



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**Ministry of Urban and Rural Development**

**REMARKS**

**BY**

**HONOURABLE ERASTUS UTONI (MP), MINISTER OF**

**URBAN & RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL  
INFORMAL SETTLEMENT UPGRADING PROJECT**

**13 DECEMBER 2024**

**SWAKOPMUND**

Thank you Director of Ceremonies,

- Honourable Neville Andre Itope, Governor of Erongo Region;
- Honourable Benitha Imbamba, Chairperson of Erongo Regional Council;
- Your Worship the Mayor of Swakopmund, Councillor Blasius Goraseb;
- Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councillors;
- Chief Regional Officer of Erongo Regional Council, Mr. Mpezeni Ntelamo;
- The Chief Executive Officer of NHE, Mr. Gisbertus Mukulu and your team;
- The Chief Executive Officer of the Municipality of Swakopmund, Mr. Alfeus Benjamin and all Council employees;
- Pastor Samuel Franz and other Traditional, Spiritual and Community Leaders;
- Senior Government Officials;
- Representatives from Banking Institutions;
- Distinguished Invited Guests;
- Members of the Media,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be with you this morning to launch the much-anticipated National Informal Settlement Upgrading Project. The Informal Settlement Upgrading Project is a brainchild of the Government through the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development which was piloted in 2020 in Windhoek.

At inception, I tasked NHE, the City of Windhoek the Khomas Regional Council to join hands with the line Ministry and devise measures to address the mushrooming of informal structures in Windhoek's informal settlement areas, a collaboration that yielded immediate results following the delivery of more than 750 housing units. The continued success of the pilot project paved the way for considerations to roll out the project on a national scale seeing that the housing challenge is on that experienced in all our urban areas.

### **Director of Ceremony**

I am therefore pleased that, through collaborative efforts, we are witnessing the commencement of the Informal Settlement Upgrading Project on a national scale. NHE has been knocking on our door to seek Government's blessing to engage various local authorities regarding this life-changing project. Today's launch is testament that the scarcity of affordable and decent housing can be addressed if we all work together for a common cause.

I am reliably informed that the Swakopmund Municipality has identified and availed 803 plots for this project with phase earmarked to develop 233 houses.

This is certainly a timely intervention which comes at a time when most of our residents in areas such as DRC are yearning for decent houses. I therefore wish to comment both the NHE and the Municipality of Swakopmund for having prioritised this project to an extent that we are ready to start with construction. Equally, let me caution against situations where projects are brought to a standstill immediately after being launched. I am expecting a similar approach of dedication and hard work that you have dispensed in Windhoek to be replicated here so that our people can be housed as a matter of urgency.

**Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Invited Guests;**

Our Government through the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development will continue to invest in housing interventions with a realisation through deliberate and targeted interventions such as the National Housing Policy, the Harambee Prosperity Plan, National Development Goals (NDPs) and the Vision 2030. The National Housing Policy, in particular, launched in July this year, is aligned to accelerate housing development to improve the living conditions for urban and rural residents, and to increase access to housing.

To this end, Government has availed resources to the tune of N\$700 million for the 2024/2025 Financial Year to guarantee the smooth implementation of objectives outlined in the National Housing Policy. A huge chunk of this amount has since been geared towards the social progression pillar of the Harambee Prosperity Plan to aid incremental land servicing and the upgrading of informal settlements.

Housing remains a cornerstone of economic emancipation and therefore, these resources must be utilised efficiently and effectively to ensure that more and more Namibians benefit and that the economic progression of such individuals is activated in a positive manner. I am convinced that the National Informal Settlement Upgrading Project will fuel a significant flow in Government's unyielding passion to address and reduce the national housing backlog in the country and in turn create and propel tangible opportunities for sustainable economic growth and socio-economic empowerment.

**In conclusion,** I wish to call on all local authorities in the country to join hands with NHE and implement this project in their respective towns. The concept has proven to be a success in Windhoek and therefore the same modality must be used and implemented elsewhere.

Allow therefore,

**On that note Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is now my distinct pleasure and honour to officially launch the National Informal Settlement Upgrading Project here in Swakopmund's DRC settlement and trust that many lives will be changed through the implementation of this noble initiative.

As we all are looking forward to the festive season, let me wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2025.

I thank you.