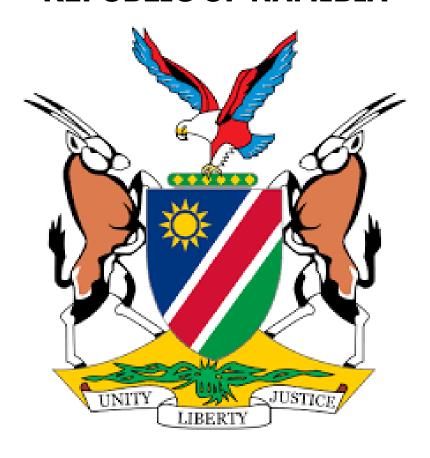# REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY

DR. NANGOLO MBUMBA, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, ON THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 6TH NATIONAL ICT SUMMIT 2019

OCTOBER 8, 2019

SAFARI COURT, WINDHOEK

Director of Ceremonies,

Hon. Stanley Simataa, Minister of Information and Communication Technology;

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers;

Members of Parliament

Honourable Laura McLeod Katjirua, Governor of the Khomas Region;

Hon. Muesee Kazapua, the Mayor of the City of Windhoek;

Regional and Local Authority Councillors;

High-level Government Dignitaries and Officials present;

Your Excellencies, High Commissioners and Ambassadors;

Representatives for Regional, Continental, International Organizations and our Implementing Agencies;

Captains of the ICT Industries;

Media Representatives;

Exhibitors;

Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good morning to everyone.

It gives me a great pleasure to address you at this 6th National ICT Summit where hundreds of Information Communication

Technology (ICT) experts and institutions have converged to discuss the very pertinent topics related to ICT under the theme **"Accelerating digital transformation".**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The first industrial revolution was aimed at mechanising production. The second industrial revolution was to generate electric power to create mass production. The third industrial revolution used electronics and information technology to automate production. Now, the fourth industrial revolution building on the third industrial revolution characterised by the fusion of technologies visa vis the convergence of the physical, digital and biological spheres.

According to David Rogers in his book titled **"The digital transformation playbook",** digital transformation refers to enabling, improving and transforming business operations by levering digital technologies. By leveraging on information, communication technology and innovations to enhance the rendering of government services to its citizens. Government should leverage on the innovation of the information communication technology to enhance its services to citizens thereby ensuring efficiency, accessibility and transparency. No citizen or business should be subjected to undue delays due to lack or loss of information.

The importance of any Infrastructure in any economy can't be overemphasized. ICT infrastructure acts as an important catalyst for accelerated and sustained economic growth and the alleviation of poverty in any country.

A few years ago, overcoming latency and expensive Internet bandwidth over satellite was a major connectivity problem in view of becoming part of the Information and knowledge Society. As recently indicated by the Gallup survey and I quote **"Internet access is clearly a function of economic development; as recent trends demonstrate, demand for electronics and online services grows as the living standards rise along with disposable income levels"**. Moreover, internet connectivity is closely associated with economic output measured as gross regional product per capita, with a correlation of .89. It is also closely correlated with total factor productivity (.87), the UN Human Development Index (.84), and the Global Competitiveness Index (.84) being various measures of the level and extent of economic development.

Namibia therefore cannot afford to be left behind. It is against this background that Namibia invested in the WACS (West Africa Cable System) submarine cable being an ultra-high capacity Fiber-optic submarine cable system which links Southern Africa, the rest of Africa and Europe.

The Swakopmund Submarine Landing Station, gives access to affordable Internet through the submarine cable landing station, enabling fast, reliable and efficient communication overcoming latency and high costs associated with satellite

connectivity. This landing station is the culmination and realisation of a dream, a development that reflects our ability to find solutions and overcome common challenges. Access to the International Internet backbone via the submarine cable landing station has started to change the way as Africans work, communicate and connect with others while enabling our youth to further harness the power of the internet with all its endless possibilities.

Ladies and gentlemen

The notion of E-Governance, which is the application of information communication technology for delivering government services, exchange of information, communication transactions, integration of various stand-alone systems and services between government to citizens, government to businesses, government to government and government to employees as well as administrative processes and interaction within the entire government framework, has been embraced in our country. Although this needs to be accelerated, the provision of government services to our citizen has been made efficient, virtual and transparent. With timely provision of services to the citizens particularly civil documentation and other government activities e.g. e-Birth certificate, e-ID, e-Passport, marriage certificates and death certificates, we have been able to inculcate and entrench a new culture of efficiency, transparency and accountability.

In anticipation of the promulgation of the Access to Information Act in 2016, which aims to improving access to information, government will continue to work towards the full implementation of the E-governance policy, as outlined in the Harambee Prosperity Plan under the pillar of ICT Infrastructure development.

Our overall objective is to remove impediments for businesses to provide immediate information and to enable digital communication via E- business platforms. This will certainly improve our competitiveness locally and globally and improve the ease of doing business in Namibia. Moreover, this will foster an investment friendly environment for both local and international investors.

As we position our country to fully participate in the global technological arena, we must ensure that appropriate measures are taken to guarantee the security and integrity of our digital systems. This will be achieved by fostering collaborative efforts between public and private sector institutions and industry as well as academic institutions. Together we must devise innovative ways to enhance and sustain the security of our networks and systems.This will ensure that the integrity, confidentiality, and availability of information is not compromised.

The competitiveness of our nation will only be sustained if we actively harness the full potential of our youth. Our youth are the catalysts for our nation's digital transformation efforts.

Africa as well as other continents, continue to experience a bulging young population. Given this reality, it is imperative that concerted efforts be made to unleash the innovative potential of our youth. Youth empowerment initiatives in the ICT sector should therefore to fully optimize the benefits of the 4th Industrial revolution. I therefore implore all relevant institutions in the public and private sectors to act in unison and in so doing be the catalysts for innovations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, I trust the ICT Summit will continue to be a platform for effective networking and also as a conduit to create effective synergies in the ICT sector.

I sincerely trust that this Summit will enhance our country's multi sectoral agenda in harnessing the immense benefits of the 4th Industrial rrevolutio.

With these few words, allow me now to officially declare this Summit open and I wish you successful deliberations.

Thank you for your attention