



# **Republic of Namibia**

**OPENING STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HON. SELMA ASHIPALA-MUSAVYI**

**MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND TRADE,**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE**

**OPENING CEREMONY OF THE COMMONWEALTH BUSINESS SUMMIT**

**18 JUNE 2025**

**WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA**

- Honourable Dr. Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, Secretary General of the Commonwealth;
- Honourable Commonwealth Trade Ministers,
- Honourable Minister from Namibia
- His Excellency Wamkele Mene, Secretary General of the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat;
- Members Parliament
- Representatives of the Africa and Import Bank (Afreximbank)
- Representatives of the Namibia Chamber and Commerce of Namibia (NCCI)
- Representatives of the Namibia Local Business Association (NALOBA)
- Heads of Institutions and Development Partners,
- Distinguished Business Leaders and Delegates
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
- Members of the Media,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Welcome to this historic occasion, the inaugural Commonwealth Business Summit, which we have convened alongside the 2025 Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting. Namibia is proud to host the first Business Summit. On behalf of the Government and People of the Republic of Namibia, I warmly welcome you all.

2. As we gather here from across the Commonwealth, our common goal of building our resilience through unlocking investment opportunities, strengthening partnerships and charting a more inclusive and resilient path for

trade and investment within our Commonwealth Family unites us. Indeed, we are meeting here to work toward the goal of growing trade between ourselves to 2 trillion US Dollars.

3. This inaugural Business Summit allows us to emphasise the spirit of “Ubuntu”- humanity towards others – a value that in Namibia is deeply lived. Let us build upon that same spirit at this Business Summit, while being focused on investment promotion, to grow visionary partnerships and advance our shared Commonwealth values and goals, to forge meaningful linkages between governments and businesses, policy and practice, and aspiration and implementation.

**Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,**

4. Namibia, like the rest of the Commonwealth, is pregnant with opportunities. Member countries in our Commonwealth Family are richly blessed with natural resources and with a wealth of young people of great potential, who are ready to contribute to the global economy. Our task is to facilitate the unlocking this potential through collaboration and partnerships across our borders.
5. Indeed, our commonwealth and heritage are underpinned by our 56 member countries, comprised of 2.7 billion people or a third of the global population. I believe that the Commonwealth can harness the vision of promoting local production and intra-Commonwealth trade through building a unique platform that aligns our aspirations to address youth unemployment, build resilient value chains, embrace the green and digital economies and reduce dependence on extractive exports.

6. Taking place at a time of global uncertainty shaped by rising geopolitical tensions, climate threats, trade disruptions, food insecurity and widening economic disparities, we must focus on building resilience, the theme launched at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Samoa last year. Most of us here represent developing and smaller economies under great economic and climactic pressure.
7. We have in common our commitment to the Commonwealth Charter that emphasizes democracy, equity, sustainability, and mutual respect. Now, let us translate those collective values into practical trade and investment partnerships toward achieving intra-Commonwealth trade of US\$2 trillion by 2030. Let us build a transformational agenda that brings prosperity to our small and medium enterprises, women-led businesses, digital innovators, and local manufacturers.
8. I am delighted that this Business Summit places SMEs, women entrepreneurs, digital trade, and climate-conscious supply chains at the centre of our dialogue, themes that resonate with Namibia's own strategic priorities and reflect the kind of leadership that will define the next chapter of global inclusive and digitally integrated trade.

**Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Business Leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

9. Your engagements this week will allow you to learn about Namibia's investment opportunities across various sectors such as energy, infrastructure, transportation, agriculture, sustainable supply chains and digital innovation. I

encourage you to engage openly, explore opportunities, and partner with us to unlock the full potential of these sectors.

10. Namibia is ready to support our Commonwealth Family in our joint business journey. Namibia offers a stable policy environment, investment support mechanisms and a youthful and trainable workforce.

11. I am pleased to note that the Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat has made time to be part of the Commonwealth Business Summit and be able to provide the status of the African Continental Free Trade Area. We commend the progress that has been made regarding the continental integration agenda. It is important that Africa increase intra-African trade, industrialise Africa and be able to attract investment in the continent. I urge the Commonwealth member states to support the efforts of the AfCFTA integration process.

12. With respect to national investment opportunities, kindly engage with our institutions, such as the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB), the Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI), and the Namibia Local Business Association (NALOBA), who are well positioned to facilitate investment and business collaborations.

13. I urge you all to focus on concretised partnerships, bankable ideas and a renewed commitment to building a Commonwealth that is connected by history and unified in economic prosperity.

14. May this Business Summit mark the beginning of new friendships, new ventures, and new hope for our peoples. Let us navigate the future together, boldly, inclusively, and sustainably.

15. It is now my distinct honour, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia, to declare the Commonwealth Business Summit officially open.

**I thank you, and once again, welcome to Namibia!**