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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WARNING AGAINST A SUSPECTED ILLEGAL SCAM

The Bank of Namibia has become aware of a new defrauding scheme which runs predominantly from South Africa. This scheme aims at defrauding organisations operating in Namibia. We wish to alert organisations and the members of the public in Namibia not to fall victims of this illegal scam.

The scheme operate as follows: A Namibian company (the debtor) is approached either through e-mail, telephone or official business correspondence by an individual claiming to be an employee of a company/organization (the creditor) to whom the Namibian company is indebted. Such individuals supposedly advise the Namibian company that the creditor's banking details have been changed and that all future payments should be channeled to the new account of which particulars have been provided in such correspondence. These individuals pretend to be employees of the creditor business/organization and subsequently present false invoices on a letterhead similar to that of the creditor's invoice with the false banking details.

The scammers make use of names and logos of legitimate businesses/organisations who are creditors. These are used as convincing elements to have funds transferred into their fraudulently opened bank accounts. The fraudsters also use email addresses similar to those of the targeted businesses/organisation, however, the contact numbers usually differ. For example the email address may look almost identical to the company's e-mail address but may be a "Gmail" email address.

These fraudsters also make use of a typical “Invoice Fraud” where a genuine invoice from a supplier is intercepted and augmented through the insertion of false bank details. The unsuspecting business/organisation then settles the invoice and pays the funds into the false bank account appearing on the invoice. The discrepancies are only discovered when the genuine supplier contacts the business/organisation regarding non-payment.

Namibian businesses/organisations and the public at large should therefore be on alert about this prevailing scam. They should not transfer funds to honour payment obligations in cases where they have been advised of changes in the banking particulars of the creditor. This should only be done when one is absolutely confident and verified that the company initiating the change of banking details is indeed the creditor to whom monies are due and payable. Such confirmation should also be made using known contact details of the creditor and be mindful not to use the contact details on the letter requesting the change.

The Bank of Namibia further advises all members of the public not to divulge any personal banking details to unauthorized third parties. Promoters of this scam, including persons that are circulating these emails in Namibia are warned to cease such activities with immediate effect.

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