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How Paladin spent N$2.1b to restart Langer Heinrich

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Business Insights Weekly...

Why generational cuspers are crucial in the workplace

"Cuspers" excel at connecting multiple generations within the workforce. But what exactly is a cusper, and why should organisations pay attention to them?

A cusper is someone born at the intersection of two generations, embodying a blend of traits from both. These individuals act as a generational bridge, often referred to as "generational glue" or a "micro-generation," linking one generation to the next.

An unbalanced generational mix in an organisation could have an impact on certain key employee metrics like turnover, engagement and employee satisfaction. It also creates diversity to have a healthy mix. The question is: Does your organisation have enough employees who are considered generational glue or cuspers to connect the major generational groupings in your organisation?

These cuspers will be this vital generational glue as they link the generation groupings. The main purpose of generational glue would be to link the different generation groupings to a common purpose, culture and jargon language. This will also facilitate cross-collaboration, improving teamwork and positively impacting team dynamics. Having a balanced generation mix could ensure higher employee engagement levels in your organisation as you have the important generation glue that interlink them.

Higher engagement levels in your organisation could, in turn, lead to higher productivity levels. Higher productivity levels will positively impact the organisation's bottom line. Cuspers or micro-generations will also positively impact an organisation's culture and lead to more team cohesiveness and a greater sense of belonging for all employees.

Cuspers are proof that a one-size-fits-all approach around reward solutions does not work and why flexibility in benefits, working methods, and pay structures is important. It is key to accommodate these employees who do not feel they fit in a specific generational construct. Allowing a great range of choices will empower all employees to customise their employee remuneration journey to meet their needs and wants.

Generations in the workplace will always be fluid as one generation ends and a new generation starts their careers. Having the right balance can have a long-term positive effect on employees and the organisation. So, it is worth looking more closely at the generational demographics of your organisation and making generational glue work for you.

>>>PROJECT HAD PEAK WORKFORCE OF 1200

How Paladin spent N$2.1b to restart Langer Heinrich

Business Express Writer

The first drums of uranium produced from the Langer Heinrich Mine (LHM) in March 2024 marked the mine's return to commercial production—a rebirth that attracted total project expenditure of slightly above N$2.1 billion.

Indeed, the return to commercial production was the culmination of an extensive work package that commenced in July 2022 and focused on the repair, refurbishment, and debottlenecking of the existing LHM plant, which was placed into Care and Maintenance in 2018.

Paladin's Chief Executive Officer, Ian Purdy, highlights that the miner successfully achieved the commercial production targets set for FY2024 on time and below the restart project and operational readiness budget, and the LHM will continue to ramp up during FY2025. In the same breath, Purdy also identifies key areas in which Paladin dedicated funding to make the restart project a resounding success.

The key repair & refurbishment work streams delivered to return the LHM to production included: civil/structural improvement works (concrete, steel), mechanical refurbishment works (pumps, pulleys, conveyors, ancillaries), piping & valve refurbishment and replacement works (pipes, valves, racks, mounts), electrical improvement works (uninterrupted power supply units, lighting, plant electrical), and control & instrumentation refurbishment works (repairs, replacement, calibration, and recommissioning of all instruments). Furthermore, debottlenecking upgrades are delivered to derisk production and increase throughput capacity and operational availability of the plant.

On the other hand, improving environmental and sustainability aspects of the plant and operations included: an automated, dustless drumming Final Product Recovery (FPR) plant, control system upgrade, addition of leach feed surge tanks, tailings dewatering upgrade, ROM bin upgrades, primary classification cyclone upgrade, pre-leach and CCD feed well upgrade, product thickener improvements, NamWater infrastructure upgrade, NamPower infrastructure upgrade, all permits, licenses, and necessary contracts have been secured and remain in good standing.

Ian Purdy

Importantly, it was done so with over 2.5 million project hours worked with no serious injury or environmental incident. The project had a peak workforce of 1,200. The ongoing operations of the LHM are in the hands of a full-time local workforce of over 300, supported by 165 experienced mining contractors from Trollope Mining, a leading African mining contractor.

The first customer shipment from the LHM departed Walvis Bay, Namibia, in July 2024, and shipments will continue under the company's long-term offtake agreements with top-tier industry counterparties.

"With a robust operational plan, strong performance

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since the restart, and the presence of a highly experienced team on the ground, we are confident in the ability of the LHM to generate significant value for our shareholders," Purdy says.

Following the achievement of commercial production at the LHM on 30 March 2024, production ramped up with 517,597 lb U_3O_8 produced to 30 June 2024. "The return of the Langer Heinrich Mine (LHM) to production was a major milestone on Paladin's pathway to becoming a globally significant independent uranium producer. As we progressed the restart of the LHM, we simultaneously and deliberately executed a range of strategies aimed at transforming our company to ensure that we were in a formidable position to take advantage of both our asset base and the strong structural demand outlook for uranium," Purdy further affirms, adding that during FY2024, Paladin achieved an outstanding performance in safety, completed the restart project, delivered first production at the LHM, and achieved the company's strategic objectives.

"The return of the LHM to production is supported by a geographically diverse world-class offtake contract book, with offtake agreements secured with top-tier counterparties in the United States, Europe, and Asia. These organisations represent the leading offtake parties in the global uranium industry. Our contract book with these leading counterparties supports our operations whilst retaining exposure to the spot price, ensuring we have leverage to strengthen uranium pricing fundamentals. We will continue to layer our contract book to ensure we provide the right balance of risk protection and pricing upside to our shareholders."

Paladin has a portfolio of over 440 Mlb of high-grade mineral resources in key global uranium jurisdictions. These globally significant high-grade exploration assets provide a strong future growth pathway for Paladin.

"At Langer Heinrich, our exploration activities are focused on reserve and resource expansion. The strong uranium price delivers the potential to lower the cutoff grade and optimise the mine plan to increase available tonnes for processing. Furthermore, workstreams are underway to determine key areas for exploration and infill drilling in the mining leases adjacent to our current mine plan. In the medium term, we will consider plant capacity expansions, ore sorting technologies, and heap leaching opportunities to maximise the value from this world-class asset.

"Paladin has a clear strategy for sustainable value creation. We have returned the LHM to production and commenced shipping to our leading global counterparties and are now focused on ramp-up activities at the mine to reach nameplate capacity. We will deliver development and exploration potential from our global portfolio of exploration and growth opportunities. And finally, we will embed sustainable returns and establish a capital management framework to drive long-term value to shareholders via returns on capital, organic growth, and M&A activity," Purdy said.

Namibia's seafood exports hit N$4.1 billion

By Business Express Writer

Namibia's seafood exports increased in value by 1.2 percent year over year to N$4.1 billion (in the first quarter of 2024.

The exports, which comprised fish, crustaceans, molluscs, and other aquatic invertebrates, largely remained the same makeup of seafood products that earned the country N$4 billion in the same quarter in 2023, according to the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA).

The European Union, specifically Spain, was the top export destination market for Namibian seafood products in the quarter, buying up a 29.7 percent share. Frozen hake fillets was the largest export from the African nation.

Other key export market destinations during Q1 2024 include neighboring Zambia, which bought up a 16.1 percent share, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which bought 14.1 percent of the exports. The latter country largely shopped for horse mackerel.

Namibia's total landings declined by 16.7 percent to 97,077 metric tons (MT), compared to 116,471 MT in the same quarter in 2023, as the country's Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources stepped up its compliance efforts regarding quota allocations to safeguard the country's marine resource.

The highest decline was seen in tuna, which dropped 95 percent from 2,970 MT in Q1 2023 to a 145 MT in Q1 2024. Other species that recorded a notable year-over-year decline in landings included crab, which declined 61 percent; horse mackerel, dropping 21 percent; and monkfish, which slid 22 percent. Namibia's hake landings recorded the smallest decline at 4 percent.

During the same quarter, Namibia cut down on its imports of seafood products, even as the country's fish consumption levels increased, in spite of the lower landings.

NSA said Namibia's seafood imports in Q1 2024 totaled N$155 million, down from N$168 million recorded in the corresponding quarter of 2023.

The value of the imports, NSA said, signaled an indication of progress toward Namibia's effort to cut down on its seafood import bill while simultaneously increasing its exports.

Around 35 percent of those imported products came from South Africa, one of Africa's largest hake producers, while the U.S. and Spain exported 32.6 percent and 9.7 percent of seafood to Namibia, respectively.

Elevate's U-pgrade™ uranium beneficiation process is a game changer

By Business Express Writer

Alongside uncovering new discoveries through active exploration programs, Elevate Uranium has distinguished itself via its wholly owned and patented U-pgrade™ beneficiation process, which it – and many market analysts – believe could be a game changer for uranium production and economics.

Currently, the explorer has five drill rigs on the go across its project portfolio in Namibia, a country known for its near-surface uranium ore bodies, which generally means uranium concentrations are less than 20m deep and hosted in sediment.

Surficial ore is ideal for U-pgrade™, a process Elevate Uranium developed in-house using ore from its 61Mlb Marenica project in Namibia's Erongo region.

"We were focused on trying to add value to our assets in Namibia," EL8 managing director Murray Hill said in a recent interview.

"Conventional processing really didn't cut the mustard because the costs were too high, so we developed this process that concentrates and rejects gangue minerals which don't contain uranium."

By rejecting 95% of the mined ore mass before the leaching stage, EL8's U-pgrade™ process produces a low-mass, high-grade uranium concentrate.

"Leaching is the highest unit cost operation of any uranium processing facility, so lowering the mass to be leached has a huge impact on the cost structure," Hill said.

"It has shown potential to lower the cost base by 50% for capital and 50% for operations as compared to conventional processes."

That point of difference alone opens the doors to countless development pathways.

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Simple but effective

Calcrete ores contain calcite which consume a lot of acid, thus the ores can't be leached in acid. The top 3 to 4 metres can contain a substantial amount of sulphate, which consumes alkali, the alternative leach method to acid.

Thus the top 3 to 4 metres of the ore can not be economically processed using conventional methods.

EL8 thought if it could develop a process that would reject the acid consumers, that meant it could then leach in acid and bring that top three to four metres back into the ore.

"U-pgradeTM not only lowers the cost base, but it increases the total ore resource we can process," Hill said.

"We decided to patent the process and build the company around it – we've been acquiring assets over the last five to six years that we could add value through application of U-pgrade™.

"It took about two to three years to develop but when I explain it to people, they just go 'wow, how simple is that'."

Hill said the company has tested every calcrete deposit in Namibia with the U-pgrade™ process and has even tested its Angela asset in Australia with it.

"Angela has a high acid consumption, and the two previous owners didn't know what to do with it, but we've come in, conducted a few bench scale tests and managed to reduce the acid consumption by 80%," Hill said.

"The U-pgrade™ process has made a big difference to the cost of the Angela project and combined with all the other projects in Namibia we've worked on, we're very confident that U-pgrade™ is going to work quite well on Koppies and other projects that we have."

Metallurgical testwork samples have been collected from Koppies for subsequent testing using the U-pgrade™ process with results to inform the design of an U-pgrade™ pilot plant, planned for 2025.

Operation of the pilot plant is expected to prove the U-pgradeTM process on a continuous basis and at scale.

Appetite for overdrafts rapidly declines

By Business Express Writer

The uptake of overdraft has witnessed rapid decline on an annual basis, registering negative growth of 23.3% y/y in July 2024, a sharp contrast to the 6.8% y/y growth recorded in July 2023, as corporates focused on debt repayment.

According to Simonis Storm, mortgage loans also continued to decline, while there was some recovery in the other loans and advances category.

"Despite being the smallest component of credit extended to businesses, the instalment and leasing category remains vital in maintaining corporate credit," says Simonis Storm.

Overall, in July 2024, the private sector experienced a modest growth in credit extension of 1.8% y/y, matching the pace seen in June but indicating a slowdown compared to the 2.6% y/y growth recorded a year ago. Although this represents a deceleration, it still stands as the third-highest growth rate observed this year.

"However, the year-to-date average growth of 2.0% highlights a concerning trend, as it represents the weakest period for credit expansion within the first seven months of the year over our two-decade dataset. This sluggish credit growth, combined with persistently high levels of non-performing loans, raises concerns about the overall health of the financial sector."

Credit extended to businesses, which comprises about 38% of total credit, showed a modest increase, rising to 0.8% y/y in July 2024 from 0.5% y/y in the previous month. This is however an improvement from the negative growth of 1.2% y/y observed in July 2023.

Instalment and leasing credit extended to corporates grew by 26.7% y/y in July 2024, up from 16.6% y/y in July 2023, though it represents a slight deceleration from the 27.3% y/y growth observed in June 2024.

According to the Bank of Namibia, this growth has been primarily driven by the car rental industry, which has benefited significantly from the rebound in tourism activity.

The tourism sector, one of the hardest hit by COVID-19, is now showing substantial signs of recovery, not only in the automotive industry but also in increased passenger arrivals and higher occupancy rates at hospitality establishments.

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Supporting this positive trend, a total of 1,172 new vehicles were sold in July 2024, exceeding prepandemic levels. Notably, rental agencies purchased 141 new vehicles, a significant increase compared to 54 units sold in the previous month.

Credit extended to households, which accounts for the largest share of private sector credit, grew by 2.5% y/y in July 2024. This marks a deceleration from 2.7% y/y in June 2024 and is markedly below the 5.5% y/y growth seen in July 2023.

"The situation for other loans and advances has also deteriorated, with growth dropping sharply to 1.4% y/y, from 15.9% y/y growth seen in July 2023, reflecting a tighter credit environment. However, this does represent a modest improvement over the 0.8% y/y growth recorded in June 2024. "This decline in other loans could indicate a shift in household borrowing preferences, potentially due to rising interest rates or a greater inclination toward more secure forms of credit. Meanwhile, mortgage loan growth remained steady at 1.9% y/y, consistent with the previous month.

In contrast, instalment and leasing credit saw a modest increase of 6.9% y/y compared to the prior month, suggesting that, despite minimal growth, there remains some appetite for financing durable goods or vehicles," adds Simonis Storm.

By the end of July 2024, the banking industry experienced a decline in liquidity, largely attributed to reduced diamond sales. The diamond sector continues to grapple with challenges, particularly the rising competition from lab-grown diamonds in global markets. Conversely, international reserves saw an increase during July 2024, reaching N$60.8 billion. According to the Bank of Namibia, this growth was driven by higher Southern African Customs Union (SACU) receipts and an uptick in Customer Foreign Currency (CFC) placements. At this level, the foreign reserves offer 4.1 months of import cover, exceeding the international benchmark of 3.0 months, thereby providing a solid buffer for the economy.

In a surprising move, the Bank of Namibia's monetary policy committee decided to implement a 25 basis point rate cut at its latest meeting, reducing the repo rate to 7.50% and the prime rate to 11.25%.

Although these rates remain relatively elevated, the reduction offers some relief to Namibian households and businesses by lowering borrowing costs.

"Despite this rate cut, we anticipate that private sector credit extension growth will remain modest in the near term. This is due to the lag effect of interest rate changes, where it typically takes some time for the impact of rate adjustments to fully materialize in the broader economy. Looking ahead, our projections suggest that inflation will stabilize at around 4.9% year-on-year by the end of 2024. Additionally, we foresee another 25 basis point rate cut at the December monetary policy meeting, which would bring the year-end interest rate to 7.25%. We expect the central bank to carefully observe the outcomes of this monetary easing before considering any further policy changes," explains Simonis Storm.

BRICS emerges as Namibia's top market for exports

By Business Express Writer

There was a notable change in Namibia's top economic export destinations in July 2024 with the BRICS countries collectively emerging as the largest destination for Namibia's exports, with a share of 28.2% of total exports, a Simonis Storm trade report released last week reveals.

The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) ranked second, accounting for 27.2% of Namibia's exports, followed by the OECD countries, which contributed 22.5%. The European Union (EU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) excluding SACU took the fourth and fifth positions, with shares of 16.2% and 15.7%, respectively.

SACU retained its position as Namibia's leading supplier of imports in July 2024, accounting for 42.9% of total imports. The BRIC countries followed in second place, making up 20.7% of all imports, primarily supplying petroleum oils and wheat. The OECD and the European Union (EU) ranked third and fourth, accounting for 20.0% and 12.5% of total imports, respectively.

In July 2024, China emerged as Namibia's main export destination, accounting for 27.6% of total exports, followed by South Africa at 21.4%, and Zambia at 10.1%, according to the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA). On the import side, the main sources were South Africa and China, with shares of 42.1% and 12.2%, respectively. The United Arab Emirates was the third largest import source, contributing 7.0% to Namibia's total imports, mainly in the form of petroleum oils, while Zambia provided 4.1%, largely in nickel ores and concentrates.

Namibia's trade activity amounted to N$22.0 billion in July, reflecting a decrease in both exports and imports compared to June 2024. The trade deficit widened to N$2.1 billion from N$689 million in June 2024. However, this was an improvement compared to the trade deficit of N$3.7 billion recorded in July 2023. This change represents a year-over-year reduction in the trade deficit of 43.8%, although it marks a month-over-month increase of 201.2%.

"During the month under review, Namibia's export bill decreased to N$9.9 billion, a decline of 23.5% month-

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over-month (m/m) from the N$13.0 billion recorded in June 2024. However, it represented a yearover-year (y/y) increase of 21.2% compared to the N$8.2 billion registered in July 2023. The year-onyear growth in exports was primarily driven by three main products: Uranium, which generated a trade surplus of N$2.5 billion, non-monetary gold with a trade surplus of N$1.3 billion, and fish, contributing N$1.2 billion.

“Imports for the same period stood at N$12.0 billion, marking a decrease of 12.2% m/m but an increase of 1.0% y/y. The primary contributors to imports were petroleum oils, which recorded a deficit of N$1.6 billion. This was followed by motor vehicles for the transportation of goods, with a deficit of N$564 million, and motor vehicles for the transportation of persons, which recorded a deficit of N$298 million,” Simonis Storm said.

Sea transport was a key channel for Namibia’s exports during this period, with a total export value of N$5,315.7 million, although this marked a decline compared to the previous month. Uranium and fish were the main commodities exported by sea. In contrast, road transport experienced an increase in export value, reaching N$2,854.2 million, largely driven by the export of petroleum oils, rotating electric plants and parts, alcoholic beverages, and specialized machinery for certain industries. Air transport, while still important for high-value exports like gold and precious stones, saw a notable decline, with export values falling from N$3,581 million in June to N$1,802.8 million in July.

On the import side, road transport led the way, bringing in goods worth N$7,036.9 million, an increase from the previous month. This mode was particularly significant for importing motor vehicles, both for goods transport and special purposes. Sea imports however decreased to N$4,511.1 million in July 2024, which coincides with a slight increase in the Baltic Dry Index (BDI), averaging 1,925 in July, up slightly from 1,922 in June. The BDI, a key measure of global shipping costs, is indicative of modest shifts in sea freight rates, potentially contributing to the observed decrease in sea imports. Air imports experienced a slight increase to N$494.6 million, while inland waterways, though a smaller contributor, saw an import value increase to N$3.8 million.

“These trade patterns are closely influenced by global market trends. The Brent crude oil price averaged USD 83.9 per barrel in July. The fluctuations in oil prices, combined with the trends in the Baltic Dry Index—ranging from 1,922 in June to 1,716 in August—directly affect sea transport, especially for commodities like petroleum oils that rely heavily on maritime shipping.

Additionally, with Brent crude oil prices showing a slight downward trend—from USD 83.9 per barrel in July to USD 78.9 in August— transportation costs might decrease somewhat, but the overall impact will depend on how these fluctuations balance against the shipping costs,” said Simonis Storm.

Here is all you need to know about changing EFT regulations

By Business Express Writer

The Bank of Namibia has re-emphasised that on 30 September 2024, the determination on the conduct of Electronic Fund Transfers within the National Payment System also known as PSD-9 will become effective. In addition, the Directive on the Speed and User Fees and Charges of Common Monetary Area (CMA) Transactions also known as PSDIR-9 will also become effective on 30 September 2024.

PSD-9 regulates how EFT payments must be processed within the country and how cross-border transactions between Namibia and other SADC countries including the Common Monetary Area should be processed. In summary, PSD-9 says that domestic EFT transactions should be processed by domestic banking institutions and on domestic payment systems, while regional transactions should be processed through regional payment systems.

This is to prohibit the practise whereby EFT transactions from Namibia to other CMA countries, particularly South Africa are treated like South African transactions and not cross-border payments. This practice is prevalent for both EFT credits and EFT debits.

On the other hand, PSDIR-9 is a Directive to the 4 commercial banks namely Bank Windhoek Limited (BWHK), First National Bank of Namibia (FNB), Nedbank Namibia (NBN), and Standard Bank Namibia (SBN) to ensure that given the changes brought about by PSD-9, the cost and speed of cross-border payments to other CMA countries should not negatively impact its customers.

As a result of PSD-9, the following changes will become effective by 30 September 2024. First, EFT transactions between Namibia and the rest of the CMA countries will cease to exist. Meaning banking institutions within the CMA that allowed their clients to make cross border EFT payments will no longer be able to do so. This includes both EFT credit payments i.e., where a customer through internet banking or in branch initiates an EFT payment to someone in South Africa, and EFT debits where a customer has a debit order deduction from their account from a South African bank.

Second, to replace cross-border EFT payments, the banking institutions within the CMA have resolved to enable cross-border payments through the SWIFT network meaning that going forward, cross-border transactions in the CMA will be treated like any other cross-border transaction between Namibia and the rest of the SADC region. In summary, cross-border EFT transactions will be replaced with SWIFT-based transactions. It is important to note that cross border transactions within the CMA are all South African Rand (ZAR) denominated and will therefore not be subject to exchange rate conversion rates or fees. From 30 September 2024, debit order deductions from Namibian bank accounts will no longer be possible. Equally, debit order deductions by Namibian banks from South African accounts will also no longer be possible. Customers are urged to find alternative ways of making cross border payments to insurance companies or other entities where they have signed mandates to be deducted on a monthly basis. Other alternate payment methods include making direct payments, stop orders or scheduled payments. Customers should contact their respective banking institutions to make the relevant payment arrangements.

The current practice has raised several regulatory concerns. For instance, Namibian debit orders for domestic insurance products are frequently processed through South African banks, even though the insurance companies have a presence in Namibia. Additionally, EFT credit payments originating from Namibia to other CMA countries are treated as domestic transactions within South Africa. This treatment creates significant regulatory challenges,

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such as insufficient reporting and lack of transaction screening for potential illicit financial flows. PSD-9 aims to correct these practices by ensuring that all EFT transactions from Namibia are treated as cross-border transactions, thus enhancing the integrity and transparency of the national payment system.

The Bank acknowledges the feedback from various stakeholders, including concerns about potential disruptions to transaction speed, convenience, and associated costs due to this migration.

To address these concerns, the Bank has issued directives, such as the Directive on the User Fees and Charges and the Speed of Cross border CMA Low-Value Transactions (PSDIR-9), to regulate user fees, transaction speed, and reporting requirements. Additionally, the Exchange Control Circular No.2024/01 offers risk based regulatory reporting on cross-border low-value transactions below specified thresholds. Firstly, the Directive states that banking institutions that process cross-border payments within the CMA must ensure that Namibian recipients receive their funds within 2 business days when such funds are sent from South Africa or other CMA countries.

This is to ensure that Namibian banks do not unreasonably delay the processing of inward payments to their customers. Secondly, the Directive regulates the maximum fees banking institution can charge for both outward cross payments and inward cross-border payments to other CMA countries.

In summary, outward cross-border payments are capped at N$20.00 for transactions below N$1 million and at N$30.00 for transactions between N$1 million and N$5 million while for inward cross-border payments, transactions are capped at N$25.00 for transactions below N$1 million and at N$35 for transactions between N$1 million and N$5 million. Banks may not charge more than the aforementioned regulated prices for transactions within the stipulated thresholds. The 4 banking institutions that provide cross-border payment capabilities have resolved to go-live earlier than 30 September 2024 with the new cross-border payment methods. This means that customers of the respective banks will be able to use the new cross-border payment channels between 09 and 16 September 2024. This is a proactive approach by the banking institutions to ensure that the system is fully operational and stable by 30 September 2024. Customers are urged to engage their respective banks to get more information on the new methods and channels of making and receiving cross-border payments within the CMA.

The Bank emphasises that this change to use the SWIFT network to process cross-border payments within the CMA is a temporary solution. Plans are underway to develop a more permanent regional payment infrastructure that will better serve the needs of all CMA countries. In the interim, the Bank of Namibia remains committed to ensuring a smooth transition and urges all stakeholders, including banking institutions, corporates, and the general public, to take the necessary steps to comply with PSD-9 by the 30th September 2024 deadline. This proactive approach will help maintain an efficient, secure, and competitive national payment system, promoting greater innovation across the region.

The Africa-America Institute to honour Geingob

By Business Express Writer

The Africa-America Institute (AAI) has announced that at its 40th Annual Awards Gala - a premier event celebrating the achievements of Africans and the global African diaspora – the Institute will honour the late former Namibian President Hage Geingob with a heartfelt tribute.

The gala will take place on Tuesday, September 24, 2024, at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York City, coinciding with the United Nations General Assembly.

President Geingob, who passed away on February 4, 2024, was a champion of education and a steadfast supporter of AAI's mission. His legacy will be celebrated by numerous African leaders, including Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, President of the Republic of Namibia and AAI Alumnus, and Monica Geingos, 3rd First Lady of the Republic of Namibia, celebrating his life and legacy and highlighting his contributions to Namibia's independence and education across Africa. AAI President Kofi Appenteng stated, "President Geingob's passing was a profound loss for Namibia and the entire African continent. We are privileged to honor his memory and celebrate his enduring impact across Africa and its worldwide diaspora alongside many African leaders, current and past, at the 2024 AAI Gala."

This year's gala, themed "Bridging Cultures & Igniting Futures: An Evening Honoring African and Diasporan Visionaries in Arts and Culture," will feature a Presidential Fireside Chat with His Excellency Nana Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, and His Excellency Joseph Boakai, the President of Liberia. The discussion will be moderated by Jennifer

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Zabasajja, Bloomberg Television's Chief Africa Correspondent & Anchor, providing a platform for insightful dialogue on leadership, education and development across Africa.

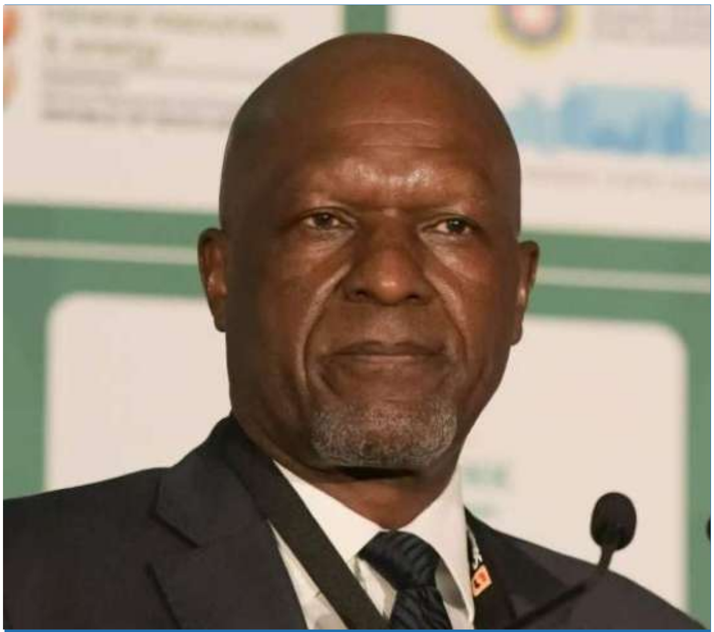
The event will also spotlight Reeta Roy, President and CEO of the Mastercard Foundation, and feature musical performances by Honey & Vinyl. Chiney Ogwumike, ESPN Host, NBA Analyst, and 2-Time WNBA All-Star, will serve as the evening's emcee, ensuring an engaging and memorable celebration.

Established in 1984 as a way for AAI to contribute to building new narratives about Africa, the AAI Annual Awards Gala is the preeminent NYC based celebration of the achievements of Africans and the global African diaspora. Held annually during the United Nations General Assembly AAI's Awards Gala convenes distinguished guests, including Heads of State, Diplomats, international and senior U.S. government officials, business leaders, philanthropists and scholars for a night showcasing the successes of Africa and its worldwide Diaspora.

Proceeds from the Annual Awards Gala fund AAI's programs and initiatives including AAI Scholarships, School Services Program, African Diplomatic Orientation and Engagement Program, and the State of Education on Africa Conference.

AAI bridges Africa and its diaspora to catalyze a more sustainable and equitable world.

Taking a transcontinental, multifaceted approach, our programs span across four impact pillars: Liberatory Education; Repair and Healing; Economic Sovereignty; and Community Building. Since our founding in 1953, over 23,000 Africans have received AAI scholarships and fellowships. Included in this community are Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa; Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte; Nangolo Mbumba, President of the Republic of Namibia; the late Dr. Wangari Maathai; Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, former United Nations Under-Secretary- General and Executive Director of UN Women; Strive Masiyiwa, Founder & Executive Chairman, Econet Wireless; and thousands more.



Mines and Energy ministry nominated for AEW award

The Ministry of Mines and Energy has been nominated for the Reformer and Change-Maker of the Year award at this year's awards ceremony of the African Energy Week (AEW): Invest in African Energy.

Taking place during the event week from November 4-8, the award ceremony recognizes the companies who are spearheading the development, innovation and growth of Africa's energy industry.

Other nominees in this category include: South African National Energy Development Institute, Ministry of Hydrocarbons, Republic of the Congo, Ministry of Mineral Resources, Oil & Gas, Angola and the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Egypt.

This esteemed award honours a government or public sector entity that has demonstrated exceptional leadership and commitment to reforming the energy sector in Africa. It recognizes the efforts of governments and public sector institutions that have driven change, fostering an enabling environment for energy growth, economic development and social progress.

The AEW: Invest in African Energy Award winners will be announced during this year's award ceremony. The event aims to celebrate the ongoing contributions by energy companies, investors and individuals to driving projects forward and unlocking long-term benefits for African countries.

AEW: Invest in African Energy is the platform of choice for project operators, financiers, technology providers and government, and has emerged as the official place to sign deals in African energy.

Namibia-China relations expected to grow - Katjavivi

By Business Express Writer

Namibia and China have maintained a cordial diplomatic relationship that "can only be expected to grow from strength to strength," Peter Katjavivi, speaker of Namibia's National Assembly, told Xinhua in a recent interview.

"Today we have an exceptional, good, cordial relationship. We partner in many respects. We fully understand each other," said Katjavivi, noting that the relationship goes back to the time before Namibia's independence.

Strengthening the bilateral relationship "is our wish and our determination," he said. "I am absolutely confident that this is what we want to see happening between our two countries."

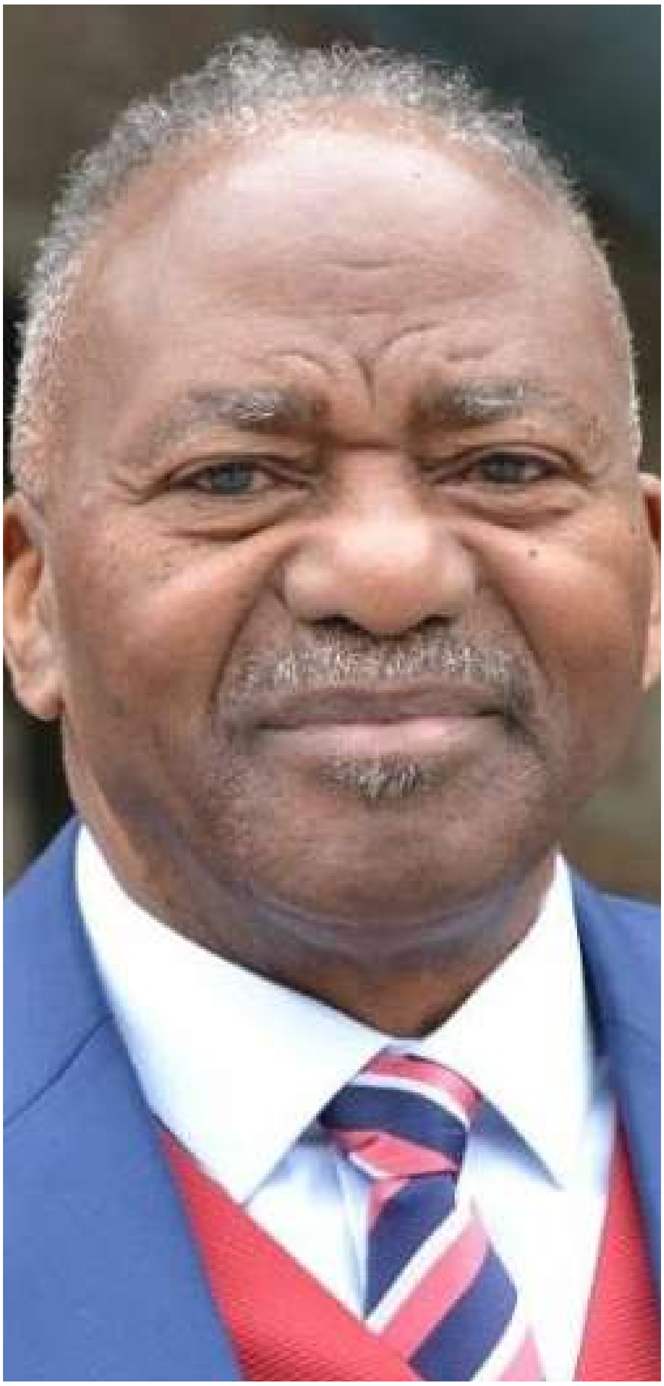
As for the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, he said it would strengthen the existing cooperation between China and Africa and would be "a great opportunity to benefit from each other."

During the interview, Katjavivi, in his 80s, proudly shared one of his precious memories of China.

On Oct. 25, 1971, the 26th session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted, with an overwhelming majority, Resolution 2758, which restored all rights of the People's Republic of China and recognized the government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate representative of China in the United Nations.

When China finally restored its lawful seat at the United Nations, "I was there at the UN General Assembly on that day," he said, adding that he remembered the international solitary that prevailed to ensure China was given its rightful place within the world body.
Katjavivi recalled that as the debate started, many countries from Africa and Asia spoke up in support of China.

"It was a dramatic moment in history," he said, adding that many of these countries, what are called the Global South today, supported the restoration of China's lawful seat at the United Nations.
"It is something that I will always remember," he said, adding that when the Global South is united, "it helps



Peter Katjavivi

to shape major decisions that affect so many people."
In August, Katjavivi took part in the 2024 interregional seminar on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for parliaments of developing countries, co-hosted by China's National People's Congress and the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

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taking trips to Beijing, Shanxi Province and Tianjin.

"When I was here in the 1960s in the national capital, it did not look like this. What I saw around that time had been totally transformed. It's in a remarkable way, in such a short period of time ... this is unique," he said, adding that it is "the determination and hard work of the Chinese people that brought that about."
Katjavivi expected the two countries to strengthen research cooperation and personnel exchanges in agricultural modernization and vocational training.
At the Jinzhong National Agriculture High-tech Zone Smart Farm Demonstration Base in Shanxi Province, he tried to establish cooperation between the Namibian and Chinese agricultural research institutions.

After visiting the Tianjin Public Vocational Training Center of China, he wrote a report, suggesting the establishment of a faculty or a department at the Namibian University of Science and Technology to train vocational instructors, hoping to apply China's experience to Namibia.

Before heading back to Namibia, Katjavivi told Xinhua that during this particular visit to cities in China, he observed and was briefed on various activities that form part of the transformation process that "brought the development in China to such a high level."

"There is a great deal of lessons to be learned from the Chinese experience. I'm going back to Namibia ... with wonderful ideas that I would like to take up with my colleagues at the government, university and parliament levels, to see how we can implement some of these wonderful ideas," he said.

Forsys appoints Malpenga as Director

Forsys Metals Corp has announced the appointment of Pierfranco Malpenga as a member of the Board of Directors of the Company, effective immediately.

Pierfranco has over 25 years experience in finance, in particular as an Investment Manager and Advisor. He has held various roles as CIO and Member of the Investment Committee of asset management companies and family offices.

He began his career at Mediobanca and worked for more than 8 years at Goldman Sachs in their equity division. Pierfranco graduated cum laude with a degree in Economics from Bocconi University in Milan.

'We are pleased to welcome Malpenga to our Board", said Forsys Chairman Martin Rowley.

He brings valuable knowledge and experience in all aspects of the capital markets which will be beneficial to the Company as it continues to advance its Norasa Uranium Project."

Forsys Metals Corp. is an emerging uranium developer focused on advancing its wholly owned Norasa Uranium Project, located in the politically and uranium friendly jurisdiction of Namibia, Africa.

The Norasa Uranium Project is comprised of the Valencia Uranium deposit (ML-149) and the nearby Namibplaas Uranium deposit (EPL-3638).

Leveraging AfCFTA for Africa's oil, gas, and critical minerals

By Nyembe Chapeshamano

Africa stands at a critical juncture where its abundant natural resources—oil, gas, and critical minerals—can serve as a catalyst for economic development and sustainable growth. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the world's largest trade bloc by the number of member countries, presents an unprecedented opportunity to harness these resources for intra-African trade, value addition, and the creation of resilient supply chains. By doing so, Africa can not only accelerate its economic development but also assert itself as a key player in the global economy.

The Role of AfCFTA in Transforming Africa's Oil & Gas Sector

The oil and gas sector has long been a cornerstone of Africa's economic landscape, particularly in countries like Nigeria, Angola, and Algeria. However, the sector has traditionally been export-oriented, with crude oil and natural gas being shipped to foreign markets for processing. This approach has limited the continent's ability to capture the full economic benefits of its hydrocarbon resources.

AfCFTA offers a platform to change this narrative. By promoting intra-African trade, the agreement can help African countries develop regional value chains in the oil and gas sector. For instance, African nations can collaborate to refine crude oil locally, share expertise, and build infrastructure that supports the entire value chain—from extraction to processing and distribution. This would not only create jobs but also retain more value within the continent, reducing dependency on foreign markets and enhancing energy security.

Moreover, AfCFTA can facilitate the development of regional markets for oil and gas products,

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ensuring that energy needs are met across the continent. For example, surplus production in West Africa could be exported to energy-deficient regions in East Africa, thus fostering regional integration and economic interdependence.

Critical Minerals: A New Frontier for Intra-African Trade

The global push towards green energy has placed Africa's critical minerals, such as cobalt, lithium, and rare earth metals, at the center of the energy transition.

These minerals are essential for the production of batteries, electric vehicles, and renewable energy technologies. However, much like oil and gas, Africa's critical minerals have historically been exported in raw form, with little to no value addition taking place on the continent.

AfCFTA provides a framework to reverse this trend by encouraging the establishment of processing and manufacturing hubs across Africa.

Countries with significant mineral reserves can partner with those with advanced manufacturing capabilities to produce finished goods such as batteries and electric vehicles. This would not only increase the value captured within Africa but also create a more diversified and resilient economy.

Intra-African trade in critical minerals can also support the development of a circular economy, where waste materials from one process are reused in another.

For instance, scrap metals from South Africa could be processed in Ghana to produce new products, reducing waste and lowering the environmental impact of mining activities. Such an approach aligns with global sustainability goals while fostering economic development.

Building Sustainable Supply Chains and Infrastructure

One of the key challenges facing Africa's resource sectors is the lack of adequate infrastructure and supply chains.

AfCFTA can play a pivotal role in addressing this by encouraging investment in transport, energy, and communication infrastructure. Improved infrastructure would not only facilitate the movement of goods across borders but also

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lower the cost of doing business, making African products more competitive on the global stage.

In addition, AfCFTA can help harmonize regulations and standards across member states, making it easier for companies to operate across borders. This would reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks and create a more predictable business environment, attracting both local and international investors.

Addressing the West's Selective Environmental Concerns

A significant point of contention in Africa's resource sectors is the selective environmental concerns expressed by Western countries. While there is significant opposition to the financing of coal, oil, and gas projects due to their environmental impact, the extraction of critical minerals is often encouraged—even though mining activities can be equally damaging to the environment.

AfCFTA offers Africa a platform to negotiate better terms with international partners, ensuring that environmental standards are applied consistently across all sectors. African countries can insist on sustainable mining practices that protect the environment while still allowing for the extraction of critical minerals. By taking a unified stance, Africa can also push for greater support in developing green technologies that reduce the environmental impact of mining and energy production.

Conclusion: A Path to a Prosperous Africa

The successful implementation of AfCFTA has the potential to transform Africa's oil, gas, and critical minerals sectors, driving sustainable economic development across the continent. By fostering intra-African trade, value addition, and the development of robust supply chains, AfCFTA can help Africa capture more value from its natural resources, create jobs, and build a more diversified economy.

Moreover, by addressing the selective environmental concerns of the West and insisting on consistent standards across all extractive industries, Africa can ensure that its development is both sustainable and equitable. In doing so, the continent can take control of its economic destiny, reducing dependency on external powers and laying the foundation for a prosperous and self-reliant future.

As Africa stands on the threshold of this new era, the effective utilization of AfCFTA in the oil, gas, and critical minerals sectors will be crucial in realizing the continent's full potential.

Namibia working on framework to institutionalise sustainable finance

By Business Express Writer

Bank of Namibia Governor, Johannes !Gawaxab has outlined the steps the Bank of Namibia is taking to align the financial sector with the country's green hydrogen agenda and foster a resilient, low-carbon economy.

Essentially, he announced the development of a Sustainability Framework, which will institutionalise sustainable finance within the financial industry and establish a dedicated industry body to champion sustainability within the Namibian financial system.

Speaking at the Global African Green Hydrogen Summit last week, the Governor was discussing the evolving role of central banks in addressing climate change, highlighting the need for central banks to respond to environmental externalities that impact their core mandates. He noted that the physical and transition impacts of climate change create financial risks that must be mitigated to ensure macroeconomic and price stability.

!Gawaxab opened his speech by acknowledging the severity of the climate crisis, which has shifted from a future concern to a present reality. He emphasised that central banks, traditionally focused on maintaining price stability and safeguarding financial systems, now face the critical responsibility of addressing the economic and financial risks posed by climate change.

He further highlighted that developing countries, including Namibia, are disproportionately affected by the physical impacts of climate change. The Governor pointed to recent studies indicating that low- and lower-middle-income countries could face GDP losses of up to 10% and 7.3%, respectively, by 2030 due to climate-related disruptions.

Governor !Gawaxab emphasised that Namibia's commitment to becoming a leader in green hydrogen production represents a significant opportunity for the country to lead in the emerging green economy. He acknowledged the challenges associated with this ambition but expressed confidence in Namibia's ability to rise to the occasion.

However, the Governor also cautioned that Namibia must navigate two critical transitions: ensuring a just energy transition and managing expectations over the next Office Use Only\General 5 to 10 years as the country awaits revenues from oil, gas, and renewables, including green hydrogen, to materialise. He emphasised that this cautious approach will be essential to securing long-term prosperity while transitioning to a green economy.

The Governor concluded his speech by inviting institutional investors and international stakeholders to join Namibia on its journey toward a green economy. He highlighted Namibia's commitment to creating a regulatory environment that supports the country's hydrogen potential, including the introduction of the Synthetic Fuels Act to establish standards that conform to international guidelines.

Said Governor !Gawaxab: "Namibia's journey toward a green economy is not just a policy decision; it is a call to action. Together, we can harness the power of innovation and investment to create a greener, more prosperous Namibia. The world is watching, and the time to act is now."

Flagship project of China-Namibia mining cooperation empowers locals

By Business Express Writer

In July 2019, the state-owned China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) and the multinational corporation Rio Tinto completed the handover of the Rossing uranium mine, officially taking over the project and bringing new vitality to the mine that was originally scheduled to be shut down.

The Rossing project has now become a "ballast stone" for the natural uranium supply guarantee for nuclear power and a "propeller" for deepening global uranium mining capacity cooperation. The CNNC's acquisition and investment in the mine changed not only the fate of the desert mine, but also the fate of mine workers and many Namibians.

Under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Africa Cooperation Forum mechanism, economic and trade cooperation between China and Africa is becoming increasingly close. More and more Chinese companies are investing and developing in Africa, growing together with the African market. These companies provide employment opportunities, conduct skills training, and cultivate batches of outstanding local talents. With the accelerated pace of Chinese companies "going global," the social status and labor skills of African women are also steadily improving.

After the CNNC acquisition, the Rossing project has not only created employment opportunities for many local women, but has also improved their economic and social status. More importantly, it has cultivated a group of high-quality female employees, empowering them to live independent and self-reliant lives.

Equally treated

Angela Kapapilo, principal resource geologist at the Rossing uranium mine, is one of the representatives. Angela joined Rossing in November 2010. After the CNNC acquisition, the company actively introduced new technologies and equipment, and the production has reached record highs year after year.

At the same time, the company has conducted efficient research on extending the life of the mine and restarted the Z20 uranium deposit exploration project. Kapapilo was then appointed as principal resource geologist, in charge of leading the Z20 exploration project, including geological, resource, geotechnical engineering, as well as hydrogeological research.

The Z20 deposit is currently in the deep exploration stage, with plans to drill over 30,000 meters by 2024-25. This will provide strong support for the feasibility study of developing over 50,000 tons of resources in the Z20 deposit and lay an important foundation for extending the life of the Rossing uranium mine for another 20 years.

"In the years working at the Rossing, I have gained experience in different positions. Serving as the principal resource geologist is a highlight of my career, thanks to the training provided by the CNNC. This is also a testament to the importance and cultivation of African employees by the Chinese company," Kapapilo told the Global Times.

While working at the Rossing, Kapapilo said, she feels that Chinese enterprises treat every employee equally, enabling them to have the opportunity to become a leader. Especially in the mining industry, being able to achieve personal ambition as a woman gives her

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a great sense of accomplishment. With the help of the Chinese company, she completed a master's degree in geology. Learning advanced geostatistics and machine learning techniques sharpened her ability to make wise decisions in mineral resource management.

The flexible working arrangements in the Chinese company also allowed her to better balance work and family responsibilities.

"I often take work home while also pursuing part-time studies and other personal interests, so the challenge is mainly around ensuring that I am a supportive and intentional parent. I do my best to achieve a work-life balance by following a schedule, and ensuring family time is prioritized," she said.

Kapapilo would often go to the mine, where vegetation is sparse, rocks are exposed, rainfall is scarce, and the wind is strong, to track project progress, identify problems, gather information, and seek solutions. Under her leadership, Chinese and local employees work closely together to complete their tasks on time. "All Rossing employees have benefited from the CNNC acquisition, as the alternative would have been the mine closure, leading to an increased number of unemployed Namibians. The recent approval of the Phase 4 plan to extend the life of the mine to 2036 means that most employees will be employed beyond the original 2026. Furthermore, Rossing procures a significant number of supplies and services from Namibian companies, and the company's improved profitability in the last few years has contributed to company income tax revenue for our government," Kapapilo said. "This means that the benefit of Rossing's continued operations via the investment by the CNNC positively impacts the livelihoods of not just Rossing employees, but also the broader Namibian society."

Heartwarming and practical actions

The Global Times learned from the CNNC that the Rossing uranium mine, through the establishment of the Rossing Foundation, supports local medical, educational, and sports projects, with its footprint covering the entire Namibia.

The Rossing uranium mine has maintained a local procurement rate of about 75 percent annually, effectively driving local economic development. It also provides employment opportunities for about 1,000 direct employees and about 1,200 contractor employees, indirectly benefiting more than 10,000 people.

Besides actively cooperating with technical schools, the mine has launched female youth entrepreneurship training programs. Since 2019, eight young women in Namibia have successfully established their own businesses with the support of the Rossing.

Education conditions in Namibia are poor, especially in rural and remote areas where resources are severely lacking. Working with UNICEF and the Namibian Ministry of Education, the Rossing has also helped improve the quality of education in remote schools in the country. In 2023, the company donated materials, textbooks and teaching equipment to schools, as well as established three classes for mathematics, physics, and chemistry across Namibia, providing training courses for nearly 3,000 students.

These heartwarming and practical actions have benefited more Namibians, earning strong support from the local government and high recognition from the surrounding communities.

Namibian Minister of Mines and Energy Tom Alweendo said at a press conference held in Namibian capital Windhoek in June that Namibia's mining industry is one of the largest contributors to the country's economy, with Chinese investment playing a significant role in the development of the uranium mining sector.
In 2023, Namibia's mining sector contributed up to 14.4 percent of the country's GDP, Alweendo said, noting that Chinese investment has been instrumental in establishing Namibia as one of the world's largest producers of uranium, according to the Xinhua News Agency.

The longer Kapapilo works with Chinese employees, the more she intuitively feels the benefits of the latest technology brought along by Chinese enterprises.
"Since my interactions with Chinese colleagues in 2019, I have been directly exposed to the technological innovations within the CNNC and Chinese companies. There was one instance during which we wanted to source a particular technology based on internal metallurgical test results. However, no suitable product was available on the market. Our supply chain general manager then introduced us to a Chinese institution, which used the information we gained from metallurgical tests to help design a suitable solution," she said.

In March this year, Kapapilo came to visit Beijing and Central China's Hunan Province. She was very impressed by the hospitality of the Chinese people, the diversity of Chinese cuisines, the richness of Chinese culture, and the level of Chinese technological advancements.

"I normally wear masks because I have allergic reactions to various airborne respiratory tract irritants. I was pleasantly surprised when I realized there were almost no fumes from vehicles on the roads as all the vehicles we saw were electric! It gave me an impression of what carbon neutral could look like, albeit far into the future for most countries in Africa."
Global Times

Shoprite to sell furniture business to Pepkor

…Namibia businesses included in deal

By Business Express Writer

Shoprite, has agreed to sell its furniture business including the OK Furniture and House & Home brands to discount retailer Pepkor, the companies said.

Pepkor will get a business operating more than 400 stores including in Namibia.

The deal excludes the Angola and Mozambique operations.

“The purchase consideration represents about 4% of Pepkor’s market capitalisation and will be settled in cash,” Pepkor, whose market value was N$80.49 billion on Monday, said in a statement.

That suggests a price of about N$3.2 billion.

It also includes the Shoprite Furniture credit loan book and related insurance arrangements in addition to inventory and certain fixed assets, Pepkor said.

Shoprite CEO Pieter Engelbrecht said in a separate statement that the supermarket group wanted to focus on its core grocery operations.

“We found ourselves at a crossroads with the business’s future growth and profitability hamstrung by the requirement of a level of investment that would have resulted in us re-directing capital and project management resources away from that currently dedicated to our food retail operations,” he said.

Shoprite’s furniture business contributed R7.2 billion or 3% to Shoprite’s group last full-year sales of R240.7 billion.

Pepkor already runs a Lifestyle business unit that comprises six household furniture, appliances and consumer electronics retail brands.

“The proposed transaction will allow Pepkor to expand its value proposition through a complementary product mix in furniture, bedding, appliances and consumer electronics, while also expanding its presence in under-represented regions,” it said.