

**Mission Statement:** Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI), is a force that represents, promotes and serves the common interests of its members, while playing a significant role in Namibia's economic transformation and growth together with the Government and national and international partnerships.

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NAMIBIAN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT TOOLS**

The Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI) in partnership with the Embassy of Finland and the Association of Women Entrepreneurs in Tampere, today conducted a plenary discussion at Roof of Africa in Windhoek, under the theme: "Equipping women with the necessary tools to enable their contribution to Namibia's economic development."

The NCCI established a 'Business Women's desk' in October 2012, created to focus on and promote projects specific to creating sustainable women's economic empowerment. The desk has been working since 2012 on growing rural women into better business owners by empowering them and increasing their opportunities to take part in mainstream business activities. With the help of the Finnish Tampere Women's Association 165 women entrepreneurs in the //Karas region have been trained in financial literacy, costing, pricing, budgeting, record keeping, planning, marketing, business coaching and mentorship. The results have been the development of better products, identification of new consumer markets, increase in individual business incomes and enjoying better living conditions.

Today's plenary objectives were to identify the most critical challenges facing women in business; to propose practical, implementable interventions and ensure that these are assigned to individuals who will be required to account on progress made. The plenary discussed and debated the following themes:

- Existing empowerment programmes in Namibia, both government and non- governmental and how favourable these programmes are for women in business.
- Financial resources and accessibility
- The existence of information/data on Namibian female entrepreneurs.

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**All official correspondence must be addressed to the CEO**

The following outcomes were committed to by the principle stakeholders:

- Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare together with the NCCI commit to developing a central data repository containing specific data on Namibian female entrepreneurs such as location, product/service profile and records of support interventions received. The existence of such data would enable well-informed support programmes to be developed.
- From the experienced garnered with the Karas pilot, NCCI will now proceed to rollout the same pilot, into 4 other regions (Oshana, Khomas, Erongo and Zambezi). This will avail the services of the NCCI Enterprise Development Programme to SME's, and the NCCI Business Women's Desk specifically to those female entrepreneurs, operating in those regions.

Remarking in the keynote address, President of the NCCI, Mrs Martha Namundjebo-Tilahun expressed her commitment to the development of more Namibian women into business, as "it certainly makes business sense to include more women in the cauldron of commerce".

Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI) is the leading business representative and support organisation in Namibia. Membership comprises of companies across all economic sectors, including prominent large companies as well as thousands of SMEs.

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