



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

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**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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**29 October 2012**

**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS - PROTOTYPE WEEK 29  
OCTOBER – 1 NOVEMBER 2012, NAMPOWER  
CONVENTION CENTRE**

The aim of this prototype week is to examine the status of ICT in Namibia, and the identify key projects that we may need to undertake to change the status quo, thereby ensuring greater socio-economic benefits for the Namibian population.

Namibia can no longer be lagging behind. We must ensure that the necessary policy framework is in place to accelerate the growth of ICT in this country. This we have done, and are continuously doing.

The Minister of ICT has made the following policies: the Overarching ICT Policy, the Telecommunications Policy, the Postal Policy, the Broadcasting Policy, the IT Policy, the Universal Service and Digital Terrestrial Television Migration Policies are being finalized. Parliament has passed the Communications Act of 2009 and created the Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN).

In underscoring the importance for ICT Infrastructure, the government has invested directly in the West African submarine Cable System (WACS), a first for Namibia. In our efforts of making Namibia a globally connected country, and creating a knowledge-based society, this fundamental investment is necessary. It is now up

to us to ensure that the population is connected to this cable from their homes, schools, villages and health centres. The necessary infrastructure in this regard must be ensured. This is an effort in directly stimulating the digital economy.

There is no doubt that ICT contributes to the any national economy. In Namibia we have recorded single digit growths of 2.9%, whereas our southern neighbor records double digits. Our discussion this week will craft out strategies that will indirectly look at increasing the overall ICT contribution to GDP.

Our discussions will further focus on why our ICT skills, ICT usage and ICT access rankings are a globally so low, standing at 102 from a 155 countries. Surely, we are being called to action to review our past actions, or rather inactions, and to accelerate our societal growth.

Our approach must duly consider the convergence of technologies and take full advantage of the solution that it offers, for both our rural and urban populations. The digital divide must be narrowed between urban and rural populations. Rural populations can no longer lag behind in TV and radio owning households and the latest fixed and mobile telecommunications due to lack of the necessary infrastructure, as has historically been the case. The DTT project and the WACS projects must be given the necessary financial and boost, in terms of various options available, to ensure that the all have universal access and usage. The necessary supporting projects in this regard, are the exact types of prototypes that we are called on to devise here.

By the end of this week, we must have then adopted the necessary targeted interventions and identified the critical policy and legislative requirements to ensure our actions lead to fruition.

So, I call on you to forge ahead, as a united force, as the Namibian ICT fraternity, to develop Namibian solutions for Namibian problems.

I thank you.