



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY

**THE MAYOR OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
OF WINDHOEK**

COUNCIL MEMBER NDESHIHAFELA LARANDJA

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
THE INTERNATIONAL FIRE SAFETY WEEK 2025**

Monday, 6 October 2025

9:45

Head Quarter Fire Station

- **Director of Ceremony, Mr Kupaha Uazukuani, Deputy Chief Fire Officer: Emergency & Disaster Risk Management;**
- **Council Members Present;**
- **Mr Moses Matyayi, Chief Executive Officer;**
- **Mrs Fredrika Shigwedha, Acting Deputy Director and Head of Disaster Coordination at the Local Authorities Coordination Committee, also representing the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD);**
- **Mr Raymond Kapia, Chief Fire Officer: Emergency & Disaster Risk Management;**
- **Mr. Max Mutomgolome, City of Windhoek Neighbourhood; Committee Member for the Tobias Hainyeko Constituency;**
- **Strategic Executives and Senior Officials present;**
- **Sponsors and Exhibitors;**
- **Distinguished invited guests;**
- **Members of the Media;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Good morning!

Thank you for being here as we officially open the International Fire Safety Week 2025. The City of Windhoek Fire Brigade Service is an essential service which is very close to all of us. Fire outbreaks do not know any boundaries of any sort and thus we must unite in advancing fire safety and prevention strategies.

Our City in its quest to enhance the quality of life for all its people by rendering efficient and effective municipal services - and this week, with additional emphasis on fire brigade services - continues to implement the Windhoek Municipal Fire Brigade Services Regulation of 2023 and has made the International Fire Safety Week a highlight on our annual events calendar!

Ladies and gentlemen,

This is the second year that Windhoek is hosting this initiative, and it is a moment of pride for our city. Last year, we reached more than 5,000 community members through awareness activities and thousands more through school, church, and social media engagements. Today, we build on that foundation with an even stronger commitment to protect lives, property, and the future of our communities through fire safety education and prevention.

The importance of this week cannot be overstated. In Namibia, fires remain one of the greatest threats to life and livelihoods, especially in informal settlements, where high-density living and limited access to emergency services increase vulnerability. Statistics show that in 2024 alone, the City of Windhoek Fire Brigade responded to over 2,000 fire-related incidents, of which nearly 200 were dwelling fires and nearly 75% occurred in informal settlements. These fires claimed lives, destroyed homes, and wiped away the belongings of families who already had very little.

However, I am grateful to announce that we reduced the number of fire outbreaks from 705 in 2023/2024 to 569 in the previous financial year. While we can always do even better, this reduction can be attributed to the robust and deliberate community fire safety and prevention strategies, where the City is shifting gear from reactive actions, to risk mitigation and proactive, prevention measures. We can thus be assured that there is hope and that hope lies in awareness, prevention, and collective responsibility.

Furthermore, I am proud to announce that, through the funds and sponsorships we received from last year's International Fire Safety Week, we were able to purchase and continue to roll out almost 200 smoke alarms in informal settlements. This project already brought safety and peace of mind to many families who previously lived with the constant fear of fire. It is proof that when we unite resources and purpose, we can make a tangible difference. A simple smoke alarm, installed in a home, can reduce the risk of fire fatalities by up to 50%. Teaching children the basics of stop, drop, and roll, or ensuring families have an emergency escape plan, can save many lives. Every resident, from the youngest to the oldest, can play a role in preventing fire disasters.

Dear stakeholders in fire prevention,

We are not stopping here. The City of Windhoek and our partners will continue to embark on new projects to enhance fire safety and prevention - from expanding community training programmes to

investing in more equipment and technology that will help protect lives and property. That is why this week matters. Our theme: *“Unite to Ignite for a Secure Nation”* reminds us that the fight against fire is not only about extinguishing flames, but also about igniting knowledge, responsibility, and solidarity!

We are especially proud to showcase the incredible skills of our Fire Brigade Services this week. These men and women risk their lives daily to protect us. It is thus our responsibility, as residents, to look after them by being fire savvy. Their dedication to fire safety and prevention strategies through teaching, training, awareness creation and engaging with various communities should be embraced while we all take ownership and make fire safety- and prevention principles part of our daily lives.

Dear residents,

As an organisation, we remain committed to offering our expertise and share what resources we have available in fire safety and prevention. We are privileged to have a dedicated team working proactively through the pillars of education, engineering, and enforcement.

During this week of observance, we acknowledge the contribution and support of different local authorities, who all play an important role in building a strong network to address national challenges around fire prevention.

Together, we aim to develop effective mechanisms and strategies that drive us toward a future with zero fires and zero fire-related deaths in our different communities.

To our sponsors and partners, I extend my heartfelt gratitude. Without your support, this week would not be possible. Your investment in fire safety is an investment in human life, in resilience, and in the prosperity of our city and nation.

To the residents of Windhoek, I extend a warm invitation: please join us throughout this week. Bring your families, visit the open exhibitions, talk to our firefighters, and take the lessons you learn back into your homes and communities. Fire safety is not just the responsibility of the City of Windhoek Fire Brigade, it is a responsibility we share together.

In closing, let me reaffirm our commitment to reducing fire incidents and safeguarding our residents. We will continue to strengthen our capacity, invest in training and equipment, and most importantly, work with our communities to build a safer future. Ladies and gentlemen, it is now my distinct pleasure to declare International Fire Safety Week 2025 officially open!

I thank you.

Ndeshihafela Larandja
Mayor