

SPEECH 2

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF THE

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF WINDHOEK



**COUNCIL MEMBER NDESHIHAFELA
LARANDJA**

THEME

"Setting the Tone for Windhoek: The Path Forward"

WEDNESDAY, 12 MARCH 2025 @ 10:00,

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Council Members;

Esteemed representatives of Government;

Distinguished members of the Private Sector;

Development Partners;

Community leaders; and

Residents of our great City, Windhoek.

Good morning,

I. INTRODUCTION: THE CALL TO SERVE

Today, I stand before you with a glittering smile, with confidence and gratitude, not just as a Mayor, but as a Servant Leader, entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that our City continue moving towards a future that is bright, inclusive and transformative. This is so because a week ago, at our Council Meeting held on 5 March 2025, I announced and subsequently Council approved our Draft Windhoek Urban Structure Plan to be opened up for stakeholder consultation to be adopted very soon. This, and many other long-term planning mechanisms, will provide the desired structured way of how the development of Windhoek will be guided.

I assume this office fully, conscious of its **legal, social and economic mandate**, as outlined in the **Local Authorities Act, 1992 (Act 23 of 1992) (as amended)**, and deeply aware that this office is not only a ceremonial function, but also a strategic governance role for leading our city through stakeholder partnerships, and catalyst to drive economic transformation from a Political Office Bearer's perspective.

During September 2022, the Local Authority Council of Windhoek approved a Five (5) Year Business Strategic Plan 2022 to 2027 which set the structured path for the transformation of the City's landscape. The City of Windhoek unequivocally agreed to pursue a Vision *'To be a Sustainable and Caring City by 2027'*. We have now entered the third year of implementation and time is of the essence if we must arrive at the destination of our adopted vision.

As I ascended to the role of the Mayor on 21st of January 2025, today marks exactly fifty (50) days in office and it is a requisite of me not to just make an address to the City's resident, but to reflect upon our successes and set out my declaration of intent to *'Setting the Requisite Leadership Tone'* for the road ahead for Windhoek.

My personal views which are shaped by my serving experience as a Council Member for the past four (4) years, suffice of me to say like many other Cities across the globe, Windhoek is at a crossroads. Our City is rich in history, culture and economic potential - is faced with challenges that demand nothing less than structured evidence based and/or people-driven solutions, bold decision-making and strategic execution at every level of governance to continue our organic growth. Based on recent statistics released by the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) in 2023, Windhoek's population was **recorded at four hundred and eighty six thousand (486 000) inhabitants, representing 32 % of the national urban population and 16 % of the country's population.** Using the 2011 to 2023 Windhoek Annual Population Growth Rate of 3.39 % per annum, the city's population is estimated to reach five hundred thousand (500 000) inhabitants in 2025, making it the single most populated urban area in Namibia.

It is factual, and on record, that more than 40 % (\pm 200 000 inhabitants) of Windhoek's population live in one hundred and thirty (130) informal settlements under deplorable living conditions requiring concerted efforts from all stakeholders to turn around the situation. To ensure strategic orientation, the current Council set out to deliver twelve thousand (12 000) erven in the informal settlements during the 2022 to 2027 Strategic Plan period. The estimated cost for delivering twelve thousand (12 000) erven is \pm N\$2.7 billion. Informal settlements are growing at a rate of 6.1 % per annum, with doubling time of eleven (11) years, compared to the City's overall population doubling time of twenty one (21) years.

While the focus in the above preceding paragraph was on the informal settlements, we are reminded that, for the period 2011 to 2025, Windhoek received fifty two thousand (52 000) additional households translating to one hundred and sixty five thousand (165 000) people, all in need of shelter, and reliable municipal services. Taken at N\$500.00 per m², the City requires N\$7.8 billion for servicing of land to satisfy the growth.

Therefore, my holding of office as the Mayor will not simply be a **position of political representation**; it is an **apex function** as enshrined in section 11 of the Local Authorities Act, 1992 (Act 23 of 1992) (as amended). We are an arm of government, as guided by Article 102 and Article 111 of the Constitution of Namibia, meaning my office must ensure alignment with central **government, private sector, civil society, and community structures** into a unified framework of execution.

This is the foundation upon which we build our "**Partnering Framework**" - a model that will drive governance **through collaboration, trust-building, and measurable economic results.**

Today, we begin a **new approach** - one that acknowledges our systemic challenges, one that speaks to our City's potential, and one that outlines how, working together, we will turn Windhoek into a known model of governance excellence, investment attraction, and sustainable urban development as provided for in our policies and strategies and guiding interventions.

II. WHERE WE ARE: AN HONEST DIAGNOSIS OF OUR CHALLENGES

As a City, we have grown significantly in the leap and bound and this is evidently demonstrated in our development projects such as housing, retail, logistics and service delivery. However, we still face both visible bureaucratic **challenges** that are embedded/entrenched in our established systems, processes and procedures. It is imperative that we recognize that this may hold back our **economical potential, service delivery capacity, and governance efficiency.** We must begin this conversation with honesty and holistically. On face value I can share a perspective that I have observed the following as a critical challenge that I would want to highlight:

1. **Constraint Economic Landscape and Investment Attraction**

I have a singular believe that, Windhoek, has so much potential yet has not been generating the economic momentum necessary for an environment that will provide sustained job creation, enterprise development, or investment attraction. These, coupled with external economic turbulence of the past, such as economic recession, persistence drought situation, COVID-19 and now recurrence of the drought season in 2023/2024, coupled with limited funding resources have implications for our growth as a City.

I equally have observed that small businesses or start-ups continue to struggle to access capital; hence, with such challenges, economic growth remains constrained. Currently there are seventeen (17) permanent open markets, one (1) communal car wash facility, two (2) products focused crafts market, and periodic markets. The current trading spaces are not adequate to cater for the demand, resulting in a shortage of $\pm 3\ 000$ trading spaces. To cater for the shortfall, Council approved the Informal Market Master Plan. Once, implemented, the said Master Plan will positively transform the entrepreneurial landscape of the City. Development of additional markets will be done in a collaborative spirit through Public Private Partnership (PPP), Build-Operate Transfer (BOT), Joint Venture (JV), and other means. Therefore, those interested in collaborating with the City, are advised to be on alert and respond to the first call at appropriate time.

Safety is key to habitability and development of a City, through Integrated Crime Prevention, By-laws, and Road Safety Framework, the Windhoek Municipal Police Service (City Police) aim to increase the use of technology as one of the key methods to reducing crime and disorder in the City. The immediate target is to install two thousand (2 000) CCTV Cameras and exponentially increase the number thereafter. Through strategic partnership (own

efforts and donations) we have over two hundred (200) cameras providing 24/7 surveillance of public and business spaces. We urge good Samaritans to come forth and donate to this worthy undertaking and make our City the safest in Africa and as such, destination of choice.

Not to digress from the topic, you will agree with me that since the introduction of the Public Procurement Act, 2015 (Act 15 of 2015) (as amended) and the Public Private Partnership, Procurement and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models have become transparent yet bureaucratic, leading to inefficiencies in service delivery and infrastructure development. More needs to be done to achieve level of efficiency conducive for accelerated economic growth.

Service Delivery Constraints and Urban Development Challenges

As a Local Government tasked with stimulation of urban economies I have observed that there have been growth in areas of access to water by the wider population of Windhoek, however, the coverage of such access to sanitation infrastructure in informal areas remain a challenge, also in the areas of solid waste management, and maintenance of roads as evidenced by our fatigued road networks struggling to keep pace with rapid urbanization.

In line with the Local Authorities Act, 1992 (Act 23 of 1992) (as amended), we are mandated to manage public spaces, recreational facilities, and urban aesthetics. Most of our public spaces remain underdeveloped, thus limiting attractiveness of our City as a place to live, work and play. Through the Public Open Space Policy, the Windhoek Tourism Strategy 2021 to 2025, and other interventions we aim to increase Windhoek's attractiveness as a destination of choice. With the above, I extend an open invitation

to all stakeholders to contribute their part in making Windhoek the best city in Africa and one that will stand the test of time.

2. **Improved Community Engagement and Public Participation in Governance**

Section 88 of the Local Authorities Act, 1992 (Act 23 of 1992) (as amended) provides a guidance for engaging residents and stakeholders alike. In keeping with the legal requirements, in 2024, a total of eighteen (18) Public Meetings were held across various suburbs of the City. However, more dedicated engagements need to be facilitated to reach all stakeholders. ensure that residents, resident associations, and grassroots organizations participate in matters pertaining to the development of the city.

3. **Lack of Collaboration Partnership Between Government and the Private Sector**

As economic players who are geared towards developing each other and the City, it is true that the absence of **formalized collaboration mechanisms with businesses, development agencies, and international partners** has led to fragmented economic planning and investment misalignment. Hence, there is a need for closer ties and formalized relations with private sector.

In my view and based on my experience, this is the reality of our situation and this is where we are. But today, I would like to urge all of us that we all shift towards **where we need to be**.

III. WHERE WE NEED TO BE: THE FUNCTION OF THIS OFFICE

My Leadership will be based on championing the provisions of section 11, subsection 5 of the of the Local Authorities Act, 1992 (Act 23 of 1992) (as amended) amongst others, I will be **proactive, systematic, and transformational**. In full realization of the above, my tenure as **Mayor** I will not merely oversee Council Meetings or engage in Ceremonial duties. I intend to make my tenure and my office to drive **execution of transformational projects and become a governance hub**. I undertake amongst others to champion:

- **Investment Attraction:** Positioning Windhoek as a regional and continental economic hub and investment-friendly City.
- **Service Delivery Acceleration:** Ensuring that infrastructure projects, sanitation expansion, and urban development programs are executed with speed and efficiency.
- **Strategic Stakeholder Engagement:** Building direct, structured partnerships with **private sector players, civil society organizations, development partners, and community leadership groups**.
- **Economic Development and Job Creation:** Enabling an environment where businesses, entrepreneurs, and informal traders can thrive.
- **Urban Transformation and Smart City Integration:** Developing a sustainable, digitally integrated, and modernized Windhoek.

I will provide the platform for **systematic engagement process over the next quarter** that will include:

1. **Meet and Greets with Business and Civil Society** - Engaging structured **stakeholder dialogue platforms** to define investment opportunities, urban planning initiatives, and social development strategies. In the next few months, we will engage in Stakeholder Consultations, as I mentioned earlier in my statement, on our long outstanding Windhoek Urban Structure Plan 2025 to 2045.

The Launch of Windhoek's "Partnering Framework" – A governance model focused on **building trust, creating economic results, and ensuring policy alignment** across sectors.

2. **A Dedicated Mayoral Hotline for Idea Submission and Public Reporting** - Ensuring that **every resident has direct access to governance processes, enabling real-time public engagement in decision-making.**
3. **A Mayoral Walk for Unity (March 2025)** – A symbolic, citywide engagement initiative that fosters **trust, transparency, and collective responsibility in urban development.** Car Free Day to create adventures and promote entrepreneurship

4. **Monthly Governance Reporting Mechanisms** – The Mayor’s Office will operate under **an open-governance reporting structure**, ensuring that **every governance decision, project milestone, and economic development intervention is transparently reported to the public in accordance with the established legal framework.**

IV. LOOKING AHEAD: WHERE WINDHOEK MUST BE IN TEN (10) YEARS

If we **execute systematically, enforce governance discipline, and drive structured partnerships**, Windhoek will **transition into a globally competitive city within the next decade and regain its status among the top Cities in the World.**

1. A Fully Integrated and Digitized Governance System:

- **City governance will function within real-time, digital execution monitoring system**, ensuring transparency, performance tracking, and digital citizen engagement.

2. A Transformed Economic and Enterprise Development Environment:

- **Windhoek will be an investment-friendly city**, offering structured tax incentives, economic growth acceleration policies, and globally competitive enterprise zones.

3. **A Sustainable, Inclusive Urban Development Model:**

- Informal settlements will be **fully integrated into structured urban development frameworks**, ensuring housing security, service delivery expansion, and economic mobility.

4. **A City Where Culture, Heritage, and Innovation Thrive:**

- Windhoek will emerge as **a leading African City for cultural tourism, creative industries, and Heritage-Based Economic Transformation**. Windhoek Museum, Heritage – revival of the famous Lovers Hill Walk with strengthened public safety and Security.

This is **not a political vision** - this is an **execution strategy**, driven by **partnerships, performance, and policy enforcement**.

V. **FINAL CALL TO ACTION**

Windhoek cannot afford **another decade of stagnation**. It is time for **governance transformation, economic acceleration, and civic engagement at grand scale**.

I call upon:

- **The private sector** to step forward as partners in governance, economic transformation, and social investment.

- **The residents of Windhoek: As I stated in my Opening Statement of the Council Meeting held on 5 March 2025, Your voices matters. Engage, participate, and drive community ownership of municipal development. Your Voices Matters.**
- **Government agencies, policy institutions, and international partners** to align with this structured execution model, ensuring that Windhoek's governance framework is positioned for long-term success.

Today, we begin a **reinvigorated spirit for Windhoek**. An era of **partnership, performance, and governance discipline**.

I do not stand here today to **announce an intention**. I stand here to **declare action**.

We will govern **not through political rhetoric, but through structured execution**.

We will lead **not through grand promises, but through measurable progress**.

We will partner **not out of obligation, but out of the undeniable truth that our success is collective**.

Windhoek is becoming, and we are open for more business.

And it is becoming because **WE - ALL OF US** - are choosing to build it.

This is our Time. This is our City. This is our Work. Let's Begin.

LET'S GET TO WORK.

Residents of Windhoek, City Officials, I thank you.