



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

**REMARKS BY: HON. ENGELBERTH NAWATISEB**

**AT THE 6<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL ICT SUMMIT**

**DATE: 09 OCTOBER 2019**

**VENUE: NIPAM, WINDHOEK**

**TIME: 08:00**

**Director of Ceremonies;**  
**Honourable Stanley Mutumba Simataa, Minister of ICT;**  
**Honourable members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee**  
**on ICT and Innovation;**  
**The Executive Director: Ministry of ICT;**  
**Captains of the ICT industry;**  
**Distinguished invited Guests;**  
**Youth delegates from every corner of the country;**  
**Members of the media;**  
**Ladies and gentlemen;**

A Very Good morning to you all;

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final day of the 6<sup>th</sup> National ICT Summit, the Youth day, a day deliberately set a side to focus on the youth and their great innovations. I strongly believe that the ICT Summit has enriched with great success, its intended delegates, visitors, exhibitors, sponsors, Youth, students and the ICT sector in general.

I have noted with great pleasure that this year's theme "**Accelerating Digital Transformation**" provided numerous productive, educational and meaningful conversations, discussions and presentations from various ICT stakeholders throughout the Summit.

It is equally impressive to note the valuable contribution, participation and your presence as distinguished Namibian youth during the preceding and most importantly today, the Youth Day, which is dedicated in honour of the Namibian Youth in ICT for a brighter future for our industry and country alike.

This special day is a testament and recognition by the Government of Namibia of the central role that the youth hold in the development of the country and the future prosperity of the nation. All policies, strategies, discussions and presentations held at this Summit and other platforms about digital transformation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution may ultimately prove to be futile if they fail to prepare the youth to understand and successfully live in the drastically changed economy that these developments are promised to bring about.

It is imperative that the majority, if not all, of the youth in our country understand the content and the context of the new economy and way of life that the digital transformation is bringing about.

Platforms like this **ICT Summit Youth Day** provide exactly the necessary opportunity for youth to be exposed to the concepts and technologies that will completely dominate their daily lives in a few short years. I therefore congratulate all the youth delegates present here with the serious intent to learn, research and navigate the complex reality that we are heading into.

The times we live in have forced everyone to become a student. No one has the full grasp of the impacts of the **Fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Industrial Revolution**. However experts warn us that it is a revolution that will fundamentally change the way in which we live, work, deliver services and even the way we relate to one another.

As we have learned yesterday, digital transformation is the application of ICT concepts and tools to all the aspects of our lives. It will impact everything from Government, Business, Education, Health Care, Employment and how individuals live their daily lives.

In order to prepare our youth to live in a digitally transformed Namibia and beyond, it is important that we ask ourselves some tough questions and seek answers to them. Some of the questions we must ask include:

- What will digital transformation mean for Namibia?
- How will the 4th Industrial Revolution impact the youth employment dynamics in Namibia?
- What jobs and opportunities will be unlocked?
- What skills will the youth need to develop in order to survive and thrive in a **“Smart Namibia”**?
- What challenges will we face on the road to this transformation?

**Ladies and Gentleman;**

No one expert or institution has all the answers to these and other complex questions. These questions and concepts have to be answered in a consultative manner by all stakeholders.

It is for this reason that at the ICT Summit of last year the Ministry announced that it would set in motion the process of developing a **National Digital Strategy** in partnership its stakeholders. The **National Digital Strategy** is intended to provide a comprehensive road map that will guide the country's digitization agenda and help us to answer some of the complex questions.

I am very happy, indeed, to announce that the process of developing this strategy has been started and it is at an advanced stage. The Namibian youth are an important key stakeholder in the development of the digital strategy and their concerns and inspirations should be discussed and captured in order to be reflected in the strategy.

**Director of Ceremonies,**

Throughout the day, there will be panel discussions, presentations and discussions on matters related to youth tech entrepreneurship, innovations and the many other challenges and opportunities that the Namibian youth are facing in the journey towards digital transformation.

Many innovative youth will be showcasing their products and concepts. We know that Namibia is confronted by a bulging sea of unemployed youth. The digital world may offer new entrepreneurial and employment opportunities. What needs to be done is to maximize the emergence of new job opportunities by establishing policies and financial support regimes that will inspire young people to fully exploit their entrepreneurial and innovative potential.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

In closing, I would like to congratulate all the youth presenters and exhibitors for their hard work and courage. In showcasing their innovation they not only open the doors for their own opportunities but also inspire others to do the same.

We are excited and eagerly anticipating to witness the unveiling of your innovative ideas, projects, solutions, for Namibia and the world at large.

I would therefore like to encourage the various business institutions and delegates to encourage innovation in the Namibian youth by supporting and investing in the innovative concepts that will be showcased.

I thank you.