



## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**BY**

**HON AGNES TJONGARERO**

**MINISTER OF SPORT, YOUTH & NATIONAL  
SERVICE,**

**DURING THE 15<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK IN  
LUDERITZ**

**27 April 2022**

**Luderitz**

Hon. Aletta Fredericks – Governor of the Mighty ||Kharas Region  
Ms. Sheila Roseau – UNFPA Country Representative Office  
Hon. Anna-Marie Hartzenberg – Councilor of Luderitz  
Ms. Sharonice Busch – Executive Chairperson of the NYC  
Board members of the NYC present  
Mrs. Calista Schwartz-Gowases – Director of the National Youth Council  
Mr. Fluksman Samuelh – CEO of the Luderitz Waterfront Development  
Company  
Ambassador of the Youth Week – Mr. N. Haikali  
Representatives of the, DBN, NFCPT and AgriBank  
Youth Leaders from Various Organisations and NYC Affiliates  
Staff of the National Youth Council  
Staff members of the line Ministry  
Members of the Media

Ladies & Gentlemen

Good morning,

It is indeed an honour to be here in Luderitz with you this morning as you under take this years' 15<sup>th</sup> National Youth Week. During each year's festivities, the National Youth Council conceptualizes a theme in line with Namibia's socio-economic priorities and youth policy framework. This year, the National Youth Week and Day will be observed under the theme, "Promotion of Youth Agri-preneurship: An Avenue for Self-Employment and work Readiness."

The observance of the Youth day is ever since the adoption of Resolution 54/120 of the United Nations General Assembly, and recommended by the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth of August 1998, therefor 12th of August of every year has been observed as the International Youth Day.

The International Youth Day is a celebration of our youth across the globe, and more importantly, a day on which socioeconomic and legal issues that young people face across the globe are reflected on, and addressed. It is a day where we sit down and ask, “Where young people today, where do we want them to go, and how do we get them there?”

### **Ladies and gentlemen,**

Of course, while the International Youth Day is globally commemorated in August of every year, several countries have dedicated different days on which they observe their national youth days and youth weeks. Through the National Youth Council Act of 2009, Namibia has elected her National Youth Day to be on the 27th April of each year, and the National Youth Week during the last week of each year’s April.

As a deep reflection, the theme for this year’s National Youth Day and Week seems like an extension and a breathing continuation of the Equipment Aid Grant Scheme that the National Youth Council coordinated between July and October 2020, where 112 young entrepreneurs from across the country received grants to the tune of **THREE MILLION NAMIBIAN DOLLARS 3,000,000 Namibia Dollars** for the purpose of equipment procurement. These grants were awarded to youth entrepreneurs in the sectors of manufacturing, food processing, IT services, automotive services, small-scale stone processing, media and, most notably, agriculture.

By prioritizing high-potential sectors and utilizing standardized monitoring and evaluation strategies, the Equipment Aid Grant Scheme will assist youth enterprises in expanding their business operations and creating employment, especially during this post-COVID recovery period. It is a creative intervention that takes into account the various challenges that young people may face when acquiring capital and scaling up. Ensuring that Namibian youth are self-reliant and well-equipped to own their futures, empower themselves economically and take charge in solving the socioeconomic problems that they face

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

As the National Youth Council's line ministry and partner, the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service is proud to, once again, support this year's National Youth Week and Day festivities, as we have done every year. For us, it is an opportunity to engage, discover, intervene and support; listen, understand our youth.

We welcome the theme of this year's National Youth Week and Day, because it is responsive to the present needs of young people in our country, and is instructive of how we can holistically empower each other through agriculture, and with the skills of entrepreneurship, self-reliance and resilience.

Seeing things through young people's eyes the multimillion dollar question remains how do we build back better? How do we ensure that the Namibian House remains for each one of us, and that every young person has a fair chance at prosperity and economic inclusion? How do we rise above the present youth unemployment crisis, and what instruments in our current policy framework can we use to empower ourselves? What can we learn from the past two years that we have endured together? How can we make this year, and the years beyond that, our years of re-imaging?

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The Namibia Development Plan 5, the Third National Youth Policy and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals have some guidelines on where we can start.

The Third National Youth Policy recognizes that while unemployment is a rising global phenomenon, the uneven level of youth unemployment in Namibia and, generally, the economic position of young people in this country, are symptoms of broader economic growth and educational challenges. To address the crises, the Policy spells out **four essential**

**pillars that must be considered; (1) youth education and skills development, (2) youth health and well-being, (3) youth employment and economic empowerment and (4) youth political and civic participation.**

The NDP5 supports the Third National Youth Policy, because it specifically recognizes the increase of productivity in agriculture.

In other words, agriculture as a commercial activity has the potential to significantly empower Namibians, if we can re-organize smallholder farmers in a manner that increases production, productivity, food security and income, subsequently enabling the creation of opportunities for value addition and further development of the agro-business.

This call by the NDP5 is in line with Goal 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which seeks to double agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular, women, indigenous people, family farmers, pastors and fishers, through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment by 2030.

These policy and guiding instruments all say one thing: agriculture has vast potential to create employment and economic opportunity, to ensure food security and self-sustenance. Therefore, we must capacitate our young people with the necessary skills, networks and capital to successfully venture into agri-business. And they are saying that we must do it now.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service is exceptionally proud of the National Youth Council for heeding this call once more, and for championing a skills-based, knowledge-based economy that prioritizes

Agri-preneurship and agro-business. We recognize that young people are on the frontlines of the struggle to build a better future for all.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the dire need for these kind of transformational change they seek – and young people must be full partners to that effort. This year's International Youth Day highlights solutions developed by young innovators to address challenges to our food systems, tackling inequities in food security, biodiversity loss, threats to our environment and much more.

We see that same drive, creativity, and commitment in many other areas – from gender equality to education and skills development. But young people cannot do it on their own. They need allies to make sure they are engaged, included and understood. Therefore, I call on all green stakeholders to hold hands and take this challenge head on with them.

With this few remarks I hereby official open the International Youth Day

I thank you.