

AfDB tackles misinterpretation



REGIONAL HAT: Namibia Competition Commission (NaCC) CEO Mihe Gaomab II is also the Alternate Executive Director for the African Development Bank (AfDB).
PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

A senior African Development Bank official this week took on the media for what he said was a wrongful interpretation of its most recent analysis of the Namibian business environment.

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Namibia fared far better in a recent analysis by the African Development Bank (AfDB) than was acknowledged in the local media, Namibia Competition Commission (NaCC) chief executive officer and Alternate Executive Direc-

tor for the AfDB, Mihe Gaomab II, said this week.

Responding to a *Nampa* article published in the local media, including *Namibian Sun* last month, on the AfDB's latest Country Strategy Paper for Namibia between 2014 and 2018, Gaomab said in fact Namibia was hailed as a regional example of

a country moving in the right direction.

"The bank concluded that there are pressing challenges which are similar [to those] faced by African countries, but not in the way the article concludes [with] a damning verdict on the country's excessive bureaucratic [red] tape, regulatory bottlenecks, and weak public private partnerships," Gaomab said.

The article, entitled 'African Bank gives damning verdict on Namibia', interpreted the bank's analysis to conclude that the country was fraught with weak institutional capacity, that it failed to use its mineral wealth to address poverty and inequality, and that due to an uncondusive environment, neighbouring countries South Africa and Botswana offered better foreign investment opportunities.

"The strategy paper commended Namibia for its good track record on political and economic governance where it has indicated that Namibia ranked sixth out of 52 African countries, and is the seventh least corrupt country in Sub-Saharan Africa," Gaomab said.

Namibia's infrastructure, he said, was in fact ranked fourth on the AfDB's Infrastructure Development Index, while the country was lauded in the paper as a "great advocate of regional integration owing to its small domestic market and the need to benefit from a larger SACU and SADC market". The report, Gaomab said, was meant to be viewed by government as encouraging, consultative and in a positive light, condemning the media's emphasis on a few singular negative comments as going against that spirit.

"The bank was explicit that Namibia performed well in terms of its business environment indicators, which reflected the government's commitment to implement policies and create a regulatory environment that fosters private sector development," Gaomab said.