



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

HONOURABLE TJEKERO TWEYA

DEPUTY MINISTER

MINISTRY OF TRADE & INDUSTRY

AT THE ANNUAL STAKEHOLDERS GALA DINNER

HILTON HOTEL, WINDHOEK

05 DECEMBER 2013

Master of Ceremonies

**Mr Festus Hangula, Chairman of the Namibian Competition
Commission**

Fellow Commissioners and Staff

**Chairman of the Committee on Competition Law and Policy, OECD,
Dr Frederic Jenny**

Lead Private Sector World Bank Specialist, Mr Chunlin Zhang

**Chairperson of the Competition Law Forum in Namibia, Mr Hans-
Bruno Gerdes**

Members of the Media

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I was asked to deliver the keynote address. When I was occasioned by such an esteemed invitation, I felt it in my DNA as my duty to accept and rightfully so as the Namibian Competition Commission resorts under the policy guidance of the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

It gives me great pleasure to share this evening in your presence, at this august event, held in honour of the Commission's stakeholders, the appreciation and acknowledgement we have of the Namibian Competition Commission.

We as the Ministry of Trade and Industry are appreciative that the Commission has proven its tasks of ensure judicial victory on safeguarding public interests in Namibia. I am referring of course to the Wal-Mart Massmart merger which we won for the Nation of Namibia in terms of safeguarding local supplier capacity, small businesses development and employment at the stores that Wal-Mart owns today.

As you all are aware, the mandate of the Ministry of Trade and Industry is to create an enabling environment required for the functioning and operation

of businesses in the country, for both domestic and foreign companies alike, and especially emerging small businesses led by entrepreneurs, entering the formal business sector for the first time.

I am made to understand that the competition policy and law is a new field and no doubt have confidence that as a young and emerging regulator in Namibia, that the Commission has ensured full and I mean full implementation of the competition policy and law in Namibia by just winning that case. Why? Because it set the bar for other cases and as the Chairman has indicated, it is business as usual at the Commission doing what we have asked them to do as a policy directive and by legislation.

I am observing Master of Ceremonies that the Commission is gaining strong momentum in terms of its work on merger regulation and enforcement. I have to state that when I did my own research that the Commission is actually the fastest growing institution if not in the region then in Africa.

I want to assure the Chairman and the CEO that we are happy with your work as you have put us on the map internationally. As a Ministry, We further take due cognizance that Competition policy and law is a fundamental aspect in economic development. I am encouraged that you admit that there is more room needed for enforcement in Namibia. Our economy is highly enclaved and concentrated and there are too many economic problems within and between markets in Namibia.

Thus Namibia should effectively enforce the law in the coming year in order to realize the benefit of fair competition to economic development. This is more pressing as we are coming into a election year where we must not only exercise political democracy but on economic democracy by giving voice and muscle to those businesses and consumers who are squeezed or marginalize within the competition market place through effective competition enforcement.

I am also informed that you supervise all businesses who are making profits in Namibia. Therefore, the scope of supervision that the Commission does is multifaceted and pertains to our need as Ministry that all business are

properly run and are growing playing their crucial role to the overall economic growth of the country for National Development Plan and for Vision 2030.

I do take comfort that Namibia is the second country in the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), to implement the competition law after South Africa, and the sixth to do so in the Southern African Development Community, (SADC) after South Africa, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This shows the commitment of the Namibian Government to the Commission in its strides to proper administration and effective implementation of competition law and policy to advance economic growth and development for all its citizens.

Master of Ceremonies

We must never shy away where Namibia comes from in terms of its developmental agenda. Due to the past commercial injustices suffered by the Namibian people which encroached on their freedom of choice and quality of life, including what and where to purchase their goods and services and at what price, I am confident that the Commission is playing its role to promote

a competition culture in which the consumers and businesses alike can derive tangible benefits from free, spirited and fair competition.

I would like to applaud the Chairman of the Board, their fellow Commissioners, the Secretary to the Commission and the entire staff of the Commission for a work well done and commend to continue what you have been doing thus far, in ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to enter and operate in the market arena in Namibia.

I have to give it to you that building such an important institution for any economy is no easy task. But you managed to reach many milestones in your short existence. The Ministry continues to provide stewardship and takes pride in you now having a fully functional corporate governance structure, well-developed institutional policies and your commitment towards building local human capacity. As the Chairman alluded in his welcoming remarks, it was not easy to establish the Commission, but certainly it was not impossible. So Well done!

I am aware that the Commission is in the process of reviewing the Competition Act No.2 of 2003 to ensure that it becomes an instrument able to fully apply the law in matters pertaining to the enforcement of the law. I trust that this review will strengthen the mandate of the Commission.

I am also informed that the Commission voluntarily undertook to be peer reviewed by United Nations on Trade and Economic Development (UNCTAD) in order to determine its efficiency and effectiveness in its functionalism and operations. This is an indication that the Commission is of the strong intent to carry out its given regulatory function in its totality.

Chairman and your team, please be rest assured that the Ministry will continue to work closely with the Commission and render its support if and when needs be. The Ministry fully supports the review of the Act process to its entire conclusion and appreciates that you are also developing a competition policy that can speak to our efforts on domestic competitiveness and global outreach in areas of trade, investment, industrial and SME reforms in Namibia.

I also appreciate the issue of competitive neutrality as we need to understand the cost of doing business in Namibia and I hope the new study will further shed light on what drives our cost structures which keep prices so high even for sensitive food supplies and basic service provision in Namibia.

And with that I wish you a happy birthday Namibian Competition Commission and many happy returns!

And on that note I wish stakeholders a merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year historic year 2014.

I thank you.