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THE

# BRIEF

News Worth Knowing

## Namibia secures Africa's first N\$1 billion community conservation funding deal



WEDNESDAY 20 MAY 2026

## MAIN STORY

# Namibia secures Africa's first N\$1 billion community conservation funding deal

Namibia has secured more than N\$1 billion in conservation financing under a landmark initiative aimed at protecting wildlife, sustaining communal conservancies and supporting rural livelihoods as traditional donor funding declines.

The programme, known as Namibia for Life, was launched as Africa's first Finance for Permanence (PFP) initiative focused specifically on community conservation.

According to World Wildlife Fund for Nature's Country Director for Namibia, Juliane Zeidler, the deal has secured more than US\$61 million in confirmed funding, with additional contributions still being negotiated.

"In Namibia, as mentioned earlier, the closing deal has been set at US\$63 million (over N\$1 billion), with additional funds earmarked but not yet fully confirmed. Today marks the launch of the very first Finance for Permanence (PFP) initiative in Africa. It is also the first on the continent to focus specifically on community conservation. Most PFP programmes implemented elsewhere have primarily supported state-protected areas," Zeidler said.

The funding package brings together international public and private conservation partners and is intended to provide long-term financial support



## Crucial Dates

- **Bank of Namibia Monetary Policy announcement dates:**
  - \* 17 June 2026
  - \* 12 August 2026
  - \* 29 October 2026
  - \* 10 December 2026
- **Namibia Oil and Gas Conference 18–21 August 2026 in Windhoek**

to Namibia’s community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) system, which has become one of the country’s most internationally recognised conservation models over the past three decades.

Namibia’s 91 communal conservancies and related community forest associations currently manage more than 230,000 square kilometres of land, supporting conservation activities and natural resource-based livelihoods for around 250,000 people. Zeidler said the initiative became necessary after Namibia’s transition to middle-income status in 2007 triggered a gradual decline in bilateral donor support, placing growing pressure on conservation programmes and local institutions.

The funding mechanism was eventually developed through the Enduring Earth partnership, which includes the World Wide Fund for Nature and other international conservation partners.

“Then, in 2021, it finally became possible to move forward through the Finance for Permanence (PFP) approach. This is a very specific fundraising model developed by the Enduring Earth partnership, of which WWF is a key member, together with international partners,” she said.

Part of the initiative includes the establishment of a Socio-Economic

Development Fund aimed at supporting conservation enterprises and local business development through a microfinance-style funding model.

The programme is expected to create new economic opportunities linked to Namibia’s wildlife and bio-economy sectors, particularly in remote rural communities heavily dependent on conservation-linked income. The funding will be administered locally through the Community Conservation Fund of Namibia (CCFN), which will oversee conservancy support, extension services and institutional strengthening programmes.

Zeidler said the initiative is also expected to ease mounting financial pressure on local conservation organisations that have struggled to survive following the end of major international funding programmes and the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Globally, many NGOs have been affected by funding cuts and are often not fully recognised as development partners. Namibia’s case is different. When large funding streams such as the Millennium Challenge Account ended, and later during the COVID-19 pandemic, national organisations came under significant pressure,” she said.



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## Govt orders immediate construction of Nkurenkuru Intermediate Hospital

Construction of the long-delayed Nkurenkuru Intermediate Hospital is set to proceed after government ordered that the project move ahead without further delays, more than a decade after its groundbreaking ceremony was first held in 2014.

Prime Minister Elijah Ngurare said government has already secured funding for

the construction of hospitals at Nkurenkuru, Ondangwa, Otjiwarongo and Windhoek as part of efforts to strengthen the country's strained public healthcare system.

"We have also decided that where feasibility studies were already conducted, such as Nkurenkuru Intermediate Hospital, it must be constructed without delay. Equally feasibility studies must not be

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used as legal delays by those professionals entrusted with such duties,” Ngurare told a graduation ceremony at Triumphant College’s Khomasdal campus.

The renewed push comes as the Development Bank of Namibia (DBN) revealed that it has disbursed N\$1 billion towards the construction of new hospitals across the country, with the bulk of the funding earmarked for the planned 500-bed Windhoek District Hospital.

Part of the funding will also support hospital projects in Nkurenkuru, Ondangwa and Otjiwarongo, which government says are aimed at improving access to healthcare services and easing pressure on overcrowded referral hospitals.

Namibia’s public healthcare system has faced growing pressure in recent years, particularly in the Khomas Region where hospitals continue to battle overcrowding and rising patient numbers.

The planned Windhoek District Hospital, which will be built in Havana, is expected to reduce pressure on Katutura Intermediate Hospital by expanding inpatient and outpatient healthcare services in the capital.

According to the Ministry of Health and Social Services, the new facility will include a pharmacy, radiology department, outpatient services, kitchen and laundry facilities.

The projects form part of government’s broader healthcare infrastructure expansion programme under the Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6) and the “ROADMAP”

initiative spearheaded by the Ministry of Health and Social Services, the Ministry of Finance and the National Planning Commission.

Government is also preparing for the rollout of Vision April 2026, a programme that will require civil servants to use public healthcare facilities. The first phase, expected to begin on 1 April 2026, will target senior public servants, political office bearers, executive directors and security chiefs.

Ngurare said government is also pursuing plans to strengthen local pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity and is negotiating agreements with India, Cuba and Egypt to procure medicines for public hospitals.



The **Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN)** herewith invites our stakeholders and the public to a consultative public hearing on the **Notice of Intention to amend the Regulations Prescribing Licence Fees and Regulatory Levies: Communication Act (No. 8 of 2009)** published in *Government Gazette* No. 8915, under General Notice No. 319, dated 08 May 2026.

**EVENT DETAILS:**

**Date** : Friday, 22 May 2026  
**Time** : 14h00 - 17h00  
**Venue** : Droombos Vineyard Country Hotel

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**SUSTAINABLE FINANCE**



# Thought Leadership piece:

## Mobilising Climate Finance for Namibia's Sustainable Future

Namibia's sustainable finance agenda took a significant step forward when RMB Namibia, the corporate and investment banking division of FNB Namibia, partnered with the Bank of Namibia to convene industry leaders under the Namibia Sustainable Finance Alliance (NSFA).

The gathering brought together regulators, financiers and investors to confront a defining challenge: unlocking climate finance at the scale needed to underpin long-term, resilient growth. Against a backdrop of increasing climate vulnerability and an urgent global transition away from carbon-intensive economies, the dialogue underscored just how critical it is for Namibia to position itself as a credible and attractive destination for sustainable capital.

A central theme was the persistent imbalance in global climate finance flows. Capital continues to gravitate toward mitigation projects that offer clear, measurable returns, while adaptation critical for safeguarding economies and livelihoods remains chronically underfunded. For a country like Namibia, where the effects of climate change are already being felt through prolonged droughts, erratic rainfall and increasing pressure on natural resources, this gap is not an abstract concern. It is a lived reality with tangible consequences for communities, industries and the broader economy. Closing it will demand innovative financing structures capable of accommodating longer time horizons, blended finance mechanisms, and risk-sharing arrangements that make adaptation projects viable for private investors.

Namibia's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are estimated to require approximately USD 15 billion by 2030, a figure that underscores the sheer scale of investment needed across sectors including energy, water, agriculture and infrastructure. International capital will be instrumental in meeting this target, but it will not flow automatically. Investors are placing growing emphasis on bankability, policy certainty and sound risk allocation. Development finance institutions and multilateral climate funds have a pivotal role to play in de-risking early-stage projects and catalysing private sector participation, but their impact depends on strong domestic frameworks that inspire confidence.

The NSFA's message was unambiguous: capital exists, but it will only move where confidence does confidence in governance, in regulatory clarity and in well-structured investment opportunities. For Namibia, building that confidence means deepening institutional capacity, strengthening environmental and social governance standards, and creating the pipeline of investable projects that international and local financiers are looking for. The conversation is no longer simply about climate ambition. It is about translating that ambition into bankable realities that can attract, deploy and sustain the financing Namibia needs.

RMB Namibia has been actively involved in financing



and advising on key sectors underpinning Namibia's transition, including renewable energy, infrastructure and resource-based industries. Its approach is not limited to funding but extends to structuring solutions that align risk and return in a way that meets investor expectations. This includes working with clients to develop bankable projects, advising on capital structuring and facilitating access to both local and international funding pools. Investors and partners seeking to participate in Namibia's evolving sustainable finance landscape are encouraged to engage with RMB Namibia to explore bankable opportunities, innovative financing structures and strategic partnerships aligned to long-term growth.

*\* For more information contact Monét Basson, Sustainable Finance and Capital Markets Transactor at RMB Namibia, Email: [monet.basson@rmb.com.na](mailto:monet.basson@rmb.com.na)*



## From the sidelines to the boardroom: Why public relations and corporate communications professionals are built to lead organizations

By Lot Ndamanomhata

Public Relations (PR) and Corporate Communications professionals have long been typecast as organizational support functions, the architects of messaging, the managers of reputation, and the custodians of public image.

Yet this characterization fundamentally misrepresents the breadth, depth, and strategic value of their work. This article argues, with reference to academic literature, real-world case studies, and practitioner research, that PR and Corporate Communications professionals possess a uniquely holistic understanding of organizational life, stakeholder dynamics, financial narrative, and strategic positioning that not only qualifies them for senior leadership roles but makes them exceptionally well-suited to lead at the highest levels.

Excluding them from decision-making tables does not merely overlook a talent resource it actively weakens institutional resilience, stakeholder trust, and long-term organizational performance.

### Introduction: The Misconception of the Support Role

There is a persistent and damaging fallacy that runs through organizational thinking worldwide: that Public Relations and Corporate Communications exist to translate the decisions of others into palatable language. Under this view, the communications professional is a craftsperson of words, valuable, certainly, but not a strategist, not a financial thinker,



**In the political arena, the capacity to communicate, to understand publics, to frame narratives, to build coalitions has long been recognized as foundational to leadership.**

and certainly not a leader.

This view is not only wrong, but also organizationally costly. Grunig and Hunt (1984), whose foundational four-model framework of public relations remains a cornerstone of the discipline, anticipated this challenge, noting that communications practitioners frequently operate at a managerial level in practice while being treated as technicians in title and status.

Decades later, the gap between the strategic capacity of communications professionals and the recognition they receive persists.

The 2023 Global Communication Report published by the USC Annenberg Center for Public Relations found that 78% of communication professionals believe the function is increasingly involved in business strategy, yet fewer than a third feel they have a genuine seat at the executive table (USC Annenberg, 2023). This disconnect represents not a deficiency in capability, but

a failure of organizational imagination.

This article makes an affirmative case: PR and Corporate Communications professionals not only deserve to be in the room, but they also possess unique competencies that position them as some of the most effective organizational leaders available.

### The Holistic View: A 360-Degree Understanding of the Organization

Few roles within an organization demand the cross-functional engagement that Corporate Communications does. By the very nature of their work, communications professionals must understand operations, finance, human resources, legal affairs, marketing, government relations, investor relations, and community engagement. They are, in practice, organizational translators, able to synthesize complexity across departments into coherent, strategic narratives.

Dozier, Grunig, and Grunig (1995) established that communication managers who participate in strategic decision-making consistently contribute to organizational effectiveness not as peripheral actors, but as central contributors to value creation. Their research demonstrated that organizations where communications professionals participated in the dominant coalition, the inner circle of organizational decision-making outperformed those where they did not.

This holistic exposure matters for leadership because effective leadership requires system-level thinking. Unlike technical specialists who

develop deep expertise in a single domain, communications professionals develop broad fluency across the organizational whole. They understand the consequences of decisions not just operationally, but reputationally, culturally, and externally. This systemic perspective is, as Kotter (1996) noted in his study of organizational change, one of the most critical and rare capacities for effective leadership.

Consider what a Corporate Communications director does in a single week: they brief the CEO on media sentiment ahead of a board meeting, review the language in an investor relations disclosure, consult legal on a crisis communication response, collaborate with HR on an internal all-hands message following a restructuring, and coordinate with regional teams on cultural sensitivities around a product launch. This is not supporting work. This is strategic leadership practiced daily without the formal title.



## Dispelling the Myth: Financial and Strategic Literacy in Communications

One of the most persistent objections to communications professionals in leadership is the assumption that they lack financial acumen. This assumption does not survive scrutiny. Senior communications

practitioners routinely manage million-dollar budgets, evaluate the return on investment of communications campaigns, interpret earnings data for investor-facing narratives, and advise boards on the financial implications of reputational risk.

The discipline of Investor Relations (IR), which sits squarely within the corporate communications function in many organizations, requires intimate familiarity with financial statements, SEC compliance, earnings guidance, and capital market dynamics. IR professionals must understand financial language with precision, because misstatements carry legal and regulatory consequences. To suggest that these individuals lack financial sophistication is demonstrably false.

More broadly, the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR, 2020) has recognized strategic communications as a discipline that requires business literacy as a foundational competency. The CIPR's Professional Framework explicitly includes financial understanding, governance, and strategic planning as core requirements for senior practitioners. The notion that communications professionals are financially illiterate reflects an outdated caricature, not contemporary professional reality.

Arthur Page Society, whose membership comprises the



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Chief Communications Officers (CCOs) of the world's largest corporations, has repeatedly documented the strategic and financial dimensions of senior communications leadership. Their 2019 report, "The New CCO," identified that modern communications leaders are expected to drive enterprise value, manage organizational risk at a board level, and contribute meaningfully to long-term business strategy (Arthur Page Society, 2019).

Furthermore, reputation is a financial asset. Research by Eccles, Newquist, and Schatz (2007) published in the Harvard Business Review demonstrated that reputation risk including crises of trust, stakeholder alienation, and media mismanagement can destroy shareholder value with devastating speed. The professionals best equipped to protect this asset are, self-evidently, those trained to manage it. Keeping them out of the boardroom is therefore not merely a matter of fairness it is a strategic miscalculation.

**Stakeholder Intelligence: The Leadership Competency Organizations Cannot Afford to Ignore**

Leadership, at its core, is about understanding and influencing people stakeholders, employees, customers, communities, regulators, investors, and the public. No professional in any organization has a more

developed, systematic, and empirically grounded understanding of this landscape than the communications practitioner.

Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory, which has become central to contemporary organizational strategy, argues that long-

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term organizational success depends on the ability to identify, understand, and respond to the needs and expectations of multiple stakeholder groups. This is precisely what PR and communications professionals are trained to do, not occasionally, but as the central purpose of their role.

While a Chief Financial Officer understands investors, and a Chief Marketing Officer understands customers, a Chief Communications Officer understands all stakeholders simultaneously, including employees, media, regulators, community groups, and civil society. This multi-stakeholder literacy gives communications leaders a breadth of perspective that is genuinely rare and strategically invaluable.

Edelman's annual Trust Barometer, one of the most comprehensive studies of global public trust in institutions, consistently shows that how organizations communicate, and who leads that communication, directly determines whether they are trusted by customers, employees, and the public (Edelman, 2024). Trust, the Barometer demonstrates year after year, is now a primary driver of purchasing decisions, employee retention, and regulatory goodwill. Communications professionals are the foremost architects of institutional trust. Leaders who understand trust at this depth lead differently and more effectively.

In contrast, technically brilliant professionals such as engineers, accountants, scientists who are elevated to leadership roles without the development of stakeholder engagement skills frequently struggle. A 2019 study by the Center for Creative Leadership

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identified that the primary reason technically strong executives derail is interpersonal and communication failure, an inability to inspire, align, and engage the diverse stakeholders their organizations depend upon (Leslie, 2019). Communications professionals do not have this gap. Managing stakeholders is their professional identity.

### **Crisis Leadership: Where Communications Professionals Excel Under Pressure**

No test reveals the quality of organizational leadership more definitively than a crisis. And in a crisis, communications professionals frequently become the de facto strategic leaders regardless of their formal title because they understand what is at stake, who is watching, and how the organization must respond across every stakeholder dimension simultaneously.

Ulmer, Sellnow, and Seeger (2019), in their seminal work on crisis communication, demonstrate that organizations led by communications-competent executives consistently outperform their peers in recovery speed, stakeholder retention, and long-term reputational resilience. They document case after case where communications leadership is swift, transparent, empathetic, and strategically sound and they determined the difference between organizational survival and collapse.

The COVID-19 pandemic offered a global laboratory for this proposition. Organizations where communications leaders had genuine authority to shape organizational response, to determine messaging timelines, to advise on operational decisions with reputational consequences, and to coordinate the multi-stakeholder communication cascade and effectively navigated the crisis more effectively than those where communications was merely

tasked with distributing decisions made by others (Kim & Kreps, 2020).

Consider also the Johnson & Johnson Tylenol crisis of 1982, perhaps the most studied case in corporate communications history. The decision to recall 31 million bottles of Tylenol, at a cost of over \$100 million, was driven in significant part by the communications counsel that transparency and stakeholder protection were non-negotiable. That decision is now celebrated as one of the finest examples of ethical organizational leadership ever recorded (Seitel, 2017). It was, fundamentally, a communications-led decision.

### **The Cost of Exclusion: What Organizations Lose When Communications Is Kept Out**

The consequences of excluding communications professionals from strategic leadership are not abstract, they are measurable and well-documented. When organizations make major decisions without communications counsel, they frequently discover too late that the decision, however operationally sound, was organizationally catastrophic in its stakeholder impact.

The Boeing 737 MAX crisis, which resulted in two crashes killing 346 people and the grounding of the aircraft globally, has been extensively analysed. Among the organizational failures identified was the systematic exclusion of safety communication concerns from decision-making processes, and the absence of adequate communication counsel when responding to early warning signals (Robison, 2021). The cost of that exclusion was in human lives, financial loss, and reputational destruction and is incalculable.

Closer to ordinary organizational life, research by the Holmes Report and the Institute for Public Relations (2018) found that companies with senior communications

leaders reporting directly to the CEO and participating in C-suite decision-making achieved 47% higher returns to shareholders over a five-year period compared to companies where communications was a subordinate function. This is not a marginal finding. It is a compelling, financially expressed argument for communications leadership.

When communications professionals are excluded from the table, organizations also lose the voice most likely to raise uncomfortable questions about how decisions will land with employees, communities, and the public.

They lose the internal advocate for transparency who can prevent small ethical lapses from becoming institutional scandals. They lose the stakeholder map that would reveal which decisions carry hidden risks. In short, they lose the institutional conscience that communications leadership provides.

Bowen (2008), whose research on ethical decision-making in public relations is foundational, argues that communications professionals are uniquely positioned to serve as ethical counsel at the highest organizational levels.

Their training in stakeholder analysis, public accountability, and reputational consequence makes them natural guardians of organizational integrity, a role that, if denied, leaves that critical function unoccupied.

### **The Rise of the Chief Communications Officer: Evidence from Practice**

The evolution of the Chief Communications Officer role in major corporations provides concrete evidence that the most sophisticated organizations have already recognized what this article argues. The CCO is no longer a media-relations manager with a senior title, it is a full executive officer with

a seat at the strategy table, responsibility for enterprise-level reputation management, and accountability to the board.

Companies like Microsoft, IBM, Apple, Unilever, and Johnson & Johnson have elevated their communications leaders to positions of genuine executive authority. At Microsoft, Chief Communications Officer Frank Shaw has been a central figure in the company's strategic repositioning and culture transformation under Satya Nadella contributing not merely to external messaging, but to the narrative architecture of organizational change (Arthur Page Society, 2019).

In the public sector and non-governmental space, the pattern is equally clear. The World Health Organization, United Nations agencies, and major international NGOs have increasingly appointed communications leaders with genuine policy authority, not merely as spokespersons but as strategic architects of how these organizations engage with their mandates and their publics.

Zerfass, Verčič, Nothhaft, and Werder (2018), in their European Communication Monitor the largest annual study of communications leadership globally found a consistent trend over fifteen years of data: organizations that position communications leaders as strategic partners, rather than functional specialists, demonstrate measurably superior performance in innovation, stakeholder relationships, and organizational resilience.

The data across thousands of organizations over a decade and a half leaves little room for ambiguity.

### **Communications Professionals Who Led: Real-World Validation**

Beyond structural arguments, history offers direct evidence of communications professionals succeeding in the highest organizational leadership roles.

Richard Edelman, CEO of the world's largest public relations firm, Edelman, has led an organization of over 6,000 employees across 60+ countries demonstrating that a PR background is not merely compatible with organizational leadership but constitutes a genuine competitive advantage in an environment where trust, narrative, and stakeholder engagement are business fundamentals.

In the political arena, the capacity to communicate, to understand publics, to frame narratives, to build coalitions has long been recognized as foundational to leadership. Presidents, prime ministers, and heads of state throughout history have understood that the ability to engage, persuade, and bring people with you is not a secondary skill, it is leadership itself.

In non-profit and civil society organizations where mission, trust, and stakeholder engagement are often the only real assets, communications leaders have long been among the most effective organizational stewards.

Oxfam, Amnesty International, and CARE International have at various points been led by individuals with strong communications and advocacy backgrounds, with impressive organizational results (Nonprofit Leadership Alliance, 2020).

### **The Inclusive Imperative: Diversifying the Leadership Pipeline Through Communications**

There is also a diversity and inclusion dimension to this conversation that deserves explicit recognition. The communications and PR profession has historically been among the more gender-diverse of the professional disciplines with women representing approximately 63% of practitioners globally (PRSA, 2023). Leadership pipelines that exclude communications professionals as a category

therefore disproportionately exclude women from senior roles, an outcome that is both unjust and organizationally counterproductive.

Research consistently demonstrates that leadership diversity including professional diversity at the leadership level drives better decision-making, greater organizational agility, and improved financial performance (McKinsey & Company, 2023). Including communications professionals in leadership pipelines is therefore not only a matter of utilising available talent, but also a mechanism for achieving the diversity of perspective that modern organizations require.

Conversely, when organizations insist on populating their leadership exclusively from finance, engineering, or legal backgrounds, they create cognitive monocultures, leadership teams that think similarly, prioritize similarly, and therefore fail similarly. The communications professional, with their multi-stakeholder, systems-level perspective, provides exactly the complementary leadership thinking that diverse high-performing organizations require.

### **What Organizations Must Do: Practical Recommendations**

For organizations committed to maximizing their leadership potential, the following recommendations, grounded in the literature and organizational best practice, are offered:

- Elevate Communications to the C-Suite with genuine authority: The CCO or equivalent role should report directly to the CEO, participate in all senior strategy discussions, and have formal accountability to the board for organizational reputation and stakeholder trust. This is not a courtesy, it is an organizational competency requirement.

- Involve communications leaders at the decision-making stage, not the announcement stage: The chronic error of engaging communications professionals only after decisions have been made must be eliminated. Communications insight is most valuable and most protective when applied before decisions are finalised.

- Invest in the business literacy of communications professionals: While technical financial skills are rarely absent, organizations can support communications professionals through structured exposure to financial reporting, strategic planning processes, and governance frameworks further strengthening an already broad professional base.

- Recognise communications leadership in succession planning: When identifying future organizational leaders, communications professionals should be assessed and considered on an equal footing with those from finance, operations, or technical disciplines. Their cross-functional knowledge and stakeholder acuity are leadership assets of the highest order.

- Measure the value of communications leadership empirically: Organizations should track the relationship between communications leadership investment and organizational outcomes, employee engagement, stakeholder satisfaction, crisis recovery speed, and long-term brand equity building an internal evidence base that demonstrates the return on communications leadership.

### **Conclusion: The Room Has Always Needed Them**

The argument of this article is not that every PR or Corporate Communications professional is a natural-born organizational leader, that claim would apply to no profession. The argument is that the competencies, perspectives, and professional

experiences that communications practitioners develop through the practice of their craft constitute an exceptional foundation for organizational leadership, one that is systematically undervalued and strategically underutilized.

Organizations that exclude communications professionals from leadership tables do not do so because they have weighed the evidence and concluded that these professionals lack the capability to lead.

They do so because of an inherited bias, a cultural assumption that has outlived any validity it may once have possessed.

In a world where stakeholder trust, reputational resilience, and authentic engagement are increasingly the primary determinants of organizational success, that bias is not merely unfair, it is organizationally self-defeating.

Communications professionals see the whole organization. They understand every stakeholder. They manage complexity under pressure.

They protect the organization's most intangible but most valuable assets. They have been doing the work of leadership without the title for decades.

It is time to stop treating the professionals who best understand the world outside the organization as supporting characters within it. It is time to give them the seat, the authority, and the recognition they have long deserved and that their organizations urgently need.

The room has always needed them. The evidence simply requires that we finally open the door.

***\*Lot Ndamanomhata is from Ekoka. This article reflects his views and writes entirely in his personal capacity.***



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## Govt intervenes as ‘Order With Me’ businesses cry foul over customs charges

Prime Minister Elijah Ngurare says government is looking at creating a more favourable business environment for “Order With Me” entrepreneurs as complaints grow over high and unpredictable customs charges on imported goods.

Ngurare convened a surprise meeting with Finance Minister Ericah Shafudah and Namibia Revenue Agency Commissioner Sam Shivute to discuss possible solutions

for small businesses involved in importing goods, mainly from China.

“Order With Me” operators are small entrepreneurs who assist customers in buying products from abroad for resale or delivery in Namibia.

The meeting follows growing frustration among importers who say customs duties, VAT and courier clearance charges are making their businesses unsustainable.

Small business operators claim customs

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charges are in some cases almost equal to, or even higher than, the value of the imported products themselves.

Importers say the unpredictability of the charges is making it difficult to operate profitably, as customers are often confronted with final costs far above expectations.

Some operators also allege that customs valuations placed on goods are significantly higher than the actual purchase prices paid by buyers.

Ngurare said government intends to engage directly with affected entrepreneurs in Windhoek, while plans are also underway to consult operators in other parts of the country.

The issue has become increasingly significant as

more Namibians turn to informal import businesses and online trading as a source of income amid economic pressure and unemployment.

NAMRA has previously defended the customs charges, saying the rates are determined under regional trade agreements and are not set by Namibia alone.

The revenue body noted that clothing imports from countries such as China attract customs duties of 45% plus import VAT of 16.5%, bringing the total tax burden to 61.5%.

According to NAMRA, Namibia cannot independently reduce these charges because tariff structures are determined by the Southern African Customs Union.

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## Namibia launches luxury tourism expo to target high-end global travellers

Namibia has launched a new luxury tourism expo aimed at positioning the country as one of Africa's leading high-end and sustainable travel destinations.

The Namibia Tourism Board (NTB), in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, unveiled the Namibia Luxury Travel Market (NLTM) during the 2026 Africa's Travel Indaba held in Durban, South Africa.

The inaugural Namibia Luxury Travel Market is scheduled to take place in Namibia in December and is expected to bring together international buyers, luxury travel designers, tourism investors and tourism industry stakeholders.

Environment, Forestry and Tourism Minister Indileni Daniel said tourism remains a key pillar of Namibia's economy, with government committed to building a sustainable and globally competitive tourism sector aligned with Vision 2030 and the Sixth National Development Plan

(NDP6).

NTB Chief Executive Officer Chicalu Sebulon said the platform is expected to showcase Namibia's luxury tourism experiences while helping attract targeted tourism investment into the country.

The launch drew tourism industry leaders, international buyers, media representatives and strategic partners attending Africa's Travel Indaba 2026, one of the continent's largest tourism trade exhibitions.

Namibia participated in the exhibition alongside 22 tourism operators and five micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), showcasing luxury lodges, conservation-focused tourism, cultural heritage experiences, adventure tourism and the country's landscapes.

The NTB said the event forms part of broader efforts to strengthen Destination Namibia's visibility in key international tourism markets ahead of the inaugural luxury travel expo later this year.

# The Cost of Standing Still: Neutral Regulation Derails Development

By Tio Nakasole

The neutral position is typically not where everyone wants to be. Even under the CAF League ecosystem, national teams that hover in the middle rarely emerge as continental champions or World Cup contenders.

The middle seat on an aeroplane, subject to incursions from either side, is not very comfortable. The middle manager is accountable in every direction, empowered in none. In the same spirit, regulatory frameworks that remain neutral risk becoming functionally ineffective, neither sufficiently enabling investment nor firmly protecting national interests.

The government is brimming with excitement about a possible investment and economic development anticipated, especially in the primary sector. In the past quarters, the growth impetus has been observed from the tertiary sector (63.35% of GDP in 2025), making the domestic economy register its longest consecutive quarter of growth since the second quarter of 2021.

Despite the acknowledged sectoral growth, the primary sector is expected to boost the aggregate growth of the economy from an estimated 3.3% in 2026 to 3.6% in 2027.

However, due to geopolitical upheaval in the Middle East, the potential of further growth in 2026 and 2027 might



**The government is brimming with excitement about a possible investment and economic development anticipated, especially in the primary sector.**

be nosedived by external shocks such as the global commodity price fluctuations, especially in the mining and agriculture sectors, due to the US-Israel-Iran war.

One of the push factors for Namibia is that it is a net importer of refined fuel products; the situation presents a dual headwind: rising global crude prices and potential volatility in refined product markets, at the same time raising the cost of living.

However, this is just the tip of the iceberg; the main elephant in the room that has been socio-economic transformation from within in the past years is the opacity to revamp, revive and reboot regulatory frameworks in the current dispensation.

## **Framework Enhancement**

For the past 36 years of a natural resources-backed economy and slow economic growth, it demonstrated that

established sectors such as mining and energy, regulation, and legal institutional structures exist but need efficiency, alignment, and responsiveness to evolving market conditions.

High inequality demands equal participation; green energy development needs to support communities while preserving the flora and fauna; high unemployment needs opportunities to be unlocked; starvation and poverty need assurance of food security; the export of raw materials needs value addition and value creation to be done on critical resources; and business-minded people need access to capital and SME development.

Additionally, some of the red-flagged

indicators, such as tax rates, remain high relative to those of other Southern African markets. Tax rates remain high relative to those of other Southern African markets. Combined with the long hours required for the payment of taxes, these rates act as a deterrent to FDI flows into the country.

### Regulatory Fragmentation

Emerging industries, such as GH2 for example, are clear elements of a fragmented framework, as one-piece falls under the environment, another under energy, another elsewhere, and so on. It's not all pulled together in one focused document that deals directly with hydrogen. Additionally, regulatory architecture is still catching up with the pace of investment interest and technological change.

Moreover, some of the intended regulatory vehicles, such as the Namibia Investment Promotion and Facilitation Bill, National Equitable Economic Empowerment Bill, Public Finance Management Bill, Public Procurement Amendment Bill, Public Enterprise Governance Amendment Bill, Access to Information Bill, Regional and Constituency Development Fund Bill, Green Hydrogen Bill and Synthetic Fuel Act, are still on the menu. Not all investors will commit capital earliest over a 10- or 20-year horizon while navigating uncertainty. And that derails both developments and growth.

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It is the government's prerogative to ensure the regulatory frameworks are active and are organically driven as opposed to those that are extractive based in nature, in tandem ensure that the investor's confidence is preserved in the long run.

**Why it Matters**

Regulatory frameworks are the primacy upon which stable, transparent, and sustainable economic systems are built. An economy that is built on a weak foundation is more susceptible to collapse like a house of cards every time it is about to reach its transformational peak.

Our policies' plans should not only be designed for the sake of selling an ideology but also to transform communities.

Regulatory frameworks should not only be viewed as gatekeepers of approval and compliance; they are the architecture within which investment confidence

is constructed and sustained. When properly calibrated, they move beyond passive oversight and become active enablers of economic participation.

Therefore, an economic target for any nation is futile if it is focusing solely on a percentage change.

One doesn't improve the economic growth of the country by looking at GDP alone but by focusing on its key drivers such as regulatory frameworks that govern the underlying sectoral economic variables which collectively constitute GDP.

*\*Tio Nakasole, Analyst at Monasa Advisory and Associates. His insights draw from his experience in economic and policy analysis. The views expressed do not represent those of his employer. -theoerastus@gmail.com*

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## Govt names new Land Reform Advisory Commission to drive commercial land redistribution

**G**overnment has appointed a new Land Reform Advisory Commission to steer Namibia's commercial land reform programme as authorities intensify efforts to address land inequality and strengthen agricultural productivity.

Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform Ruthy Masake announced the appointments during the official farewell of outgoing commissioners and induction of incoming members.

The newly appointed commissioners are Petrina Mpahleni, Alexandria Angala, Thomas Uuyuni, Adolf Muremi, Kay-Dieter Rumpf, Manfred Rukoro and Nguvitjita Kapere, while Petrus Canisius Nangolo, Charles Uugwanga, Frans Kamati and Paulus Hausiku were reappointed to the commission.

Alfred Sikopo will serve as Acting Chairperson, while Nangolo retains the position of Deputy Chairperson.

The commissioners' term will run from 1 May 2026 to 31 April 2029.

"Broadly speaking, the primary role of the Land Reform Advisory Commission

is to advise the Minister responsible for land reform on matters relating to the acquisition, allocation and administration of commercial agricultural land for land reform purposes," Masake said.

She said land reform remains one of government's key national priorities under the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act of 1995 and is aligned with the Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6).

According to Masake, the programme is aimed at correcting historical land imbalances while ensuring productive land use to support rural livelihoods, employment creation and economic growth.

She urged the incoming commissioners to execute their responsibilities with commitment and a strong sense of national duty as government seeks to accelerate land reform efforts.

The appointments were made as part of a three-day induction programme aimed at equipping the commissioners with policy and operational knowledge required to carry out their mandate.

# Year in Review **5** **202** Outlook **6**



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