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**Republic of Namibia**

**Deputy Minister, Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service**

**Hon. Dr. Emma Kantema,MP**

**At**

**FIH INDOOR HOCKEY WORLD CUP 2025-TEAM SEND OFF**

**On**

**06 January 2025**

**Windhoek**

Director of ceremonies,

Mr. Erastus Haitengela, Executive Director of the Ministry of Sport Youth and National Service,

Mr. Irvine Ndjavera, Deputy Director of Sport in the Ministry

Mr. Freddy Mwiya, Chief Administrator at the Namibia Sports Commission

Esteemed members of the hockey community, players, coaches, supporters, and personnel of the media.

Good morning, today, we gather to honour our senior men's and women's indoor hockey teams as they prepare to represent Namibia at the FIH Indoor Hockey World Cup in Poreč, Croatia, from February 3rd to 9th, 2025. This event marks a significant milestone for Namibian hockey, with our women's team making their fourth appearance and our men's team their third.

Ladies and gentlemen, our men's team secured their spot as African champions this past May in Swakopmund, a moment of immense pride for our nation. Meanwhile, our women's team has shown remarkable resilience, finishing as runners-up after dominating the African stage in recent tournaments. Currently, our men are ranked 14th and our women 12th in the world, reflecting years of dedication and investment from the government, corporate Namibia, and Hockey Namibia. Both teams have demonstrated exceptional readiness for the World Cup. The

women recently defended their Nkosi Cup title in Cape Town, while the men showcased their talent despite a narrow loss in the final against South Africa.

Ladies and gentlemen, as part of our Ministry's mandate to support the growth of sports in Namibia, I am proud to inform the nation that the government has allocated N\$ 4,998,000.00 specifically to support our hockey teams for this World Cup. This is noteworthy seeing that the budgetary allocation for the National Hockey Union for March 2024 to March 2025 was N\$ 1,000,000.00. In total the government has supported the Namibian Hockey Union with N\$ 5,998,000.00 this financial year, a commitment that deserves a round of applause!

Director of ceremonies, as we look toward Croatia, we aim not only to improve on previous performances but also to reach the quarterfinals and beyond. The government remains committed to supporting our teams with necessary resources because sport fosters unity and national pride. As the legendary hockey player Wayne Gretzky once said, "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." So, take your shot, and let your passion for the game shine!

To our players: carry your Namibian spirit proudly and represent us with bravery and determination. You are ambassadors of our nation, inspiring young Namibians to dream big. Know that we rally behind you as a nation; your victories are our victories, and together, we stand as one.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the newly elected NHU Executive Committee and its first female president on this historic achievement. Your leadership will be vital in promoting hockey at all levels across Namibia. I also urge corporate Namibia to support initiatives like upgrading the Doc Jubber Hockey Fields to ensure the continued success of hockey in our country.

Thank you to all stakeholders and sponsors for your contributions. The Ministry is dedicated to you—our athletes and federations—and we encourage open communication to address any challenges you face.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to everyone here today. Let us uphold sportsmanship and excellence as we embark on this journey. To our teams: go forth and make Namibia proud! My Namibia, My Country, My Pride! Thank you, and happy landings.