



WELCOMING AND OPENING REMARKS

By

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Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN)

**At the Occasion of the launch of the ECN Electoral Calendar and
Democracy Campaign**

07 March 2024
Mercure Hotel
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

Hon. Erastus Uutoni, Minister of Urban and Rural Development, and
Keynote Speaker

Fellow Commissioners, Chief Electoral and Referenda Officer of ECN

Representatives of Political Parties' Liaison Committee

Representatives from Government Offices, Ministries and Agencies

Civil Society Organisations

Non-Governmental Organisations

Institutions of Higher Learning

Members of the Media

Distinguished Guests

Management and Staff of ECN

Ladies and Gentlemen

I stand on the protocol as established by the Programme Director

Good morning your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with immense pleasure that I welcome you to this important event – the formal **Launch of the 2024 Electoral Calendar and Democracy Awareness Campaign.**

This is a momentous occasion that brings together esteemed stakeholders including the Minister of Urban and Rural Development, Honourable Erastus Utoni and other members of parliament, representatives of government offices, ministries and agencies, political parties, organisations and associations, academia, civil society and non-governmental organisations, regional organisations and the media. Your commitment and support to our electoral processes is highly appreciated as we launch this important milestone in our democratic process.

Looking ahead, some of the most crucial tasks that lie before us are the General Registration of Voters and the management of the actual polls. These significant events require efficient and effective planning, coordination and execution. It is during this time, that we have the opportunity to empower our fellow citizens to exercise their democratic right and shape the future of our nation.

The Electoral Calendar that we are launching today is a comprehensive Roadmap that encompasses all electoral processes for this year. The Calendar outlines key milestones and activities to be carried out under each phase of the Electoral Cycle, namely **the pre-election phase, election phase, and post-election phase.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year 2024 marks the end of the life cycle of the current national voters' register. Hence, the upcoming elections will be preceded by a General Registration of Voters (GRV), **during which all eligible Namibian citizens will be expected to register afresh to cast their votes in the forthcoming elections.** In terms of the Electoral Act, No. 5 of 2014, as amended, the Commission is required to conduct the GRV every 10 years and compile a new voters register. The last GRV was conducted in 2014 when the Commission deployed a Biometric Voters Registration System for the first time.

Equally, I wish to inform you that the GRV will be conducted both inside the country and at all Namibian Diplomatic Missions as required by law, and this process will be conducted under the current Electoral Act, No. 5 of 2014.

Furthermore, as part of the preparations for the 2024 General Registration of Voters, and Presidential & National Assembly Elections, the Commission undertook a comprehensive electoral review process after the 2019 & 2020 Presidential & National Assembly Elections and the Regional Council and Local Authority Elections, respectively. This review resulted in, amongst others, the enhancement of the current Mobile Voter Registration System into the Integrated Mobile Voter Registration System (IMVRS). This is an "Integrated Solution," interfacing the voters' registration, voter identification and verification, registration of political parties and organisations/associations, nominations, and election results management modules.

The Integrated Mobile Voter Registration System leverages on technology to make voter registration more responsive and efficient, marking a significant milestone in our efforts to modernise and improve our electoral processes. The system incorporates advanced security and verification measures to ensure the integrity of the electoral processes.

The Commission had an opportunity to engage and present the Integrated Mobile Voter Registration System to our key stakeholders in this very same venue on the 19th of October 2023. This was followed by the piloting of the system in November 2023 and February 2024 through a mock registration process to ascertain its functionality and readiness before actual deployment in the field during the scheduled General Registration of Voters. I am pleased to inform you that the system meets all the requirements to carry out the registration of voters and subsequent electoral processes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, as we launch the Electoral Calendar and the Democracy Awareness Campaign, we are taking a significant step to demonstrate the Commission's preparedness to conduct the General Registration of Voters and the Presidential and National Assembly elections scheduled for later this year.

As a Commission, we are often asked the question about the voting methodology that will be used during the elections this year. I wish to inform you that the Commission will use manual ballot (conventional) voting methods during the upcoming Presidential & National Assembly Elections in 2024, and the Regional and Authority Elections in 2025.

In closing, I implore you, our esteemed stakeholders, to work with us to approach the upcoming elections with a sense of responsibility, integrity, and respect for the democratic principles that underpin our society. Let us remember that the right to vote is a fundamental right that must be upheld and protected. Together, we can ensure that our elections are free, fair, transparent and credible.

Thank you for your attention