

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Thursday 19 February 2026, Windhoek, Namibia

Remarks by Ambassador Selma Ashipala-Musavyi, MP, Minister of International Relations and Trade of the Republic of Namibia on the occasion of the launch of the report “Rapid assessment of value addition and diversification within and beyond the critical energy transition mineral value chain”

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD.



**REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR SELMA ASHIPALA-MUSAVYI, MP,
MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND TRADE OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF
THE REPORT “RAPID ASSESSMENT OF VALUE ADDITION AND
DIVERSIFICATION WITHIN AND BEYOND THE CRITICAL
ENERGY TRANSITION MINERAL VALUE CHAIN”.**

Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD),

Honorable Ministers,

Your Excellencies, members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Senior Government Officials,

Captains of industry,

Representatives of Civil Society,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. In establishing the 8th Administration, Her Excellency Dr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, President of the Republic of Namibia has adopted the theme: Unity in Diversity, Natural Resources Beneficiation and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development.” Therefore, the launch of the report on the *“Rapid Assessment of value addition and diversification within and beyond the critical energy transition mineral value chain.”* is an actualization of the theme of the 8th Administration and I am truly delighted to be here this morning. In the same vein, I extend sincere appreciation to UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for its continued support and partnership that has culminated in us convening this important engagement. I shall be remiss if I do not express Namibia’s deepest thanks and appreciation, to the Government of Japan for its generous financial support towards the preparation of this timely report.

2. Ladies and gentlemen, we live in a world that is characterized by global tension. As a result, we are witnessing a gradual shift toward a global economy structured around industrial policy, geopolitical and economic rivalry, accompanied by the scramble and control of strategic mineral resources. This assessment therefore comes at a decisive moment in Namibia's sustainable development trajectory.

3. As a nation, we remain steadfast in ensuring that our hard-won political gains continue to translate into social progress and economic advancement of our people. At the heart of this ambition is a clear and deliberate strategy to diversify our economy and strengthen domestic value addition. Hence, for the 8th Administration, economic policy priorities are firmly anchored in maintaining fiscal stability while deepening investment as we continue to prioritise the expansion of our productive capacity.

4. Namibia, like for many African economies, historically, has been characterised as an extractive economy. And while the extractive sector remains vital, we must however avoid being perpetually confined to a model based predominantly on the export of raw materials, in line with our aspirations of "Vision 2030" and the prosperous "Africa We Want".

5. The evidence presented in this report places emphasis on the fact that there are practical and achievable pathways to move beyond this status. In particular, the growing global demand for energy and transition minerals presents a strategic opportunity. By promoting beneficiation and strengthening local linkages, we can enhance industrial development, create employment, build specialised skills, and secure greater market access for Namibian products. The measure of our success must be reflected not only in export volumes, but in the depth of domestic participation across value chains, to support our quest for “Growth at Home”.

6. At the same time, diversification must extend beyond large-scale industries, as small and medium enterprises remain essential drivers of innovation, employment and inclusive growth. Strengthening this sector will be critical to reducing vulnerabilities and ensuring that economic expansion is broad-based and most importantly, sustained.

7. Ladies and Gentleman,

8. Regional integration and global partnerships continue to provide important platforms for scaling production and accessing markets. Strengthening intra-African trade can expand regional manufacturing by providing businesses access to larger markets at lower costs. Namibia’s engagement within SADC, SACU, and the African Continental Free Trade Area reinforces our commitment to value addition and productive capacity development as foundations for meaningful regional integration and

economic empowerment. These platforms enable production at scale and competitive industries within our continental market. Integration helps attract investment into key sectors and support trade expansion, which in turn fosters industrial growth. I am particularly pleased that the report speaks to the need to embed inclusion, sustainability, gender equality and regional integration across the board.

9. Namibia's development experience demonstrates the need for a fine balance between the contributions of commodity exports and the risk and limitations caused by over reliance on them. It is thus not a coincidence that through our 6th National Development Plan launched in July 2025, as part of the stewardship of natural resources, government is compelled to optimise the benefits derived from natural resources, specifying that they must be invested in sustainable development and the upliftment of livelihoods. This has birthed the imperative to actively translate our resource endowment into diversified industrial activity and sustainable growth. In this regards, coherent policy coordination, institutional strengthening, and targeted investment in productive capacities is essential.
10. The report we will launch today, provides a practical framework to guide this process. Its recommendations offer a foundation for informed policy decisions and structured collaboration between government, the private sector, and development partners. The true impact of this assessment will depend on how effectively we incorporate

its findings into national planning, investment strategies, and implementation mechanisms.

11. The Ministry of International Relations and Trade remains committed to advancing policies that promote industrialisation, structural transformation, and expanded participation in regional and global value chains. We look forward to continued collaboration with UNCTAD and our partners in translating analysis into measurable development outcomes that will tangibly impact the lives of our people.

12. We commend UNCTAD for its technical support and for facilitating this constructive dialogue. Let us approach this report not merely as another document, but as a strategic roadmap and effective tool to guide Namibia's economic transformation towards socioeconomic development and prosperity for all our people, now and for generations to come.

I thank you.