



Bank of Namibia



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BANK OF NAMIBIA AND NAMIBIA STATISTICS AGENCY CHAMPION EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION-MAKING AT INAUGURAL STATISTICS AWARENESS DAY

1. The Bank of Namibia, in collaboration with the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA), yesterday hosted the inaugural Statistics Awareness Day, bringing together policymakers, parliamentarians, academia, the private sector, development partners and the public to reaffirm the importance of quality statistics as the foundation for sound decision-making and sustainable national development. The event was held under the theme, "*Statistics in the Digital Age as the Foundation for Sound Decision-Making and Sustainable Development.*"
2. The event sought to raise awareness of the value of official statistics, demonstrate how reliable data supports evidence-based policymaking, and showcase Namibia's key economic and social statistics. It further aimed to highlight the risks associated with poor-quality data, promote greater investment in statistical systems and data infrastructure, explore the future of official statistics in the digital era, and strengthen collaboration among data producers, users and development partners.
3. In his welcoming remarks, Mr. Ebson Uanguta, Governor of the Bank of Namibia, emphasised that official statistics are indispensable to sound policymaking and effective economic management. "Namibia today boasts a sophisticated statistical ecosystem that supports monetary policy, financial stability analysis, economic forecasting, and investment decision-making – thanks to this foundational work spearheaded by our

predecessors. Policymakers can now access a wide range of indicators covering inflation, economic growth, balance of payments, monetary statistics, and external debt and other social statistics, including statistics on employment and financial inclusion indicators, which are comparable to those of other countries and allow decisions to be grounded in evidence rather than presumptions and assumptions," said Uanguta.

4. The Governor further highlighted Namibia's subscription to the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) as an important milestone that has strengthened transparency and enhanced the country's access to international capital markets. He stressed that Namibia must continue investing in modern statistical systems that leverage digital technologies, administrative records and artificial intelligence to reduce dependence on costly traditional surveys while improving the timeliness, quality and accessibility of official statistics.
5. Delivering his remarks, Statistician-General and Chief Executive Officer of the Namibia Statistics Agency, Mr. Alex Shimuafeni, described official statistics as a strategic national asset that underpins economic growth, social development and good governance. "Statistics are much more than numbers. They are the foundation upon which sound policies, effective governance, sustainable economic growth and inclusive development are built. Continued success will depend on sustained investment, stronger partnerships, modern technology, skilled professionals and a shared commitment to producing and using high-quality official statistics," said Mr. Shimuafeni.
6. Mr. Shimuafeni highlighted the role of official statistics in tracking Namibia's progress towards Vision 2030, the National Development Plans, Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. He also underscored the significance of the 2023 Population and Housing Census, Namibia's first fully digital census, as well as the growing importance of modernising the National Statistical System through digital technologies, geospatial information, administrative data and integrated data platforms. He called on businesses, households and public institutions to continue providing accurate and timely information, emphasising that quality statistics begin with quality data.
7. The technical programme featured a series of presentations showcasing how official statistics are produced, managed and utilised to support national development. Representing the Bank of Namibia, Ms. Sanette Schulze Struchtrup, Deputy Director: Macroeconomic Statistics and Analysis, and Mr. Brian Mbazuvara, Technical Expert: External Sector Statistics, delivered a presentation titled *"The Power of Data and Statistics*

in Transforming Nations: Understanding Namibia Through Data." The presentation highlighted the importance of official statistics in informing monetary policy, fiscal planning, financial stability, investment decisions and socio-economic development. It also outlined Namibia's statistical ecosystem, collaboration frameworks between the Bank of Namibia, the Namibia Statistics Agency and the Ministry of Finance, and the continued modernisation of statistical production and dissemination through digital technologies. The presentation further demonstrated how collaboration between statistical institutions has strengthened data harmonisation, enhanced methodological consistency and improved the availability of timely and internationally comparable economic statistics.

8. Joining virtually from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Mr. Jim Tebrake, Deputy Director of the IMF Statistics Department, delivered a presentation titled *"Why Investment in Statistics is More Important Now Than Ever Before."* He described statistics as a critical national infrastructure, arguing that poor-quality data erodes public trust, weakens policymaking and undermines programme implementation. Drawing on international case studies, including Greece and Argentina, he illustrated the high economic and reputational costs of weak statistical systems and called for sustained investment in quality-first, AI-ready national statistical systems capable of supporting modern economies.
9. The event also explored the future of official statistics through a presentation by Ms. Olivia Haenert, Deputy Director: Digital Transformation and Innovation at the Bank of Namibia, who examined how digital transformation, emerging technologies and innovation can reshape statistical production and strengthen evidence-based decision-making. Ms. Haenert noted that while significant progress has been made, challenges remain around interoperability, timely reporting and technical capacity in data science and data engineering. She called for continued investment in modern statistical infrastructure, stronger collaboration among data-producing institutions, enhanced data governance and the responsible use of artificial intelligence.
10. The event concluded with a panel discussion titled "From Data to Decisions: Leveraging Official Statistics for Better Policies, Business Strategies and National Development in the Digital Era," moderated by Ms. Helvi Fillipus, Economic Advisor to the Governor of the Bank of Namibia. The discussion featured Dr. Emma Haiyambo, Director of Research and Financial Sector Development and Chief Economist at the Bank of Namibia; Mr. Alex Shimuafeni, Statistician-General; Mr. Salomo Hei, Managing Director of High Economic Intelligence; and Mr. Tannan Groenewald, Head of Research at IJG. Panellists emphasised the need for sustained investment in Namibia's statistical system through

enhanced capacity building, increased funding and improved resource allocation for the production of official statistics. They further called for continued modernisation of the national statistical system through digital transformation, greater accessibility and use of official statistics, and the development of a Consumer Confidence Indicators to strengthen economic analysis and policy formulation. The discussion concluded that high-quality, accessible, granular and timely statistics are fundamental to evidence-based policymaking, private-sector decision-making, and Namibia's long-term socio-economic development.

11. The Statistics Awareness Day concluded with a renewed commitment by stakeholders to strengthen collaboration across Namibia's National Statistical System, invest in modern statistical infrastructure, improve statistical literacy and promote the wider use of reliable, timely and accessible official statistics to support sustainable development and informed decision-making across all sectors of the economy.

Enquiries can be directed to:

The Deputy Director:
Strategic Communications and
Sustainability
Bank of Namibia
Tel: +264 61 283 5171
Email: info@bon.com.na

The Manager:
Corporate Communications Manager
Namibia Statistics Agency
Tel: +264 61 431 3200
Email: Info@nsa.org.na