



**OFFICIAL STATEMENT BY:**

**HER WORSHIP, NDESHIHAFELA LARANDJA  
MAYOR OF THE CITY WINDHOEK**

**ON THE OCCASION OF:**

**THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING OF JANUARY 2025**

**30 January 2025**

**17:30**

**Council Chambers**

- **Your Worship, Clemencia Hanases, Deputy Mayor;**
- **Councillor Illse Keister, Chairperson of the Management Committee;**
- **All Local Authority Council Members, Present;**
- **Father Timothy Hausiku of the St Boniface Catholic Parish;**
- **Mr. Moses Matyayi, Chief Executive Officer;**
- **Strategic Executives and Senior Officials, Present;**
- **Windhoek Residents;**
- **Members of the Media;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Good afternoon,

It is with profound gratitude and humility that I stand before you today as the newly-elected Mayor of the City of Windhoek. I am deeply honoured to take up this responsibility to serve our city, its vibrant communities, and its people. I also congratulate the following Councillors who were elected as new members of the City's Management Committee:

- Cllr Illse Keister (MC Chairperson);
- Alderwoman Fransina Kahungu;
- Cllr Bernardus Araeb;
- Cllr Jeürgen Hecht; and
- Cllr Joseph Uapingene

Today marks the beginning of a journey together - a journey building on the hard work of the previous four years of our term as Council members - towards a city that is inclusive, resilient, and sustainable for all its residents.

As we convene the first Ordinary Council Meeting of 2025, we are reminded of the critical role that leadership and governance play in addressing the challenges faced by our city. I pledge to lead with integrity, prioritise community voices, and act boldly for the benefit of all residents. While recognising Windhoek's rich landscapes, history, and cultural heritage, I also acknowledge pressing challenges, including inadequate access to sanitation and clean water. Addressing these issues is vital for improving residents' quality of life and enhancing Windhoek's appeal as a global tourism destination.

## **Key Projects**

Key initiatives of my term of office include modernising the city's sanitation systems, investing in sustainable water infrastructure, and engaging communities to ensure equitable access to essential services and participation in local economies. The recently concluded Local Economic Development Policy Validation workshop is one of many initiatives aligned to the Vision 2030 agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Harambee Prosperity Plans. It is essential that we stimulate inclusive, sustainable growth that addresses both local needs and contributes to the broader national economy and leverage strategic partnerships to ensure that the following objectives are met and supported at multi-sectoral level:

- Promoting regional economic self-sufficiency while addressing socio-economic disparities.
- Aligning local economic initiatives with national policies and global frameworks.

- Enhancing job creation, poverty reduction, and social inclusion.
- Ensuring that the LED efforts are dynamic and responsive to technological, economic, and social changes and;
- Strengthening partnerships among government entities, businesses, and civil society.

I also want our efforts to move towards growing the tourism sector and protecting cultural and natural assets. Let us collaborate with local businesses to create unique visitor experiences and promote sustainable tourism practices that balance economic growth with environmental preservation. Furthermore, I emphasise the importance of community participation and accountability, inviting residents to work together to build a thriving, inclusive, and world-class capital city of Namibia.

Similarly, in our quest to create economic development opportunities in Windhoek and promote a vibrant Central Business District (CBD) Council provided numerous platforms for entrepreneurs to showcase their products and talents in the last quarter of 2024. On 22 and 23 November 2024, Council also hosted the first, annual Windhoek City Kapana Festival with great success under the theme “Savour Local.”

The festival brought together about 30 Kapana traders from our open markets, thereby promoting entrepreneurship and networking opportunities. The event reflected the heritage of the city by fusing tradition and flavours to create a unique Windhoek culinary experience offering residents and visitors a closer glimpse into our local urban culture.

As is customary, the Christmas Market was held on 6 and 7 December 2024 under the theme “Christmas under the stars.” This annual event was bigger than ever and provided a festive and vibrant atmosphere along the CBD area. As in the past the market was planned to coincide with the annual switching on of the city’s Christmas streetlights.

Council would hereby like to thank all residents and visitors for their overwhelming attendance and support of our public events. In addition, Council applauds all the sponsors for their generosity in contributing to the success of the above-mentioned events. We look forward to building on these events as the year unfolds.

### **Flood Response Efforts**

The ongoing flooding, especially in our informal settlements, has brought immense suffering to hundreds of residents, leaving many without shelter, possessions, or access to basic services. A total of 282 households (1,189 people) are currently affected. Over 100 families have already been evacuated by last week and this figure is expected to increase pending final verification. Considerable portions of the flood-prone areas have been evacuated. However, these floods are a stark reminder of the vulnerabilities that climate change and urbanisation impose on our city, especially on those already living in precarious conditions.

To the families who have lost their homes, belongings, and sense of stability, we see your pain, and we share in your grief. The City of Windhoek is committed to supporting you in this time of crisis.

In recent weeks we, together with the Office of the Prime Minister, the Khomas Regional Council, and other key stakeholders, mobilised emergency relief efforts, including the provision of temporary shelters, food, and clean water to those most affected. Together we rendered aid in the form of, amongst other things, tents, sanitation facilities, blankets, mattresses, clothing, food hampers, and transport of the affected households, along with the associated provision of manpower as coordinated by our Economic Development and Community Services Department.

Our dedicated municipal teams, in collaboration with community leaders, and our valued partners, are working tirelessly to provide aid and ensure no one is left behind. Council extends its appreciation to the following gracious partners for assisting in restoring dignity and hope to our affected residents:

- The FNB Foundation;
- Lady Pohamba Hospital;
- The Katutura Old Age Home;
- Grateful Hearts Foundation;
- Xwama, together with the Rani Group; and
- The Rocky Crest Extension 4 Neighbourhood Watch.

If I left anyone out, please accept that it is not intentional. We truly appreciate all assistance from the various corners of society. These efforts, while critical, are only the beginning. As a city, we must address the root causes of these vulnerabilities. It is unacceptable that year after year, flooding continues to devastate the same communities. This council must prioritise investments in resilient infrastructure, such as proper drainage systems, safe housing, and sustainable urban planning that considers the realities of rapid urbanisation as well as climate change.

I had the opportunity last week to also visit the affected areas and families. Our flood preparedness efforts began as early as September 2024, following the seasonal forecast. Multi-disciplinary teams convened regularly to ensure adequate preparations for potential flash floods. As a result, between 28 December and 4 January, our Emergency and Disaster Risk Management teams responded to several flooding incidents, successfully rescuing five individuals without any loss of life. On 7 January 2025, we commenced evacuations in Otjomuise, and to date, 109 households have been relocated to Goreangab.

This unfortunate situation occurred when some residents were away on holiday, further complicating relocation efforts which carry financial implications associated with relocation, as dismantling structures often leads to material losses. Additionally, the availability of serviced land remains a challenge, making relocation even more complex. **However**, I want to also caution residents to refrain from settling in flood-prone areas and dumping waste in undesignated areas which further leads to blockages and exacerbates flooding. The current flooding is partly due to illegal human activities and settlements in these high-risk areas. Strict adherence to the City's Town Planning Scheme and Building Regulations is crucial in mitigating future flash floods as we continuously address the sustainable long-term solutions. The solutions lie with **all** of us which means that we must comply to the said regulations to ensure a safer and more sustainable urban environment. We can no longer continue with the same challenges every year and so, let us work together to build a safe, lawful, and sustainable community for everyone or bear the consequences which affect us all.

Lastly, I will be embarking on a number of key engagements over the next two months and identifying key projects that require my dedicated attention and support. In my endeavour to craft a roadmap of high impact activities, I shall be providing regular updates on progress against these projects with a focus on economic development, housing and land delivery, SMART Cities for example.

**Dear Council Members,**

As we deliberate and make decisions in this chamber this evening, let us do so with the best interests of all our residents at heart. Let us embrace innovative thinking, foster partnerships, and remain accountable to the people who have entrusted us with their hopes and aspirations. The challenges we face are significant, but I am confident that, together, we can overcome them.

To the residents of Windhoek: this city belongs to you. We as Council are here to listen, learn and partner with you to find sustainable solutions with intention, for future generations.

May God bless the City of Windhoek and all its residents, and I thank you for your trust and support.

**Ndeshihafela Larandja**

**Mayor**