

# MICHAEL HU

## The sky is the limit

Kaula Nhongo

and policies as well as helping the work towards a national competition policy.

NaCC was established in 2009 with the role of safeguarding competition in the country across all sectors of the country's economy.

As per Section 2 of the Competition Act, the purpose of the Act is to enhance the promotion and safeguarding of the competition in Namibia in order to promote the efficiency, adaptability and development of the Namibian economy and to promote employment and advance the social and economic welfare of Namibians.

Thus far, the NaCC has worked through more than 180 cases in the mergers and acquisitions as well restrictive business practises (RBPs).

"NaCC's future is extremely ambitious as much more work lies in store. Given the low competitiveness of our local economy, the Commission works towards contribution to such efforts of raising national productivity," he says.

Commenting on his new role, Humavindu says; "Well, I have always primed my career to start at a sectoral agency to mainly pick-up skills in real sectors.

Thereafter, I wanted to go into the supply side of things to understand how enablers are set up or governed (which was the DBN, in terms of financing).

My main intention was to improve the pickup skills in terms of regulatory economics and the Commission offers me such an opportunity. I am thus grateful", he explains.

Michael has his hands full as he is responsible for conducting economic analysis and evaluating the impact of the Commission's cases and policy initiatives on the economy.

Dr Michael Humavindu: The newly appointed assistant secretary for Research and Development at the Namibian Competition Commission (NaCC).

**T**he newly appointed assistant secretary for Research and Development at the Namibian Competition Commission (NaCC), Michael Humavindu, faces a daunting task; maintaining stability in the Namibian economy, which was ranked 83 out of 142 countries in a recent Global Competitiveness Index.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry has set the target of ensuring that Namibia's competitiveness ranking improves to the third position by 2014.

The Commission's work will revolve around helping to attain that position through appropriate sectoral research, review of laws

# MAVINDU:

His role also includes providing independent guidance on methodological issues for economics in the application of Namibian competition rules. He will also be overseeing market or sectoral studies from a competitiveness perspective, as well as co-ordinating the Commission's work on national competition policy as well as consumer protection economics.

The former manager/head of research for the Development Bank of Namibia was born and bred in Windhoek by a single mother who struggled to look after him and his siblings but that did not stop him from excelling.

Michael completed his high school studies at St Joseph RC High School, Dóbra. Driven by an insatiable appetite for success, he graduated with a BA in economics from the University of Namibia in 1997.

This was just the beginning as later, his academic pursuits landed him in the UK where he did his MSc in Finance and Investment.

Realising that the sky was his limit, he went for a PhD in Economics in Sweden in 2008.

1996, however, marked the beginning of his career when he worked for the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) as an economist until 1999.

Some of the notable achievements at MET have been pioneering initiatives in putting an economic price to tourism, wildlife and trophy-hunting at MET.

Answering to calls for seeking challenges and opportunities, he joined the DBN where he became the head of research. At DBN, he became the lead analyst on projects such as the Ohorongo Cement, Ekango Salt Processing, and Leo, amongst others.

"It is gratifying to see an idea evolve into a concept and then into a fully-fledged market as in wildlife or into a subsector or full sector such as the Ohorongo Cement case.

"The immense skills one picks up in deal structuring, project finance, negotiations and at times how the country operates at the highest levels of state, are highly valuable," he asserts, adding that one should always appreciate opportunities for growth and further aspects of learning but at the same time be pensive about the road that lies ahead and the need to perform optimally to bring in some added value to the well-being of our country.

It is clear that Humavindu is a hard worker whose passion to excel lifted him from a poor background to be one of the people responsible for effecting change in the Namibian economy.

"I believe in my own way, I have paid and still pay my professional dues. One's work and output do not go unnoticed in the market place. In addition, I am grateful to be among a coterie of Namibian economists who are actually 'putting in the work' - people like John Mbango, Paul Egelse, John Ashipala, Daniel Motinga, Uahatjiri Ngaujake and my boss, Mihe Gaomab II. In our little ways, we see our output being appreciated out there," he boasts.

To ensure consistency in the NaCC, Michael says he will always approach projects or company initiatives with a strategic mindset to essentially give direction.

"I also believe and promote delegated authority to those reporting to me and ensure a consistent and all-inclusive capacity building programme for the division. Finally, it is essential in this position to bring attention to detail.

Improving the analytical rigour to the Commission work is of paramount importance that helps improve overall company's accountability and ensuring that it meets its mandate."

According to him, the economy is still in a developmental state, so there are ample opportunities for an economist to contribute and work on practical issues affecting the economy.

"Economics is more of a calling, I believe. Perhaps if you are in it for money, you might just have to find your niche elsewhere," he stresses.

His major challenge is to foster industrial organisation-driven type of data.

"A major task of my position is to ensure that such work is initiated and completed to ensure that the output of the commission is more evidence-based and that our decisions are arrived at much more optimally and efficiently," he says.

He advises the youth to "constantly seek and make use of all opportunities to upgrade yourself. Get involved in what is happening around you, there is no such thing as 'politics is for old people'.

Remember, decisions made today will most likely be your burden as a youth of today to pay off, or your seeds. So get involved to ensure that such decisions do not weigh on you or your seeds." **PF**