



The Gateway to Endless Opportunities

**OFFICIAL STATEMENT BY HER WORSHIP THE MAYOR OF
THE CITY OF WINDHOEK, CLLR SADE GAWANAS, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETING,**

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 10 AUGUST 2022

TIME: 17:30

VENUE: COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Pastor Reverend Paul Muha, ELCIN Pastor from Chaplin Ministry;
Your Worship, Cllr. Joseph Uapingene, Deputy Mayor of Windhoek
Cllr. Ndesihafela Larandja, Chairperson of the Management
Committee;

Honourable Councillors;

Acting Chief Executive Officer and Strategic Executives of the City
of Windhoek,

Esteemed Windhoek Residents,

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to our Council Chambers this evening.

This year as the Mayor of Windhoek, I undertook three (3) international trips mainly to Germany, Cape Town and Singapore, which were all either semi or fully funded by the inviting organizations.

The trips were essential simply because, there have been lasting relationships of common objectives to make cities play their pivotal roles and obligations towards the service delivery for our residents. These are opportunities created by domestic, regional and

international bodies to mainstream decentralization, urbanization, sustainability and discuss matters of great concern such as climate change and city resilience.

Many have asked, what is the importance these trips?

No town, city or country, or even a family has ever worked or succeeded in isolation. Great cities and countries such as Cape Town, Germany and Singapore are important lessons to learn from.

My recent trip to Singapore has highlighted the need to envision the impossibilities and cultivate a culture of changed attitudes and mindsets. Singapore's territory is composed of one main island, 63 satellite islands and islets, and one outlying islet, the combined area of which has increased by 25% since the country's independence as a result of extensive land reclamation projects. It has the third highest population density in the world. With a multicultural population and recognizing the need to respect cultural identities of the major ethnic groups within the nation, Singapore has four official languages: English, Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil. English is the lingua franca and numerous public services are available only in English. Multiracialism is enshrined in the constitution. After early years of turbulence whilst lacking natural resources and a hinterland, the nation rapidly developed to become one of the Four Asian Tigers based on international trade and economic globalization, integrating itself within the world economy through free trade with minimal to no trade barriers or tariffs, export-oriented industrialization, and the large accumulation of received foreign direct investments, foreign-exchange reserves, and assets held by sovereign wealth funds. A highly developed country, it is tied for 11th on the UN Human Development Index and has the second-highest GDP per capita

(PPP) in the world. Identified as a tax haven, Singapore is the only country in Asia with an AAA sovereign credit rating from all major rating agencies. It is a major aviation, financial, and maritime shipping hub, and has consistently been ranked as one of the most expensive cities to live in for expatriates and foreign workers. Singapore is placed highly in key social indicators: education, healthcare, quality of life, personal safety, infrastructure, and housing, with a home-ownership rate of 88 percent. Singaporeans enjoy one of the longest life expectancies, fastest Internet connection speeds, lowest infant mortality rates, and lowest levels of corruption in the world.

The World City Summit is an exclusive platform for government leaders and industry experts to address livable and sustainable city challenges and to share integrated urban solutions as well as creating a platform to forge new partnerships.

Since its inauguration in 2008 the World City Summit has been attended by over 250 global cities and supported by leaders from government, business, international organizations and academia. Jointly organized by Singapore city for livable cities and the urban redevelopment authority the world city summit returned to a face-to-face conference, which was held at Singapore's Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Center from the 31st of July up to 3rd of August 2022.

This year's Theme - Livable and sustainable cities emerging stronger with the need for cities to remain livable, sustainable and more resilient in times of prolonged and unpredictable disruptions that include pandemics and climate change.

As the convening point for global mayors, business leaders and knowledge experts the summit aimed to be a platform for the exchange and co-creation of city solutions for livable and sustainable cities. The summit intended to engage cities,

businesses and experts at the highest levels to discuss how cities can emerge stronger through prolonged and unpredictable disruptions.

The four-day event comprised of the main conference which included plenaries and tracks and other key events such as the;

- LEE KUAN YEW World Price lecture Award ceremony,
- the World Cities Summit Mayors forum,
- World city summit Young Leaders Symposium and the
- World city Summit Expo.

Through the plenaries and tracks of the main conference we engaged on the themes and how cities can emerge stronger from contemporary disruptions across five tracks namely;

- Smart cities,
- Urban resilience,
- Planning and Development,
- Sustainable financing, and
- Livable future cities.

As the Mayor of Windhoek, I was cordially invited to attend the Mayor's Forum and the world cities summit by Ms. Indranee Rajah Minister in the Prime Minister's office and the second Minister for Finance and National development of Singapore. I had the opportunity to highlight the strategies as well as challenges faced by the City to become smart, resilient and sustainable. City leaders interacted and shared insights and experiences.

We discussed the following;

- STRATEGIES ON Emerging stronger
- **Accessible cities** where we discussed innovations and strategies to help cities provide better access to services sustainable

- **Financing mobility** in the future where we explored the latest challenges and solutions in urban transport and mobility,
- cities that are in development
- **Lee Kaun Yew world city prize and award ceremony** (Vienna took the prize) and Lisbon Boston and Antwerp were notable mentions. Lee Kung Fu world city prize lecture and forum the
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- **Resilient cities network discussion** share light on how cities can become more resilient
- **Destination city** which was assessing the status of tourism around the world and exploring strategies to bring tourism back in a sustainable inclusive and prosperous way. Most importantly we engaged on climate change and tomorrow sustainable cities for today elaborating on ways to ensure cities can center sustainability for the future while building resilience now.

With the vision to become a sustainable and smart city, the city of Windhoek can no longer work in isolation and act as if they do not appreciate the innovative assistance to unlock its potential.

The city of Windhoek's economic development, public safety, and welfare must begin to understand and accept its immense responsibility in unlocking the potential of this City. Playing small in a world that is ever changing, new challenges arising from global issues such as climate change and the world having moved into a digitalized spectrum, we cannot be left behind. Change is inevitable and uncomfortable.

The transformational strategic plan, under the theme social progress economic advancement and infrastructure development seeks to ensure that the municipal council of Windhoek is

productive, inclusive and sustainable through rendering access to urban services, socio economic opportunities, spatial inclusiveness, quality urban environments and vibrant city life.

To achieve the desired economic resilience and prosperity for Windhoek and its residents, the municipal council of Windhoek must be both proactive and responsive to changing economic conditions, whether they be opportunities or threats. While council should encourage new and innovative ideas/businesses, equality of importance is the protection and support for existing businesses. Therefore, closing of home shops as reported in the newspapers, is but a failed attempt at trying to paint council as uncaring and unbothered, which is far from the truth.

A message to the media, journalists and reporters, when you are reporting, keep this message in mind that change is uncomfortable and it is also inevitable, it is uncomfortable because others can and will lead and it is inevitable because others can and will lead.

Currently, the Economic Development department, together with Councilor Austin Kwenani - Chairperson of Economic Development, Public Welfare and Safety Committee is addressing the three strategies namely;

- Windhoek Investment Incentives and promotion strategy,
- Windhoek Economic Development strategy and the
- Tourism strategy,

We have demonstrated good governance principles, and Windhoek being inundated with proposals for consideration put forth and approved WERI.

Furthermore, WERI was drafted in line with social progress, economic advancement and infrastructure development theme, to create conducive environments for businesses not only to economically, but also to thrive., therefore council last year introduced and advanced the Windhoek Economic Recovery Initiative in line with the new Economic development strategy that awaits to be tabled for approval by council.

Germany, Bremen Trip - 37 million grant funding

We were in Bremen to kick start the implementation of our EU funded project on “improvement of solid waste management in Windhoek”. In the history of Windhoek’s, sister cities cooperations, this is a milestone project that our two cities are jointly implementing in Windhoek. Inspired by the historic relationship that exist between Bremen and Namibia, our two cities formally, entered a cooperation in the year 2000 in partnership with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development as a result joint projects have since then been carried out mainly on topics related to environmental management. Since 2017, Windhoek and Bremen have been working together on a **municipal climate partnership** and exchanges of municipal experts from both cities have taken place several times under topics such as waste management, wastewater management, sustainable tourism and environmental education. On 31 January 2022, the Mayor of Bremen Dr. Andreas Boven Schulte and I, signed an MOU on the implementation of the said EU-funded project. As I alluded earlier, this project is a flagship of Windhoek sister cities cooperation and the main objective of the project is to reduce waste volumes and harmful environmental impacts, and thus to expand the share of recycled waste along with creating jobs through innovative start-ups in the circular economy in Windhoek. The municipal cooperation between Windhoek and Bremen; is built

on the premise that through knowledge and creativity; cities can develop stable lifestyles, sustainable environments, and economies. Trade and investment are as well cornerstones of development.

Therefore, these visits are important for sister cities cooperation's, active engagements and implementation of the action plans between our cities and countries. It is important to visualize the possibilities and streamline active participation of our technocrats to make these visions a reality. What we must therefore ask is, where do we see or want to see Windhoek in the next 5,10,15 years? What can we do to understand the policies, the vision and how do become part of the greater scheme of things? Where and when do we understand our roles as residents, as a society?

Financial Report

I would like to give clarity and context on the financial report stunt that that was held at a press conference on the 25th July 2022

We have gained a lot of insight into the City's financial affairs over the last year and a half. Yes, the financial position of the City requires intervention, but I can assure you that we are working on a financial recovery plan to try and bring us financial sustainability as per the new strategic plan. It is unfortunate that certain language was used in the press release on the 25th July 2022 have caused immense panic among our stakeholders, especially the residents and creditors but we will avail more detailed information and stats at a later stage to provide a full context and where the organization is heading so that you are well informed. One must understand that when you work with an organization this size and complexity it is not an easy task. Our main challenge is our salary bill and council together with management is looking at ways within the permissible parameters to reduce or at least stabilize our salary bill whilst

increasing our revenue. Though the salaries are above market in some aspect, the presented figures were still draft and yet to be verified as they are material different from other comparisons.

Our debtors is our other main challenge and collecting for services has become a challenge given the amount of people in the City that are unemployed or is just not earning enough to pay for these services. The debt have significantly increased from before covid-19 at N\$840m to N\$1.2b to date, which has adversely affected our cash flow.

As we have mentioned before Capital Cities are normally subsidizes to ensure first class infrastructure and to reduce the cost of services to the residents. Example, In SA, central government is mostly taking care of the social agenda and major infrastructure of local authorities.

We have further reviewed our performance the last five (5) years and have looked at what has detracted us from implementing our strategy centre to our new strategy is financial sustainability hence why in the new financial year that has just started the first of July, this has become our first priority.

Lastly, last month was extremely stressful with all articles in the media but I want to remind you that as we continue to strive towards development and creating a smart, sustainable and resilient City. I encourage each and every one of you to remain committed and consistent. Honesty and integrity will take us very far. We will rise above the challenges and negativity and become one of the greatest cities in Africa and beyond. We should remain focused and keep our eyes on the ball. Let us continue tackling the challenges by communicating effectively, and let us not allow too much political

interference and let us substantiate the technocrats and their departments to improve and create conducive environments for our City to thrive.

We remain Council,

I thank you.