

Your Worship Cllr. Ndesihafela Larandja, Mayor of Windhoek,

Your Worship Cllr. Clemencia Haneses, Deputy Mayor of the city of Windhoek,

*Cllr Shaalukeni J Moonde, Chairperson of Khomas Regional Council,
Honorable Councilors present,*

Ms. Sophia Eises, the CEO of the Gobabis Municipality,

Strategic Executives of the CoW and staff members present,

esteemed representatives from government ministries,

esteemed private sector leaders,

agricultural experts,

youth and women's groups,

members of the media,

residents of Windhoek, and

last but certainly not least the staff of the City of Windhoek

Good Morning.

It is with pride and purpose that I welcome you all to the 8th Windhoek Mayoral Business Forum (WMBF), a forum that marks not just a gathering, but a call to targeted action to advance Urban Agriculture in the capital.

Following our AgriForum hosted on 19 March 2025, we clearly noted the intersection between **agriculture, urbanization, and water scarcity placing us at a critical crossroads**. The path we choose now will determine the future of food security for generations of residents to come.

This 8th Windhoek Mayoral Business Forum is more than a milestone; it presents a strategic opportunity for Council and the business sector to effectively engage to collectively devise solutions for current economic challenges and explore opportunities for growth and development.

Our Windhoek Economic Development Strategy (WEDS), charts a bold course for sustainable economic growth through six (6) critical pillars. Among them, agriculture and agro-processing are not only economic engines—but lifelines. In the face of rising urban populations and erratic water reserves, urban agriculture is no longer an option—it is an imperative. We as a City, with the creation of platforms like today, clearly demonstrates our serious intent about **moving urban agriculture from A to B where B is the better place.**

Statistic from the *IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis* for Namibia, covering the period from April to June 2024 reported that approximately **1.2 million people**, or **40% of the analysed population**, were facing high levels of acute food insecurity. This number has more than doubled since mid-2023 which speaks to the need for urgent action to reduce food gaps and protect livelihoods.

Behind these statistics are real lives: the unemployed, marginalized, undocumented, children, expectant mothers, and our elders. This crisis, fueled by erratic weather patterns, economic strain, and unemployment, threatens not just our rural farming community but our cities as well, our residents, and our collective resilience as a nation.

Ladies and gentlemen, within these challenges lies the seed of transformation and advancement of this primary sector. This forum is a space for us to laser-focus on the ideas suggested by industry leaders, solidify multi-stakeholder partnerships, and walk away with 3 to 5 solution-oriented action items which Council, with the support of the Mayor's Office, can work towards realizing for the socio-economic benefit of the city.

It's not enough to suggest Policy interventions. We'll hear today how we can realize changes to the legal framework and what needs to happen – the road-map to introduce the recommended changes.

What makes the 8th Windhoek Mayoral Business Forum particularly significant is its focus on soliciting high-level commitment and the mapping of implementation action items suggested by industry players. We're moving beyond conceptual discussions to address the policy and legal framework that will make urban agriculture in Windhoek a sustainable and viable option for food security.

We are honored to host a number of panelists who will share insights and visionary strategies how we filter through the 17 recommendations made in March. The round table panel discussion ahead is not designed to inform—but to ignite and deliberate where we must focus our efforts and limited resources.

This is our opportunity to shape a future where agricultural businesses and households in the capital have the option to implement change and have access to fresh, nutritious, locally-grown food, respectively. A future where urban agriculture flourishes not in spite of the city, but because of it. An eco-system that is supported by capacity building programmes developed with the end in sight, where efficacy and productivity are at the forefront and business development in the area of agro-processing is incentivized. A future where policy is driven by innovation and a need for movement.

Ladies and gentlemen, I warmly welcome you all to the 8th Windhoek Mayoral Business Forum. Let the transformation begin here this morning and let us together move Urban Agriculture from A to B where B is a Better Place.

Thank you.