MEDIA RELEASE

24 August 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT ON THE CALL BY THE PRESIDENT FOR NAMIBIAN BUSINESSES TO USE THE AFRICA CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA

1. The Independent Patriots for Change supports President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah's call for Namibian businesses to use the African Continental Free Trade Area and reach regional markets.

2. However, the Ongwediva figures expose the Government's failure to match its rhetoric with capacity. According to reports, **1,872** businesses applied for space, yet only **485** were accommodated. That left **1,417** entrepreneurs, **75.7%,** or nearly three out of every four applicants, outside the gate. A terrible failure to provide access to markets desperately needed by our entrepreneurs.

3. The same contradiction is visible on the Northern Trade Corridor. The reported **N$329 million**, **57-kilometre** Ondangwa–Oshikango railway has gone more than **two years** without a TransNamib train, while Government plans to spend **N$952.1 million** on railway infrastructure in 2026/27, including **N$946 million** in development expenditure, and claims a **1,000**-kilometre upgrade target.

4. Before asking taxpayers for more, Government must explain why the line already built **cannot** reliably move people and goods. This is not a minor administrative inconvenience.
5. The Namibia Statistics Agency's June trade bulletin put Namibia's first-half 2026 trade deficit at N$20 billion, imports of **N$87.2 billion** against exports of **N$67.2 billion**.

6. Five raw commodities reportedly made up **65.5%** of June exports. A country cannot close that gap by repeating **AfCFTA** at conferences while its entrepreneurs lack space, its corridor lacks service, and its export basket remains concentrated in raw materials.

7. Government must publish a costed, year-round OATF expansion plan; connect it to export-readiness, standards, finance, digital directories, customs and buyer matchmaking and table a Northern Corridor plan with freight targets, border arrangements, maintenance indicators and annual reporting.

8. The **N$952.1** million rail allocation must be judged by trains, tonnes, jobs and contracts, not by the size of the announcement.

9. The IPC will place these failures before Parliament through Notices of Questions and a Notice of Motion on AfCFTA implementation and public-value infrastructure.

10. We are not anti-investment or anti-development, we are against development theatre, speeches without space, rail without service, and trade policy without delivery. **AfCFTA** must mean access, not accession; markets, not meetings; and jobs, not just photographs.

Namibia is all we have

Namibia is not for sale

We must and can save it!

ISSUED BY: Ptr. Rodney Cloete (MP)

Shadow Minister of International Relations and Trade (MIRT)

For media inquiries or further information, please send an e-mail to i.nashinge@ipc.com.na or contact Ptr. Imms Nashinge on +264 812135525.