

MEDIA STATEMENT



Bank of Namibia

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BANK OF NAMIBIA HOSTS FINTECH THOUGHT LEADERSHIP FORUM TO CHAMPION YOUTH INNOVATION AND JOB CREATION

1. The Bank of Namibia hosted the Fintech Thought Leadership Forum under the theme “Unlocking Youth Potential and Job Creation Through Innovations of Tomorrow.” The event brought together public and private sector leaders, academics, entrepreneurs, investors, and development partners to advance a shared vision of an inclusive, digitally empowered financial future for Namibia. At the heart of the gathering was the launch of the Bank’s FinTech Youth Programme, a flagship initiative designed to equip young Namibians with the entrepreneurial tools, networks, and support systems necessary to drive fintech innovation and job creation.
2. In his opening remarks, the Governor of the Bank of Namibia, Dr. Johannes !Gawaxab, reflected on how technology is reshaping the way we live, work, and transact, noting that its implications for the economy and financial system are both far-reaching and transformative. “The future of money and payments is digital. Fintech and financial innovation are no longer optional luxuries. They are inevitable realities that are already happening,” he declared. He warned that Namibia’s ability to lead or lag in this new era would determine how much prosperity it reaps or how many opportunities it forfeits. The Governor noted that digital innovation is redefining the global financial landscape, from fast payments and tokenised assets to Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs), and that Namibia must act with “vision and purpose” to modernise its legal and regulatory environment, invest in digital public infrastructure, and empower homegrown entrepreneurship.
3. Delivering the keynote address, Dr. Michael Humavindu, Executive Director of the Ministry of Finance, stated that Namibia’s long-term competitiveness will depend on whether it positions itself as a creator or a consumer in the global digital economy. He stressed that fintech is a lever for inclusive growth, with the power to expand access to affordable finance, formalise

informal markets, and generate employment across sectors. Dr. Humavindu further welcomed the ongoing work by the government to expand innovation hubs, establish the National Youth Fund, reactivate Start-Up Namibia, and collaborate with the African Development Bank to develop digital skills for young Africans, noting that these initiatives reflect Namibia's growing digital ambition and commitment to youth empowerment.

4. A highlight of the event was the official launch of the FinTech Youth Programme (FYP), introduced by Ms. Valeria Mbango, Director of Strategy, Projects, Transformation and the Innovation Hub at the Bank of Namibia. The initiative seeks to equip young Namibians with the technical and entrepreneurial skills needed to participate meaningfully in the digital economy. Ms. Mbango explained that the programme will support youth-led innovation through mentorship, financing, incubation and regulatory guidance, while strengthening collaboration between public and private institutions.
5. Three high-level panel discussions followed the keynote, each tackling key dimensions of fintech and economic transformation. The first panel, "Building the Workforce for Innovation – Skills, Education and Practical Pathways," moderated by Ms. Naufiku Hamunime, Acting Deputy Director: Corporate Communications & Sustainability at the Bank of Namibia, featured insights from Dr. Gurvy Kavei of the University of Namibia (UNAM), Dr. Nhlanhla Lupahla of the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology, Mr. Todd Malone, CEO of Digital Frontiers, and Mr. Chris Botha, Co-Founder and CEO of IDToday. The session highlighted the urgent need to align educational systems with the future of work and build digital capabilities across Namibia's youth.
6. The second panel, "From Startups to Scale – Unlocking Opportunities for Youth-Led FinTechs," was moderated by Ms. Claudia Boamah Capelao, Senior Manager for Strategy Enablement at Standard Bank Namibia. It brought together Ms. Ojoma Ochai, Managing Director of Co-Creation Hub; Mr. Immanuel Kadhila, General Manager of Investments at the Government Institutions Pension Fund (GIPF); Mr. Jesaya Hano-Oshike, Director at Basecamp Business Incubator; and Ms. Baronice Hans, CEO of Burning Bush Strategy Partners. The discussion underscored the importance of ecosystem collaboration, risk-tolerant capital, and the need for national platforms to support the scaling of local innovations.
7. The final panel, "Innovation as the Engine for Inclusive Job Creation and Economic Diversification," was moderated by Ms. Abigail Nainda, Deputy Director: Policy Research Analysis at the Bank of Namibia. Contributions came from Dr. Leora Klapper, Lead Economist

at the World Bank; Ms. Hopolang Phororo, UN Resident Coordinator in Namibia; Mr. Rodney !Hoaeb, Interim CEO of the Namibia Trade Forum, and Dr Leake Hangala, Chairperson of the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) Council. The dialogue reinforced the notion that inclusive innovation must be embedded into the national economic strategy if Namibia is to reduce unemployment, improve competitiveness, and broaden participation in the digital economy.

8. In her closing remarks, the Deputy Governor of the Bank of Namibia, Ms. Leonie Dunn noted that the success of Namibia's digital future will depend on how effectively the country connects policy, capital, and human capability. "Fintech offers us a real opportunity to make economic growth more inclusive," she said. "But we must move from dialogue to delivery, from pilots to platforms, and from vision to execution. Let this forum mark not the end of conversation, but the beginning of meaningful partnerships that shape the future of innovation and opportunity for Namibia."
9. The FinTech Thought Leadership Forum concluded with a shared commitment from all stakeholders to continue building a digitally inclusive financial system that drives entrepreneurship, job creation, and long-term national competitiveness.

Issued by:



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