MEDIA RELEASE

26 August 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT ON THE ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY POLICY AND THE 500000 JOBS

1. President Netumbo Nandi Ndaitwa, repeatedly at rallies and during the SONA promised Namibians **500,000** jobs. That is an extraordinary promise, but jobs do not emerge from presidential speeches, ministerial flights, memoranda of understanding or photographs of delegations shaking hands.

2. Jobs come from an economic machine of businesses selling more, factories processing more, farmers reaching markets, infrastructure carrying freight and investment becoming operating enterprises.

3. The IPC therefore asks the question Government increasingly cannot avoid, **where is the economic machine** that will produce these **500,000** jobs?

4. Namibia formally launched trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) on 30 June 2025. In May this year, the Minister of International Relations and Trade reportedly stated that Namibia had since issued nine AfCFTA Certificates of Origin for exports to Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria.

5. Nine certificates are not nine exports, and we will not pretend otherwise. However, after all the speeches about a continental market, Namibians are entitled to know how many firms are actually using that market, what they are selling, where they are selling it and what those exports are worth.

6. The NDP6 has already established measurable export and market-access targets, the ruling SWAPO party led by the President wrote the scoreboard through its SMIP.

7. Let's then consider the infrastructure that is supposed to carry this new trade. TransNamib says the last recorded train movement between Ondangwa and Oshikango was on **12 July 2024**. The railway is reportedly usable and maintained.

8. Government says there is simply not enough cargo to make short trains commercially viable. There is no economic sense in running empty trains for political theatre. The politically serious question is different, **how does a Government promising 500,000 jobs** build and maintain trade infrastructure but fail to generate enough economic activity to use it?

9. At the same time, the Government's NDP6 requires rail to take a larger share of national freight, meanwhile, across the border, Africa Finance Corporation has reached financial close on **US$753 million** for the approximately **1,300-kilometre** Lobito railway in Angola, including **US$553 million** from the United States International Development Finance Corporation and **US$200 million** from the Development Bank of Southern Africa.

10. We welcomes that investment, a prosperous Angola is good for the region. Cargo does not follow speeches, it follows the route that is cheaper, faster and more reliable. A gateway is not declared, a gateway is used.

11. This is where Namibia's economic diplomacy enters the argument. Namibia needs a proactive Foreign Minister. Our diplomats must negotiate, travel and build relationships, not cut ribbons, hold national days and photo sessions.

12. That is not economic diplomacy, the public is entitled to ask for an economic result. **Which market opened? Which barrier disappeared? Which Namibian company won an order? Which announced investment became an operating business? Which factory opened? Which jobs were created?** That is not hostility towards diplomacy but the purpose of economic diplomacy.

13. The contradiction is becoming impossible to hide. We have AfCFTA and SADC. We have ports, railways, embassies and bilateral commissions. We hold investment conferences and instruments such as the NDP6. Yet, what Namibia still needs to see is the **conversion: agreement into market; market into exporter; exporter into cargo; cargo into processing; processing into factories; factories into jobs.**

14. If Government cannot show how that machine gets Namibia from today's economy to **500,000 additional jobs**, then 500,000 is not yet an economic programme. It is a campaign number looking for an economy. We will judge every major economic-diplomacy announcement against what actually translates to real jobs. We are no longer interested in counting ceremonies. We are counting conversions.

Namibia is all we have

Namibia is not for sale

We must and can save it!

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