



Founding Members: Hon. Ben Amathila Hon. Dr. Kaire Mbuende Prof. Peter Katjavivi

THE NAMIBIAN ECONOMIC POLICY RESEARCH UNIT

Postal: P. O. Box 40710, Ausspannplatz, Windhoek, Namibia

Street: Cnr Louis Raymond & Grant Webster, Windhoek, Namibia

Tel.: +264 61 277500 Fax: +264 61 277501

eMail: nepru@nepru.org.na Web Site: www.nepru.org.na

Acting Director: Klaus Schade

27 March 2007

Report on the Second NRG Meeting

Capacity Building on Competition (7Up3)

Prepared by:

Rehabeam Shilimela, NEPRU

Date of Meeting: 1 February 2007
Venue: Polytechnic School Hotel, C/o Beethoven & Brahms Streets, Windhoek
Subject: Meeting Report
Attachments: Programme and Agenda

Present : Hon. Bernhardt Esau, Ministry of Trade and Industry
: Mr. Rehabeam Shilimela (co-Chair), NEPRU
: Mr. Hennie Fourie, Namibia Manufacturers Association
: Mr. Klaus Schade (co-Chair), NEPRU
: Mr. Douglas Reissner, Totus Consult/NaCC
: Dr. O. Kakujaha, University of Namibia/NaCC
: Mr. F. Elago, Social Security Commission/NaCC
: Mr. M. Gaomab II, Namibia Economic Society

Absent with Apologies

: Mr. Johannes .A. Ashipala, UNDP Namibia
: Mr. Jan Kruger, Namibia Communications Commission
: Mr. Juergen Hoffmann, Agricultural Trade Forum
: Mr. Mr. Sajeev Nair, CUTS Resource Centre, Lusaka
: Mr. Riunndja A. Kaakunga, Ministry of Trade and Industry

Board of Trustees: Dr Zedekia Josef Ngavirue (Chairperson) Hon. Ben Amathila (Member of Parliament) Mr Mocks Shivute (National Planning Commission Secretariat) Ms Erica Shafudah (Ministry of Finance) Hon. Dr. Kaire Mbuende Hon. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah Mr Paul Hartmann (Bank of Namibia)

Background

The main role of the National Reference Group is to discuss competition concerns in Namibia on a consultative basis, forming the basis for advocacy for more competitive markets in Namibia. The country paper on competition is to be a product of the NRG, together with NEPRU. This includes dissemination of information and to sensitise the general public about benefits of competition and on how they can participate and contribute to national development efforts. Competition increases the purchasing power of consumers' money by reducing prices and thereby increases the economic activity. This meeting was specifically to discuss findings of the Country Research Report for adoption by the NRG, and the way forward regarding the 7Up3 activities ahead.

Attendance

Compared to the first meeting where there was no Key note address by the minister, Attempts to the involvement of the minister bared fruits for this meeting as the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry agreed to address the meeting and to be there for proceedings.

Attendance by NRG members remained poor though. The main reason for Absentees with apologies is that the country is currently engaged in conferences and negotiations aimed at trade and regional/international integration. The earlier postponement of the meeting from 25 February to 1 March was a compromise to ensure NaCC members and the representative of Manufacturers attend, but also losing representatives from Agricultural Trade Forum and Namibia Communications Commission. In addition, general lack of interest is another factor. In this regard, it was proposed that these meetings be group working meetings (not presentations and commenting only) and coverage should be widened (not only NRG members). Via the attended stakeholders, it was observed that many stakeholders outside the NRG are interested in these meetings.

Presentations and Discussions

Mr. Klaus Schade, the Acting Director of NEPRU opened the meeting. This was followed by the key note address by Hon. B. Esau, by the presentation of findings of the Country Research Report by Rehabeam Shilimela and then the invited comments (see attached programme and Agenda).

Hon. Esau emphasised that *"the Namibian Competition policy and law is developed as a consequence of the global requirements for effective domestic, regional and International market governance and also to ensure that the Namibian economy benefits from liberalisation by preventing firms not to indulge in restrictive business practices"*. Citing from reports by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, he indicated that trade liberalisation does indeed often lead to greater competition, but not always because products in some sectors may not be tradable. He reiterated that the Ministry of Trade and Industry in consultation with the Treasury is doing everything with a view to ensure that the Commission [Namibia Competition Commission] has the necessary resources to effectively carry out its functions.

Brief discussions on competition concerns in Namibia followed, touching on recent complaints in the telecoms sector as well as in the health sector.

Mr. Reissner gave a brief status of the NaCC and reflected of challenges they are facing as they are looking forward to commence with their functions. He mentioned that the office space for NaCC has been secured, but the budget and timing of implementation is still unclear. They are

also receiving enquiries on competition issues already, though they cannot deal with these at the moment.

The way forward

The better way is to widen the Stakeholdership to these meetings – say not NRG meetings, but public meetings on topical issues related to competition.

Programme and Agenda

Capacity Building on Competition Policy (7Up3 project)

Second National Reference Group (NRG) Meeting

Date	1 February 2007
Starting time	10h00
Venue	<i>Polytechnic School Hotel, C/o Beethoven and Brahms Streets WINDHOEK</i>
Agenda	
10h00 – 10h10	Welcome and Introduction – Mr. Klaus Schade, Acting Director, NEPRU
10h10 – 10h25	Key Note Address by the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Hon. Bernhardt Esau
10h25 – 10h50	Presentation of the findings of the country research report – R. Shilimela, NEPRU
10h50 – 11h20	Invited Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Dr. Douglas Reissner, Resource person on competition</i> - <i>Mr. Mihe Gaomab II, NES</i>
11h20 – 11h45	Break
11h45 – 12h15	Floor Discussion
12h15 – 12h25	Emerging trends and the way forward – R. Shilimela
12h25 – 12h55	Identifying training and capacity building needs for various stakeholders in Namibia
12h55 – 13h00	Closing remarks,
13h00 –	Closure of the Meeting, followed by Lunch