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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**GOVERNOR !GAWAXAB URGES SOUTHERN STAKEHOLDERS TO RALLY BEHIND
ECONOMIC RECOVERY BY PRIORITISING COVID-19 VACCINATIONS**

1. The Governor of the Bank of Namibia, Mr. Johannes !Gawaxab, continues to engage stakeholders countrywide aimed at enriching understanding on how best to position Namibia to secure a sustainable economic recovery amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. His recent engagement in Keetmanshoop in the //Kharas region held on Thursday 7 October, follows highly subscribed events in Oshakati and Swakopmund hosted earlier in the year which bolstered national efforts aimed at mobilising stakeholders behind the singular goal of building back the economy better.
2. During the southern event attended by regional and local authority leadership, representatives from the business community, commercial banks, as well as civil society organisations, the Governor reminded stakeholders about the overall responsibilities of the Bank, such as the promotion of price stability and financial stability, which underpin sound macroeconomic fundamentals, necessary for economic development and advancement.
3. On the economic outlook, the Governor shared that the Namibian economy is expected to recover gradually during 2021 by 1.4% and then improve to 3,4% growth in 2022. This is on the back of most countries opening their economies and successful Covid-19 vaccinations. During the past five years, the local economy has been affected by persistent droughts, low mineral prices and now the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the demand for Namibia's exports, mainly minerals, is expected to pick up in 2021 as major economies are projected to make full recoveries. In relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is expected to remain a global health problem for the remainder of 2021, while vaccination campaigns are underway.

4. The Governor reiterated that Namibia is not out of the woods yet as far as the Covid-19 pandemic is concerned, despite the recent declining transmission and mortality rates. He was of the view that containing the pandemic and its spill-over effects should not be left to authorities alone but should be everyone's pre-occupation in order to reduce the impact on the economy which has been evident in job losses reported at 13 000 during 2020 and the first half of 2021. Therefore, vaccinations are essential to contain the pandemic and assist the country in reversing the economic misfortunes of late which have exacerbated inequality, unemployment and poverty.
5. The Governor was hopeful that the interventions implemented since April 2020 by the Bank of Namibia have assisted greatly to soften the blow to the economy and provide relief to struggling borrowers. The unprecedented relaxation of certain regulations by the Bank as the regulator of commercial banks has made it possible for banks to lend to critical sectors in the economy while also providing borrowers an opportunity to negotiate repayment conditions on their loans. These relief measures coupled with a low interest environment and low inflation continue to support growth in the economy.
6. He concluded by stating: "On the economic front, we are moving with the necessary speed and urgency to deal with our structural challenges. For Namibia to rebuild the economy and secure a sustainable recovery it doesn't require a magic bullet but a strong response and acceptance of Covid-19 vaccines in our communities. Our call, as the central bank, is for community, church and civic leaders to mobilise their communities *en masse* to get vaccinated and give this economy a shot in the arm."
7. The Regional Governor of //Kharas region, Hon. Aletta Fredricks, welcomed the high-level interaction with the leadership of the central bank. The attendees also used the opportunity to engage the Governor on measures to grow and revive the economy.

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