



The Gateway to Endless Opportunities

**OFFICIAL STATEMENT BY HIS WORSHIP, CLLR JOSEPH
UAPINGENE, MAYOR OF WINDHOEK, ON THE OCCASION OF THE
ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING OF NOVEMBER 2023**

8 November 2023

17H30

Town House Council Chambers

Your Worship, Cllr. Magdalena Lombardt, Deputy Mayor;

Cllr. Shafiishuna Nujoma, Chairperson of the Management Committee;

All local authority councillors, present;

Pastor Günther Swartz from the Evangelical Lutheran Church, serving the Bethel Parish, Katutura;

Mr. Moses Matyayi, Chief Executive Officer;

Strategic Executives and Officials, present;

Dear residents;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good afternoon,

I hope that you are starting to enjoy the festive spirit as we approach the end of the year. However, before we wind down the year's activities, allow me to update you on several important matters since the last Council meeting.

The Municipal Council of Windhoek's vision is, namely: ***'To be a sustainable and caring City by 2027.'*** To achieve this vision, the councillors and officials on our seven Advisory Committees focus their efforts on specific areas of concern every year. The work of these committees is aligned to the objectives of the City's Strategic Plan (2022-2027) and as the committees are currently busy concluding their work for the year so, allow me to share the following:

Debt write-offs for residents:

Primarily, I want to address the issue of debt write-offs to our residents. In these challenging times, I understand that many members of our community face financial difficulties. It is essential that we come together as a community to support one another. To this end, I am pleased to announce that we are finalising a submission to Council around various options for a debt write-off programme for qualifying residents. We believe that our work around this will conclude before the end of the year and I regard this as a vital step towards alleviating financial burdens and helping our residents get back on their feet. Our goal is to ensure that our community remains strong and resilient. I undertake to communicate the outcomes of our work in this regard in due course.

Benchmarking consultations, visits and excursions:

Councillors and City of Windhoek (CoW) officials continue to engage stakeholders locally, regionally, and internationally to gather and share insights and learn from the experiences of other organisations, cities, and countries.

Just recently we met with a delegation from the National Housing Enterprise - Namibia (NHE) to discuss ways of strengthening cooperation around land and housing delivery in Windhoek. I agreed with them that we need to re-strategise and accelerate our approach here. Keeping in mind the City's limited resources, we need central government and the NHE to help us deliver. I'm also interested in the idea of a City Bank to help residents save to eventually pay for their own land and houses.

As a way forward, the relevant CoW and the NHE technical teams will form a committee to prioritise the issues currently affecting the delivery of land and housing in Windhoek and come up with an action plan to address these.

In October we signed a cooperation agreement with Okahandja. The agreement addresses areas of cooperation between the two local authorities concerning emergency services; land delivery and housing; an HR exchange programme; economic development and tourism; environmental health and management; laboratory services, policy development; and assistance with heavy equipment and machinery. I look forward to work together for the benefit of all our residents. I urge prudent planning and budgeting for us to properly implement our cooperation agreements going forward.

I recently attended the 2023 Green Hydrogen Global Forum at the International Convention Center Jeju, on the invitation of the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy and the Jeju Special Self-Governing Province. The event was themed: *'Leading the Clean Hydrogen Nation, Towards Sustainable International Collaboration.'* A delegation from Jeju already visited Namibia on the invitation of the Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB) to deepen cooperation around green hydrogen, agriculture, and tourism. Our aim is to position Windhoek as an excellent investment destination for the clean technologies of the future.

Windhoek is the gateway for people entering Namibia, hence we need to create an environment that ensures visitors' safety and pique the interest of investors and tourists to fully explore the business and recreational opportunities on offer. In this regard I am happy to note our CEO, Mr Moses Matyayi's engagement with the Namibia Airports Company so that our two institutions speak the same language in terms of attracting visitors to spend more time here, instead of only using Windhoek as a transit to other parts of the country.

I'd like to thank Deputy Mayor Magdalena Lombardt who represented the City of Windhoek during a working visit to our sister City of Bremen, as part of the trilateral cooperation between Windhoek, Durban, and Bremen during the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) conference from 15 to 21 October 2023. The SDG's are a global task that need to be tackled largely at the local level. Cllr Lombardt paid a courtesy call on Kevin Lenkeit, a Bremen Member of Parliament and member of the Committee for International Relations, Cooperation and International Development initiatives. During the workshop, councillors discussed the successes of the existing bilateral relations and the work already done within the trilateral agreement. Best practice examples were shared among the participants of the workshop with a focus on the manifold lessons learned in the partner municipalities. They reviewed their respective challenges around identified SDG's and took the opportunity to ask for advice of their colleagues from all over the world.

Cllr Lombardt also promoted the need for development exchange programmes focusing on knowledge sharing and youth engagement.

As a sustainable and caring City, we realise that swift action is called for around the UN SDG's and we look forward to making key contributions with problem-solving approaches.

I was happy to receive a team from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) that was in the country looking for opportunities to collaborate with various sectors. They identified areas of possible cooperation include renewable energy, housing, digitalisation, urban mobility, and infrastructure development, just to mention a few. We are ready to work with stakeholders to receive financial support to assist us in meeting our objectives like, upgrading our two main sports facilities, namely the Sam Nujoma and Khomasdal sports stadiums. We also continue to explore funding options to develop and service land in the newly-established townships of Rocky Crest Extension 8 and Otjomuise Extensions 14 and 15.

In our ongoing efforts to collaborate with sister cities in Africa, I will this month sign an agreement between Windhoek and Brazzaville that will see the two African cities build on existing cooperation in areas of mutual interest. Brazzaville, the capital city of the Republic of Congo, already has a bond with Namibia that was created between our peoples during our struggle for independence. Based on this historical background, the cities of Windhoek and Brazzaville signed a cooperation agreement in Windhoek on 27 July 2011 which will now be revised and updated. Our commitment is to make the best use of resources while continuing to explore opportunities for the growth and betterment of our communities.

Dear residents, ladies and gentlemen;

I attended the Namibia National Mayor's Forum in Lüderitz and please allow me now to congratulate His Worship, Mayor Trevino Forbes, of Walvis Bay, who was re-elected as the president of the mayoral leadership body and His Worship, Mayor Johannes Ndeutepo, of Omuthiya, who was elected as the vice president of the forum. The National Mayors' Forum aims to address various issues affecting residents in different towns across Namibia. The City of Windhoek will continue to collaborate with our local authority peers to introduce new developments and initiatives.

Local community upliftment initiatives:

The heart of our city lies in the strength of our local communities. It is crucial that we invest in initiatives that uplift and empower our neighborhoods. I am proud to announce that the City switched on electricity to various areas in Windhoek over the last few months. This is part of our informal settlement electrification project, which has electrified over 3 500 households in the last five years. The project was extended this year to run for another five years, with a target of electrifying over 4 000 households in various informal settlements, including Havana Ext. 1, Kilimanjaro, Okahandja Park, Okuryangava, Otjomuise, Mix Settlement, and Groot Aub. The project will also see the installation of five high mast lights at the Havana Dumping Site, the Goreangab Soccer Field, Behind Frans Indongo Primary School, Oohambo dhaNehale Interlocks and Deeper, and Sonder Water.

We are making progress to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy, in line with UN Sustainable Development Goal 7.

I would also like to highlight our partnership with UNICEF Namibia and other stakeholders in commemorating the annual Health & Hygiene Promotion Month and Global Hand Washing Day. The City of Windhoek adopted the World Health Organisation (WHO) handwashing initiative and used it as an opportunity to remind community members and food handlers, particularly at the City's open markets, about the importance and necessity of health and hygiene practices to eliminate and reduce the spread of infections and diseases. We conducted an evaluation of various City markets to assess their cleanliness. Based on the evaluation, Soweto Market was declared the cleanest market under the big/large market category, while Limbandugila Market was announced as the cleanest small market. Stokes Market was declared the most improved market. Individual traders from various markets were also awarded for maintaining clean stalls. Congratulations to them all.

We recently received a donation of over 400 trees from the First National Bank of Namibia. This formed part of our Arbor Day celebrations this year whereby we planted trees along Independence Avenue in Katutura. The planted trees are part of the 400 indigenous trees and shrubs, and 100 flower boxes that the FNB pledged to donate to the City of Windhoek over a three-year period.

The European Union donated two symbolic trees while the Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism announced a donation of 50 fruit trees at the event that will be planted at various schools around Windhoek.

This gesture demonstrates the commitment towards combined efforts to combat climate change and create awareness amongst Windhoek's residents to appreciate the importance of trees in our city and around our public open spaces. Unfortunately, I must announce that since this initiative, we have observed with great concern, that many of our newly-planted trees, flowers and shrubs throughout the city, have been stolen or uprooted and damaged, like the over 30 plants of various in Independence avenue, Katutura, value of approximately N\$70,000.00, which were stolen. This deliberate removal of greenery intended to enhance our public spaces is very unfortunate and a setback to our ongoing efforts to beautify Windhoek. We are committed to create a vibrant and beautiful environment for our residents to be proud of, and the hard work and dedication of our teams in planting and maintaining these green spaces aim to enhance the quality of life for everyone in our communities. Unfortunately, the ongoing incidents of theft keep hindering our progress in this regard. Therefore, I urge all residents to report any suspicious activity related to the theft of plants to the City Police on 061-302 302.

Since our last meeting, councillors, senior management, and industry experts held a workshop on the Windhoek Urban Structure Plan. This significant gathering was aimed at charting a development course for Windhoek and its expanded boundaries.

The Urban Structure Plan explains strategies for accommodating the increasing population, enhancing infrastructure, and elevating the overall quality of life for residents. Discussions during the workshop touched on key components of the plan, including transformation of informal settlements, achieving spatial justice, environmental and financial sustainability, and economic development.

A recurring theme highlighted the imperative need to harmonise urbanisation with environmental preservation, underscoring the significance of a holistic approach to urban planning. The Urban Structure Plan, once finalised, will serve as the cornerstone for forthcoming policies and projects in Windhoek, striving to ensure the city's evolution and prosperity, while preserving its unique character and environment. I want to thank all involved for their valuable input and the progress made. The next phase involves a series of public engagements for further inputs into the Urban Structure Plan.

Busy end-of-year period:

I am grateful to see that the City's CEO, Mr Moses Matyayi, continues to engage employees as part of his induction programme. He has implored employees to take stock of their behaviour and attitude towards their work and the value they bring to the organisation and residents of Windhoek. Indeed, we are the ambassadors of the City of Windhoek, and we need to carry ourselves in ways that reflect good ethics and embody our vision of being a caring and sustainable city. In the meantime, councillors will conclude their public meetings with residents soon.

Let us work together to enhance public education and create safer and more vibrant neighbourhoods. Your ideas and involvement are instrumental in shaping the future of our communities, and I encourage you to reach out to us with your suggestions and proposals.

As we approach the end of the year, I understand that our lives become even busier. With the holiday season upon us, it's important that we take the time to celebrate with family and friends. I encourage everyone to do so, but still be mindful of the ongoing challenges our community faces. Let us continue to support one another, practice kindness, and show the spirit of unity that defines our city.

I want to share a well-known African proverb with you which says: *'Honest advice doesn't destroy true friendship'* and with that in mind, I would like to remind you of the just-started City of Windhoek communication audit project. This project aims to assess the effectiveness of our internal and external communication strategies and identify areas for improvement. We need your honest advice. Participation is entirely voluntary and confidential. Your responses and comments will be kept anonymous and used solely for the communication audit, so please consider taking part when approached to do so by our teams.

Furthermore, I encourage residents to stay connected to us by following the City of Windhoek on social media, including our newly-established Facebook page for the Office of the Mayor - @cowmayoroffice – where we aim to bring the activities of my office closer to the residents.

Please follow and engage us in our efforts to be transparent and improve our communication to achieve our organisational vision and mission.

In conclusion I would like to urge all residents to use water sparingly and save wherever possible. At the moment we are exceeding our monthly water consumption target and this is not sustainable, especially considering that the Von Bach Dam water level is currently low at 17.9%. It is crucial for all of us to take immediate steps to conserve water. By implementing water-saving practices, we can reduce our consumption and help preserve this valuable resource. Let us make a conscious effort to be more responsible with our water usage.

Finally, it remains my privilege to serve as your mayor, and I remain committed to working diligently to ensure our community's prosperity and well-being. Together, we will address the challenges that lie ahead and seize the opportunities for growth and progress. I look forward to the upcoming CoW office bearer elections, on 1 December 2023. Until then, thank you for your continued trust and support.

I thank you.

Cllr Joseph Uapingene

Mayor, City of Windhoek