



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

THE

HONOURABLE AGNES BASILLA TJONGARERO

2022 NEDBANK CYCLE CHALLENGE LAUNCH

01 FEBRUARY 2022

Nedbank Namibia Managing Director, Martha Murorua;
President of the Namibian Cycling Federation, Axel Theissen
Fellow sponsors of the Nedbank Cycle Challenge;
All supporters and stakeholders of our cycling fraternity;
Members of the Media;
Esteemed invited guests
Masters of Ceremonies;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning,

It is an exciting time for the sporting fraternity, and it has proven that it isn't just a hobby, but rather a sector that feeds many families and that brings people closer together. With the past two years proving to be challenging in terms of the non-hosting of sports events due to the prevailing COVID – 19 pandemic. It is pleasing to see that sports events have picked up from being dormant to a level of actuality even if it isn't a hundred percent back. And I can't thank the general public and organizers for adhering to the regulations at all times.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Cycling is in actual fact the best sports discipline during this challenging times with COVID – 19 given the fact that it requires almost minimal to non-physical contact with each other. As we make significant strides in bringing sport back, allow me to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Nedbank Namibia for ensuring that we start the year on a high note or should I say with a bang—that being, the

Nedbank Windhoek Pedal Power Series and now with the Nedbank Cycle Challenge.

I have taken note of the clear personal goals set by our cyclists, who will come into the reckoning for national colours, so early in the year. Xavier Papo, who has represented our country before, has won the first two really competitive races this year, and with the “Nedbank Festival of Cycling entering its peak time” over the next two weeks, our Ministry remains excited about how well the sport is being organized.

Ladies and gentlemen,

With the Commonwealth Games looming on the horizon, the year promises to be an exciting sporting year. Nedbank Namibia’s cycling races are essential for our athletes’ in preparation for the games.

These cycling events are regarded as one of Namibia's biggest cycling events in the country, as it brings together hundreds of cyclists and fans to create a spectacular atmosphere.

The inclusivity this events portray are commendable and I thank you all for good sportsmanship displayed at all times. To all participants whether you are taking part in the 20km or 100km race go out there and give it your all. I always say if you fail the first time don’t give up until you’ve gotten to the level that you’ve been dreaming off.

Ladies and gentlemen,

According to stats, using bicycles contributes to cleaner air and less congestion on the roads, while also making education, health care, and other social services more

accessible to the most vulnerable populations. However with the current unseen enemy that we are fighting, the usage of bicycles are a safer option than public transport.

The current spike in COVID – 19 cases actually demands that we consider the usage of bicycles in order to comply with the stipulated regulations of social distancing and it would be a great governmental initiative if additional bike lanes can be open in Namibia. We have seen the City of Windhoek commence with the construction of new bicycle lanes too. I am reliably informed that no future roads in Windhoek will be constructed without bicycle lanes.

We welcome the cycling initiative and hope that it encourages more people to take up bicycles as a mode of transport. Perhaps more bicycle lanes could act as training grounds for many people to participate in the country's biggest cycling race, the Nedbank Cycle Challenge.

Research on the usage of bicycles in the United Nations shows that there are an estimated 1 billion bicycles in the world – about as many as passenger cars. Their use spans the generations, from toddlers to older people, and once you learn how to ride, you never forget.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I am concluding, allow me to once again extend my heartfelt gratitude to Nedbank Namibia for their continuous commitment to this race. Not only the monetary investment but the time and resources in this challenge since 1986 is truly remarkable. These are peculiar times, not just because of COVID-19 but also because of the current economic conditions we are living in.

We are all well aware of the pressure on operating costs, and budgetary constraints everywhere thus Government alone will not be able to sustain the sport fraternity thus corporates like Nedbank are highly appreciated and shouldn't be taken for granted.

As the Ministry responsible for Sport development, we would like to say thank you to Nedbank Namibia once again for committing in helping the nation through the Nedbank Cycle Challenge.

Cyclists—Set your feet on the pedals and emerge victorious!

I thank you.