuring that policies remain responsive to rapidly changing technological, economic and societal realities.

Emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, digital transformation and the knowledge economy require policy frameworks that are agile, forward-looking and regularly updated.

Despite the existence of strong policy intentions, several challenges continue to limit the impact of Namibia’s innovation ecosystem. These include limited research funding, weak linkages between universities and industry, insufficient commercialisation of research outputs, inadequate research infrastructure and a shortage of dedicated technology transfer and intellectual property management structures within many institutions.

While the National Intellectual Property Policy provides a framework for protecting innovation and encouraging research

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and development, many researchers and institutions still face challenges in translating research findings into market-ready products and services.

Investing in Research for a Knowledge Economy

The Government of Namibia deserves recognition for its continued investment in education and human capital development.

Through public universities, student financial assistance programmes and investments in training and skills development, government has demonstrated its commitment to building a knowledgeable and capable workforce.

However, the next phase of national development requires a stronger focus on research and development funding. Investment in education alone is not sufficient if institutions do not have adequate resources to conduct impactful research and innovation activities.

Recent estimates indicate that Namibia's expenditure on research and development stands at approximately 0.65% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). While this reflects progress compared to previous years, it remains below the African Union's recommended target of at least 1% of GDP dedicated to research and development.

Countries that have successfully transformed their economies through innovation have generally exceeded this benchmark and have benefited from strong private-sector participation in research funding. If Namibia is serious about building a knowledge-based economy, greater investment in research and innovation will be essential.

The Critical Role of Industry Partnerships

For Namibia to realise the ambitions outlined in Vision 2030 and the National Science, Technology and Innovation

Policy, government funding should be complemented by stronger industry participation.

The private sector can play a transformative role by funding university research chairs, sponsoring innovation challenges, investing in start-up incubation programmes, co-developing technologies with universities and supporting applied research that addresses industry-specific challenges.

Around the world, countries that lead in innovation have strong partnerships between government, universities and industry, with businesses contributing a substantial share of national research and development expenditure.

Universities must therefore position themselves not only as centres of teaching and learning but also as trusted partners for industry and government.

Through collaborative research, innovation partnerships, intellectual property commercialisation and entrepreneurship development, institutions such as Welwitchia University can help bridge the gap between knowledge creation and economic impact.

This approach will strengthen Namibia's innovation ecosystem, create new employment opportunities and contribute meaningfully to national development.

A Vision for Welwitchia University

As I begin this new chapter at Welwitchia University, I see significant opportunities to strengthen the institution's innovation ecosystem. One of my aspirations is to contribute towards building a culture where innovation is embedded across teaching, research and community engagement.

This includes creating platforms that encourage students and staff to develop innovative solutions to real-world challenges while providing support mechanisms that can help transform ideas into viable businesses and social enterprises.

Equally important is the strengthening of research capacity and governance within the institution. A university's reputation and impact are largely determined by the quality of its research output.

Welwitchia University has the potential to become a recognised contributor to Namibia's knowledge economy by investing in research excellence, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and encouraging publications that address national and regional development challenges.

Quality research must become an institutional priority, not only because it contributes to academic excellence but because it generates evidence-based solutions that improve lives.

Furthermore, there is an opportunity for Welwitchia University to strengthen its intellectual property systems, establish innovation and technology transfer mechanisms, and create pathways for commercialising research outcomes.

By doing so, the institution can encourage innovation among students and academics while generating value for society and the economy.

Learning from Other Namibian Universities

There is much that can be learned from the experiences of the Namibia University of Science and Technology, the University of Namibia and the International University of Management.

These institutions have demonstrated the importance of innovation, applied research, entrepreneurship and industry engagement in advancing national development.

Their experiences provide valuable lessons for strengthening Namibia's higher education and innovation ecosystem.

Globally, the most successful universities are those that have embraced the concept of the entrepreneurial university. These

institutions recognise that teaching, research, innovation and enterprise development are interconnected.

They actively contribute to the creation of new businesses, the development of new technologies and the generation of solutions that improve the quality of life for their communities.

The Way Forward

As Namibia advances towards its development aspirations, universities must position themselves as strategic partners in nation-building.

Their contribution should not be measured solely by the number of graduates they produce but also by the jobs they help create, the innovations they develop, the research they generate and the societal impact they achieve. By investing in quality research, strengthening intellectual property systems, fostering entrepreneurship and mobilising resources, universities can become powerful engines of economic transformation.

The future of Namibia's development will depend significantly on its ability to harness knowledge, innovation and human capital. Universities therefore have a responsibility that extends far beyond the classroom.

They must serve as catalysts for opportunity, drivers of innovation and champions of sustainable development. Through collaborative effort and strategic vision, institutions such as Welwitchia University can play a defining role in building a prosperous, inclusive and knowledge-driven Namibia.

** Hasekiel Johannes recently joined Welwitschia University as the Innovation and Research Mobilisation Coordinator. The views and opinions expressed are his own and do not necessarily represent the official position or views of the Institution.*

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