

TARGETED REVIEW ON  
**YOUTH**  
UNEMPLOYMENT IN  
**NAMIBIA**



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The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) had 38 participating countries as of November 2019. These are:

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**The African Peer Review Mechanism Panel of Eminent Persons (APRM Panel)** is pleased to present the first Targeted Review Report on the Republic of Namibia, focusing on Youth unemployment. This report is the outcome of active collaboration with various stakeholders and institutions of Namibia.

The APRM Panel is sincerely grateful to **His Excellency Dr. HAGE G. GEINGOB, President of the Republic of Namibia**, for his unwavering support for the APRM process since Namibia's accession in January 2017.

We also take the opportunity to thank the **Ambassador Linneekela Josephat Mboti** APRM Focal Point, **Ambassador Wilfred Emvula** Chairperson of the APRM National Governing Council (NGC), members of the APRM National Governing Council and **Mr. Felix Amporo**.

The APRM Panel wishes to express its gratitude to all the stakeholders for their valuable input in this Targeted Review Report. These include senior ministry officials, representatives of the National Assembly, members of civil society organizations and the private sector, women's associations, youth groups, international organisations and the media.

The Panel also acknowledges the work of the Targeted Review Team led by **Ambassador Ombeni Sefue**.

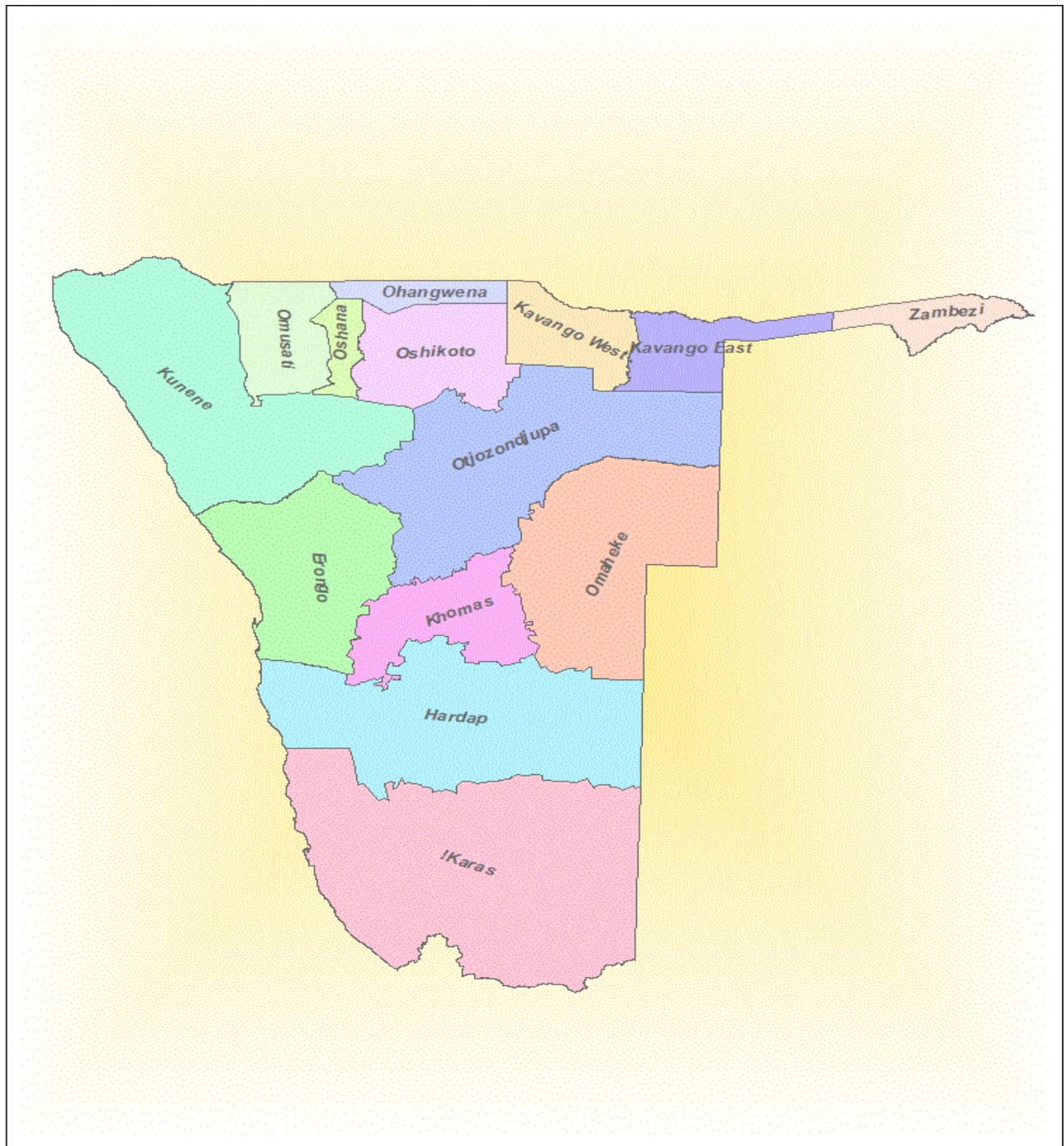
Our thanks also go to **Professor Trywell Kalusopa** and **Ms. Julinda Makili**, our international and national consultants.

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**THE APRM PANEL OF EMINENT PERSONS**

# POLITICAL/ADMINISTRATIVE MAP OF NAMIBIA



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## Republic of Namibia



Geographic Coordinate System: WGS 1984  
Datum: WGS 1984



## **BRIEF HISTORY**

- Namibia gained independence on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1990.
- Prior to independence, apartheid South Africa occupied the former German colony known as South-West Africa during World War I and administered it as a mandate until after World War II, when it annexed the territory.
- In the year 1966 until the year 1998, the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) guerrilla group launched a war of independence for the area that became Namibia, but it was not until 1988 that South Africa agreed to end its administration in accordance with a UN peace plan for the entire region.
- Namibia has been governed by SWAPO since the country won independence.
- The current **President His Excellency Dr. Hage GEINGOB** was elected in 2014 and 2019 for a second term after **His Excellency Mr. Hifikepunye POHAMB**A who stepped down after serving two terms until 2013.
- **His Excellency Mr. Sam Nujoma** served three terms as the first President of Namibia, from the year 1990 to 2005. **His Excellency Mr. Nujoma** was a founding member and the first president of SWAPO in the year 1960.
- Namibia has a bicameral Parliament which consists of: National Council (42 seats); members indirectly elected 3 each by the 14 regional councils to serve 5-year terms); note - the Council primarily reviews legislation passed and referred by the National Assembly which has (104 seats; 96 members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by closed list, proportional representation vote to serve 5-year terms and 8 non-voting members appointed by the President)

## NAMIBIA FACT SHEET

- Political: Namibia gained independence on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1990. Namibia has been governed by SWAPO since the country won independence; **President: H.E. Dr. Hage GEINGOB** was elected in the year 2014 and re-elected in the year 2019.
- Population: 2,413,643 (2018); Under 15 years: 881, 676 (36.5%); 15 years and above: 1,531,967 (63.5%);
- Ethnic groups: Ovambo 50%, Kavangos 9%, Herero 7%, Damara 7%, mixed European and African ancestry 6.5%, European 6%, Nama 5%, Caprivian 4%, San 3%, Baster 2%, Tswana 0.5%.
- Geography: Located in Southern Africa, total: 824,292 sq km; land: 823,290 sq km; water: 1,002 sq km; bordering countries (4): Angola 1427 km, Botswana 1544 km, South Africa 1005 km, Zambia 244 km; climate: desert; hot, dry; rainfall sparse and erratic.
- Administrative divisions: Has 14 regions: Erongo, Hardap, Karas, Kavango East, Kavango West, Khomas, Kunene, Ohangwena, Omaheke, Omusati, Oshana, Oshikoto, Otjozondjupa, Zambezi.
- Land use: agricultural land : 47.2% (2011 est.); arable land: 1% (2011 est.); crops: 0% (2011 est); pasture: 46.2% (2011 est.); forest: 8.8% (2011 est.); other: 44% (2011 est.)
- Natural Resources: diamonds, copper, uranium, gold, silver, lead, tin, lithium, cadmium, tungsten, zinc, salt, hydropower, fish, note, suspected deposits of oil, coal, and iron ore.
- Capital: Windhoek
- Currency: Namibian Dollar
- GDP (Purchasing Power Parity): \$26.6 billion (2017 est.); GDP (Official Exchange Rate): \$13.24 billion (2017 est.); Per Capital GDP: \$11,200 (2017 est.); Local Debt to GDP Ratio: 41.3% of GDP (2017 est.)
- Economically active population: 1,090, 153 (71.2%); Employed: 725,742 (66.6%); Unemployed: 364,411 (33.3%)
- Inflation rate: 4.8% (2019)
- Exports: \$3.995 billion (2017 est.)
- Imports: \$5.384 billion (2017 est.)

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document provides a summary of the key highlights of the findings of the Targeted Review on Youth Unemployment in Namibia.

1.2 The objective of the Targeted Review is to identify key issues on “Youth Unemployment” as a way to provide Namibia with a short, independent, credible and legitimate analysis of, and solutions to youth unemployment.



## 2.0 TARGETED REVIEW PROCESS

2.1 On 28 January 2017, Namibia became the 36th African Union (AU) Member State to voluntarily accede to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

2.2 The National Governing Council, a 15 member structure headed by Ambassador Wilfried EMVULA, was inaugurated by H.E DR. Hage GEINGOB, President of the Republic of Namibia in the presence of Ambassador Lineekela MBOTI, APRM Focal Point in Namibia, Ambassador Ombeni Yohana SEFUE the APRM Lead Panel Member for Namibia, and Professor Eddy MALOKA the APRM Chief Executive Officer on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2019.

2.3 The Targeted Review Mission was undertaken from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2019, to obtain primary data input from various representatives of Government Ministries and Agencies, Parliamentary Committee, Civil Society, Youth Organizations, Trade Unions, Academia, and the Private/Business sectors

2.4 The methodology adopted was largely a qualitative approach that relied on desk review and content analysis of several documentary sources from AU, APRM Secretariat, government and research institutes relating to the subject.

### Task Force for the Targeted Review in Namibia



### **3.0 BACKGROUND OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN NAMIBIA**

3.1 The youth unemployment challenge in Namibia should be seen in the broader historical socio-economic context. The Namibian economy is dualistic and has evolved as an enclave of primarily a resource/ extraction-based economy, with agrarian features. Much of Namibia's growth has been driven by mining. Namibia has various mineral resources, including diamonds, uranium, copper, gold, lead, tin, lithium, cadmium, zinc, salt and vanadium.

3.2 Mining, a key driver of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), has had diminutive impact in terms of employment creation and currently accounts for only 1.7 percent of all those in active employment (Namibia Statistic Agency, 2018). However, it is important to underscore the fact that the mining sector remains the largest contributor to the Namibian economy with positive record contribution of 25 percent of the country's income in recent years. Indirectly, the mining industry contributes to the livelihood of 100 000 people (Bank of Namibia, 2017).

3.3 There has been some positive attempts to diversify the structure of the Namibian economy since independence in that in the early 1990s more than half of the country's GDP was generated by largely three sectors, namely: agriculture, mining and fisheries. Nonetheless, by 2014, construction and tourism began to play a key role in the national economy as well. The tourism industry, for example, directly created 44,700 jobs, equivalent to 6.5 percent of total employment in the country in 2018. Inclusive of indirect jobs, it created 100,700 jobs, which represents 14.5 percent of total employment in the country. It is forecast that by 2025 the industry is expected to create 186,000 jobs (National Planning Commission, 2018).

3.4 The Namibian economy contracted 2.6 percent in the second quarter of 2019, following an upwardly revised 2.9 percent decline in the prior period (Namibia Statistic Agency, 2019). The contraction has led to a drop in real personal income, industrial production, retail sales. The impact on unemployment has been evident. Companies have stopped hiring to save money in the face of lower demand; while some have laid off workers; making unemployment, and, in particular youth unemployment rates even higher.

3.5 The 2018 Labour Force Survey (LFS) survey results showed that the overall youth unemployment rate is 46.1 percent; an increase of 2.7 percent compared to the youth unemployment rate of 43.4 percent reported in 2016. Female youth experience a higher unemployment rate (48.5 percent) compared to their male counterparts (43.7 percent). Youth unemployment rate is higher in rural areas (49.1 percent) than in urban areas (44.0 percent).

3.6 In most of the regions of the country, except in Erongo, Oshana and Oshikoto, unemployment was generally higher for female than male youth. The youth unemployment rates were particularly highest for Kavango East (62.5 percent) and Kunene (53.0 percent) regions respectively. Other regions recorded youth unemployment as: Karas (44.7 percent), Erongo (36.8 percent), Omusati (39.7 percent), Hardap (41.9 percent) and Khomas (43.0 percent) regions.

3.7 A major concern is the increase in unemployment between 2014 and 2018. This negative trend is likely to continue in the face of government's austerity measures that have been implemented since 2010.

3.8 In Namibia, there are several factors that have been cited as contributing to youth unemployment such as: relative lack of skills development, skills mismatch, unstable labour market experience, gender discrimination, lack of experience, inappropriate or lack of career guidance in schools.



## **4.0 POLICY ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

4.1 The Targeted Review Team noted that the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) has over the years made sterling efforts to put in place a legislative, policy environment and several youth programmes so as to empower the youth and resolve youth unemployment. Currently, the strategic national vision and planning for youth employment is espoused in Vision 2030, National Development Plans 1-5 and Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP).

4.2 The GRN has implemented successive strategies and programs designed to bring about a special focus on employment generation in general and for the youth in particular, reduce poverty and income inequality. Specific mention is efforts through the Small Medium Enterprise (SME) Financing Strategy, consisting of Venture Capital Fund, Credit Guarantee Scheme and a Training and Mentorship Programme, approved by Cabinet and operationalized under the Development Bank of Namibia (DBN), which established a SME Centre in October 2018 (HPP, 2019). The Fund has been capitalized with N\$20 million contribution from DBN and N\$110 million from Central Government (HPP, 2019). Furthermore, 101 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) obtained funding to the value of N\$165 million from the DBN and collectively created 850 permanent jobs and 682 temporary employment opportunities (HPP, 2019).

4.3 There are 121 rural youth enterprises that have been identified, selected across all constituencies and registered with Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA). Nine (9) enterprises were piloted in 2016. HPP (2019) reports that 21 youth-owned rural enterprises have been established and are in the process of developing bankable Business Proposals for funding and operationalization.

4.4 The National MSME Policy was launched in December 2016 whilst the National Youth Entrepreneurship Policy, an offshoot of the MSME Policy has been drafted and is due to undergo public consultation. The Apprenticeship Pilot programme was launched to facilitate job attachments and Work Integrated-Learning. A total of 41 applications were received from interested local employers, where 21 were approved to participate in the apprenticeship pilot, with a total of approximately 300 apprentices. Agreements have been signed with all participating employers including State Owned Enterprises (SOE) and SMEs. This programme includes coaching, mentorship and incubation at Vocational Training Centres (VTC) as far as practically possible. Reports also show that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) was conducted to certify skills obtained through experience in the informal sector. Over the period 5,918 assessment applications in 28 different occupations were received, of which 2,157 candidates were assessed, with 1,190 candidates (56 percent) declared competent and duly certified; this represents a shortfall from the set target of 2,000 candidates in Year 1, marking a 60 percent attainment rate (HPP, 2019)

4.5 The Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation, has also developed

its National Employment Policy (NEP) which was launched in 2013 and outlines several strategies to promote employment and decent work.

4.6 There is the Namibia Integrated Employment Information System (NIEIS), a portal that connects the employees and employers, where job seekers can log in and find their desired job. Though it has not taken off effectively, the system is envisaged also to assist job seekers in finding jobs and employers finding qualified workers. The system is not only to collect job seeker's information but to manage information, manage the opportunities, manage training, match suitably qualified and suitably experienced people with suitable employment opportunities. (Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, and Employment Creation, 2019). There are currently over 100,000 jobseekers, mostly youth registered on the database.

4.7 The National Youth policy also makes provision for the establishment of the National Youth Council (NYC), which advises the Ministry of Youth and Sports on developmental issues and youth issues. The Council was established in 1994 and operates in five key areas such as: employment; promotion and environmental awareness; youth health and welfare; networking; youth exchange and international relations, information technology and media.

4.8 The National Youth Service (NYS) was established by the National Youth Service Act (Act No.6 of 2005), with the objectives to provide the youth with opportunities for further studies and training so as to enhance their opportunities of employment as well as enable the youth to share common experiences and to encourage notions of equality.



## **5.0 CHALLENGES IMPLEMENTING YOUTH PROGRAMME**

The report notes that despite the efforts by the Government of Namibia to address the problem of youth unemployment, constraints still exist. The following, among others, were identified during the Targeted Review field mission:

(a) Namibia's economic structure is restrictive, and growth has been slow with current socio-economic framework incapable of addressing the growing challenges of youth unemployment over time.

(b) Uncoordinated policy framework, lack of administrative co-ordination and poor financial consolidation of youth programmes – whereby there is a lack of an appropriate institutional framework to ensure all youth employment initiatives are targeted and time-bound, financed and are properly coordinated, monitored and evaluated in a comprehensive manner. Greater coordinated level of involvement of key economic ministries such as Youth and Sports; Labour; Finance; Trade and Industry and other key national stakeholders, Private Sector, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), Civil Society, in the planning and implementation process for job creation interventions is absent.

(c) Mismatch of educational system to labour market demands – whereby there is a mismatch between the existing educational, training and development programmes and the requirements of the labour. The provision of skills and vocational training in the informal economy lacks a coordinated and integrated skills development strategy.

(d) Weak Technical and Vocational Skills Development Base - Technical and Vocational Training (TVET) is undermined and overlooked with the perception that it is for those not academically good enough to guarantee a decent employment on the labour market.

(e) Underdeveloped local procurement, content and value-addition strategy- lack of implementation of the Growth Strategy, Industrial Policy and other policies and strategies that emphasise procurement from local and youth owned companies for the provision of goods and services to the government institutions and other sectors.

(f) Infantile entrepreneurial framework – slow and low entrepreneurial culture that inculcates positive attitudes towards business, as well as the knowledge necessary to start an enterprise.

(g) Absence of an enabling role of Arts, Sports and Culture - Creative Industry – absence of the role of an enabling policy and environment for the development, nurturing and growth of the creative, artistic and sporting talents of the youth as only 0.6 percent youth are employed in the sector.

(h) MSME and informal economy policies and strategies - designed to facilitate the transition of enterprises from informality to formality are not accompanied by well-resourced and coherent programme of action, which need to be monitored for progress over time.

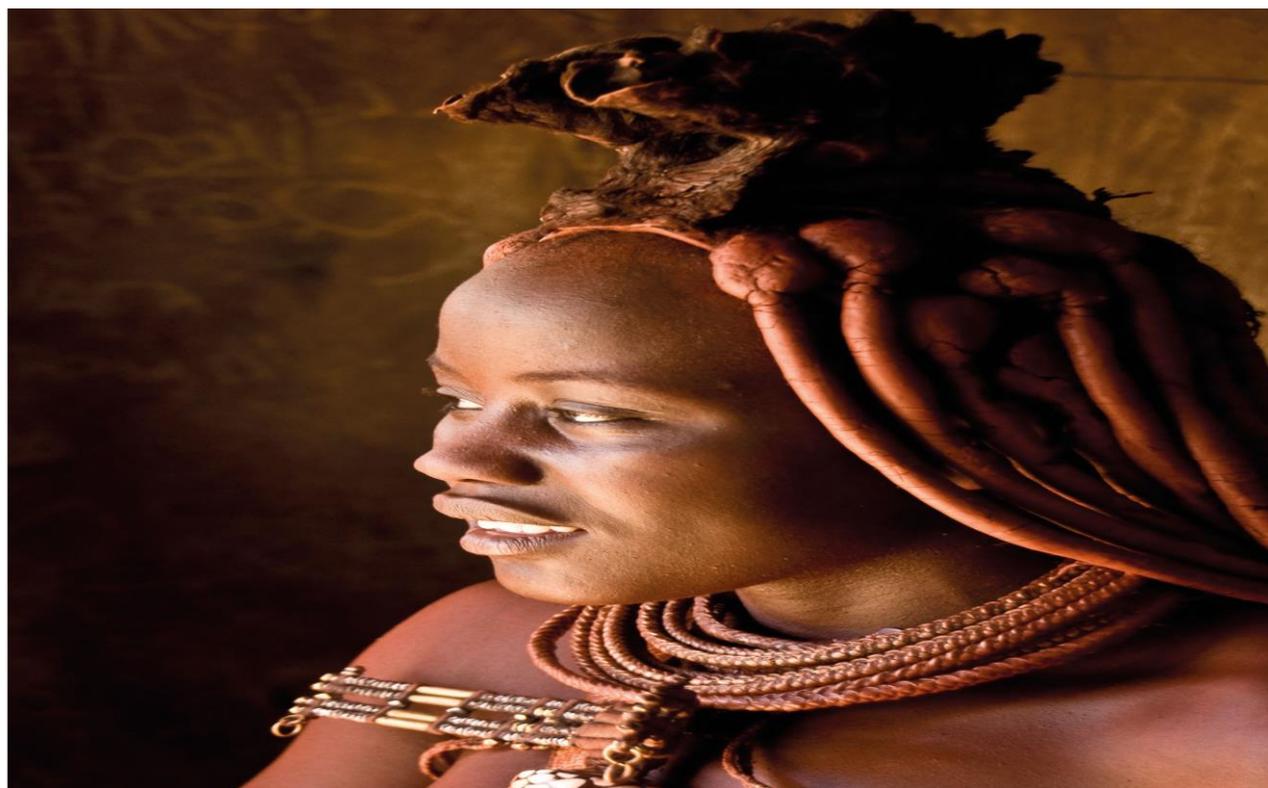
(i) Weak agro-based value chains for youth employment – whereby agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors that informally employ 87.6 percent of the population (Namibia Statistic Agency, 2018); and about 15.4 percent of the youths is highly vulnerable, underdeveloped and characterised by low productivity, low value addition, and erratic production pattern, with most of the people involved in it being underemployed.

(j) Weak Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Sector for Youth Innovation and Employment – whereby, only a total of 3,041 or 1 percent were employed in the ICT sector (Namibia Statistic Agency, 2018). Yet, there is no co-ordinated and coherent framework to grow the ICT sector so that it offers substantial transformational possibilities in terms of contributing to economic growth and youth employment creation.

(k) Underdeveloped Internship, Volunteering and Youth Service Corps - current internship programmes are not only fragmented and not well coordinated.

(l) Constrained data/information ecosystem – several programmes for the youth that have been put up are not well targeted based on empirical information of youth segmented supported by an information support system or database. And that is where there is a shortcoming with the flow of government information from the national to regional levels and vice versa.

(m) Absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms – within the context of national youth employment interventions, there are weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation at all levels.



## **6.0 SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERVENTIONS**

The following are the specific and immediate targeted interventions that the GRN can embark on:

6.1 Establishment of the Youth Programme Coordination and Implementation Unit: The Government of Namibia should establish a ‘Youth Programmes Coordination and Implementation Unit’ under the Office of the President. Such a Unit should have the appropriate convening power, political authority and gravitas under the Presidency to do the following:

- (a) consolidate the funding across ministries and government agencies;
- (b) monitoring and evaluation of all targeted programmes that will create youth employment
- (c) develop an information support system and database that will provide information on the composition and specificities of youth segments and groups in the country at national, regional, urban and rural levels. This should be based at the ‘Youth Programmes Coordination and Implementation Unit’
- (d) Communicate government information on existing youth initiatives and programmes shared onto appropriate platforms at national and regional levels in a transparent and accountable manner.

6.2 Reforming the education system through:

- (a) Reviewing the education curriculum for technical and entrepreneurship subjects to be offered throughout the education system.
- (b) Establishing specialised schools that will do talent spotting, coaching, mentoring and training in creative, artistic and sports field as a pathway for those youth that are not academically gifted.
- (c) Compelling legislation based on targeted tax incentives for private sector to collaborate on robust internship along the lines of the “Mobile Telecommunications Company” (MTC) Internship Programme’ in order to scale up mentorship for preparation of employment in the labour market.

6.3 Strengthening Technical and Vocational Training Education

- (a) The Government of Namibia should offer free Technical and Vocational Training (TVET) education and set up more technical education institutions to scale up the technical skills base for youth self-employability.
- (b) Government to provide grant support to students upon graduation from TVET colleges in form of free or subsidised tool kits, credit and any other targeted means for start-up individually or in groups as youth cooperatives.

6.4 Legislation on Procurement and local content

Government should put in place legislation on procurement and local content with provisions on the following:

- (a) 30 percent of procurement quotas reserved for youth MSMEs in government institutions and that government procurement awards should prioritise youth owned SMEs;
- (b) For the implementation of the already existing policy instruments on local content and value addition in agriculture, mining and fishing sectors that should be targeted at youth enterprises;
- (c) For partnering with local companies to provide the service to create employment for the youth.

6.5 Strengthening agro-based value chains and value addition for youth employment, the Government of Namibia should:

- (a) Review the current Government Green Scheme and small-scale farmer's programmes that have not been successfully administered and based on the findings, develop an appropriate plan to be implemented for creation of youth employment.
- (b) Legislate for the appropriation of land for small-scale farming to be approved, monitored for viable youth agricultural co-operatives schemes.
- (c) Reward youth innovators that propose ICT-based agriculture solutions with targeted funding to lure them into the agricultural sector thereby creating employment.

#### 6.6 Sovereign Wealth Fund

The Government of Namibia should legislate and establish a Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) arising from the proceeds of national extractive natural resources (such as: diamonds and uranium and fishing). A certain percentage of the fund should be channelled to the proposed 'Youth Programmes Coordination and Implementation Unit' under the Office of the President to accelerate targeted youth programmes that will support youth employment.



## 7.0 BEST PRACTICES FROM THE TARGETED REVIEW

The following are some of the best practices that other countries could learn from:

1. The Namibian Institute of Mining Technology (NIMT) was established in Arandis by Rossing Uranium in 1991 as a contribution to vocational training for the Namibian mining industry. It has subsequently broadened its scope beyond mining to general engineering, building and civil skills across Namibia and has established a Northern Campus in Tsumeb and a Southern Campus in Keetmanshoop. NIMT caters for approximately 4000 students and produces between 300 and 500 graduates per annum, with very high employment success. The Institute receives support from other mining companies like Namdeb and B2Gold and cooperates closely with the Namibian Training Authority (NTA), attaining the highest standards in Namibia. NIMT has also been recognised as a centre of excellence in Africa. Recent examples of this is that B2Gold and Paladin Energy, Canadian and Australian companies, respectively, which built the Otjikoto Gold and Langer Heinrich Uranium in Namibia, subsequently employed up to 100 Namibian artisans to build their respective gold and uranium mines in Mali and Malawi. These companies are both very complementary of the NIMT-trained artisans they sent as expats to construct these African mines, as they and others are of the NIMT graduates who operate most mines and related engineering operations in Namibia. The secret to NIMT's success is that it grew out of the needs for qualified technical skills in the mining industry and has expanded over the years through close cooperation with the mining industry. The broadening of its scope to wider engineering and building skills has been managed through attention to industry needs and in consultation with NTA. It is a true success story of private sector contribution to the public. NIMT has also been recognised as a centre of excellence in Africa.



2. The Upgrading of Informal Settlements in Namibia under facilitation of the Shack Dwellers Federation (SDFN) with the support of the Namibia Housing Action Group (NHAG) has the potential to create jobs for Youth in the short and medium term. Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) and the local authorities involved in the pilot project are also key stakeholders. As part of this initiative; youth in the informal settlements receive training in data collection, manual data analysis, mapping using Global Positioning System (GPS) and data entry. These skills result in better employment opportunities. Furthermore, involving the community skills training (prioritising youth) during service installation enable more employment opportunities, land, social and spatial development. Students interning with organisations during the information collection, land surveying, planning studios, obtain practical experiences which is relevant for meeting the needs of the poor in their future. Young professionals are exposed to working with communities, learn the values of patriotic service and selfless sacrifice. But also because of the element of work integrated learning it gives them a better chance of finding a job easier once they graduate as they can use this as on the ground experience. A basic idea that can be conveyed is to see the youth as implementing partners in the process of informal settlement upgrading. Partnering with professionals, local government, and NGOs gives the youth insights on how urban development and the institutions involved work; increasing their employability in the institutions involved (e.g. local authorities, professional services, offices, etc.). Furthermore, it could prepare a younger generation to be more acquainted on how cities work; still today, many see living in cities as problematic and mysterious. A very valuable gain of involving the youth would be to engrain in them that they can transform the city.



3. Rural Youth Shack Dwellers Emerging Agricultural Cooperative in Omaheke Region, Namibia. This is an Agricultural Cooperative for School Dropouts in Omaheke Region where School Dropouts acquired land for vegetable growing. The unique point is that this is a group of rural youth that are Grade 10 dropouts who are able to organise themselves and create employment with support from the government.