

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Namibia Monthly Briefing August 2025

Namibia Summary 8 August 2025

Namibia and Zambia announce that passports will no longer be needed for cross border traveling, promoting access and ease of travel between the two countries, while also bolstering bilateral ties and regional integration. The Bank of Namibia (BoN) (central bank) launches the currency redesign of Namibia's notes and coins. However, this sparks public debate about Namibians access to money and wealth and the pegging of the Namibian dollar to the South African rand. At the 12th edition of the Namibia mining expo, President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah (2024-present) announces a significant surge in mining exploration expenditure in 2024 while industries, mines and energy minister, Natangue Ithete, announces a policy initiative to promote 51% local ownership in mines.

Namibia and Zambia allow cross-border travel without passports

Home affairs minister, **Albert Kwana** [announced](#) on 4 August that Namibia and **Zambia** will now allow cross-border travel without passports, as the two countries deepen bilateral relations. Per the announcement, only national identity cards will be necessary to travel between the two countries. Namibia agreed to a similar arrangement with [Botswana](#) in 2023, which resulted in increased travel between the countries, and the launch of **Air Botswana's** [direct flight](#) from **Gaborone, Maun and Kasane** to **Windhoek**.

The announcement was made during Zambia's 57th independence celebration in **Windhoek**. The two countries share historical ties with Zambia [playing](#) a significant role in Namibia's liberation movement by providing refuge, training and logistical support for the **South West Africa People's (SWAPO)**, which at the time was Namibia's main liberation movement.

During the independence event, the two countries also revisited [past exchanges](#) on incarcerated Zambian and Namibian nationals being able to serve the rest of their prison sentence in their respective home countries, and formalised the arrangement. The deepening of bilateral ties is also important for infrastructure development between the two countries, especially concerning both countries' energy, and oil and gas sectors. In 2022, Namibia and Zambia signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to build a cross-border oil and gas [pipeline](#), the **Namibia-Zambia Multi-Product pipeline (NAZOP)**. The project has faced delays as it is largely reliant on private sector funding. However, the decision to allow passport-free travel will help ease of travel for those involved in the project and potentially drive it forward.

The decision to allow passport-less travel between the countries is also important for regional integration – both countries are part of the **Southern African Development Community (SADC)**, which has a protocol of the facilitation of movement of goods and persons. Further, ease of access between countries is an important way to bolster tourism and in turn increased flow of funds but also economic relations. Ease of travel also inspires new business opportunities as it allows businesses to have a bigger market reach.

Namibia unveils currency redesign which sparks debate

President **Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah** (2024-present), together with the **Bank of Namibia (BoN)** (central bank) central governor, **Johannes !Gawaxab**, unveiled the country's newly designed bank notes and coins on [24 July](#). This is the first time since 1993 that Namibia has

updated its currency design. During the unveiling ceremony, !Gawaxab [stated](#) that part of the redesign was to make the coins lighter, smaller and more durable to make everyday transactions more efficient. The new notes and coins were launched at the 35th anniversary of the BoN under the theme 'Anchored in Stability: 35 years of central banking excellence and innovation'. As such, the launch of the notes aims to contribute to nation-building and celebrating Namibia's independence.

Although the currency redesign aims to bolster national unity, it sparked critical debate about the access to money and wealth within the country. Namibia remains a country of great inequality and the country is [projected](#) to have a **Gini** coefficient of 0.58 in 2025, zero meaning absolute equality and one meaning absolute inequality. Additionally, poverty also remains a big [challenge](#), with the country ranking 117th out of 157 countries on the **2024 Human Capital Index**.

The release of the new currency has also brought other questions regarding Namibia's [economic policy](#) to the forefront, most notably the currency's pegging to the **South African** rand and legal tender of the rand throughout Namibia. This places the economy at risk to South Africa's current foreign policy and economic challenges, including its ongoing confrontation with the **United States** over domestic policy, which could lead to the rand [depreciating](#) against the US dollar (*see ARC Briefing Namibia Feb 2025*). There is also [criticism](#) locally about Namibia's decision to accept the rand throughout the country, with some voicing that it keeps Namibia tied to its former administrator, especially considering that the Namibian dollar is not accepted as a legal trading currency within South Africa.

The unpegging of the Namibian dollar to the South African rand has been an ongoing debate since the Namibian dollar replaced the rand in 1993. However, Namibia has never been in a strong enough economic position whereby it can seriously [consider](#) this as a viable economic policy. This is because Namibia remains too reliant on imports and exports internationally but also regionally. As a consequence, if the Namibian dollar were to significantly depreciate against the rand, the country could face a serious escalation of inflation as goods would be too expensive to import.

Namibia hosts mining expo, announces high local ownership requirements

Namibia [hosted](#) the 12th edition of the **Mining Expo and Conference** between 5 and 7 August in Windhoek, showcasing the latest advancements, technologies and innovations in the mining industry. This was the largest edition of the expo, and was attended by Nandi-Ndaitwah, and deputy prime minister and industries, mines and energy minister **Natangwe Ithete**.

During the event, Nandi-Ndaitwah announced that [exploration expenditure](#) in the mining sector reached a new record of N\$1.23 billion (\$68.5m) in 2024. Nandi-Ndaitwah attributed the increase in exploration expenditure to investor confidence in the country and the country's mineral resources; especially uranium. She also [confirmed](#) that the industry created 20,843 direct jobs in 2024, up from 17,799 in 2023. The mining sector's contribution to employment and the economy is significant considering that the country's [unemployment rate](#) rose to 36.9% in 2023 from 33.4% in 2018.

However, most notably, [Ithete](#) announced that the government is actively consulting with stakeholders to promote 51% local ownership in new mining ventures, as Namibia seeks to assert greater control over its natural resources. Namibia's mining sector is largely dominated by foreign investors, including its key uranium sector – **China National Uranium Corporation Limited (CNUC)** is the majority owner in two of Namibia's biggest Uranium mines, **Rossig Uranium** and **Swakop Uranium**, and Chinese investors have expressed interest in further its role in the sector (*see ARC Briefing Namibia Jan 2025*).

Promoting such a high level of local ownership can create over regulation of the mining industry which can cause disinvestment in the long run. For example, in South Africa, over regulation has made mining businesses [unprofitable](#) and motivated numerous international mining companies, such as **United Kingdom**-headquartered [Anglo American](#) to sell their South African subsidiaries, despite vast mineral wealth.

Stakeholders in Namibia's mining sector have voiced concerns against the policy proposal of 51% local ownership. The first vice president of the **Chamber of Mines** and country manager of **Canada**-headquartered **B2Gold**'s subsidiary in Namibia, **John Roos**, [warned](#) that foreign investors may divert their attention to countries with more favourable mining regulations.

In 2023 the industry sector, which largely consists of mining, [contributed](#) 30.02% to GDP, which is significant compared to other sectors such as agriculture which contributed 7.72% to GDP. Any legislation affecting the mining industry must be closely considered as it stands to have significant economic repercussions as Namibia heavily relies on international companies to develop big mining projects. It is important for the government to balance promoting local ownership, while not overregulating the industry to support Namibia's rapidly growing mining industry.

Planner

12-15 Aug 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia) Namibia Oil and Gas Conference 2025**

Chronology

7 Aug 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia) *The Namibian***. Urban and rural development minister **James Sankwasa** directs all local authorities to discontinue contracts with local debt-collection agency **RedForce**, citing economic and political concerns;

6 Aug 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia) *The Namibian***. **Bank of Namibia** (central bank) launches a month-long campaign to tackle financial exclusion, citing limited access to financial services and low financial literacy as major barriers;

6 Aug 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia) *Ministry of International Relations***. **Eric Perdison**, the regional director for the **World Food Programme** for east and southern Africa pays a courtesy visit to deputy international relations minister, **Jenelly Matundu**;

6 Aug 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia) *The Namibian***. **Bank of Namibia** (central bank) identifies limited access to formal financial infrastructure and low levels of financial literacy as the primary barriers to Namibians participating in the financial system;

4 Aug 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia) *The Namibian***. Police report that over 258 vehicles were stolen across the country in 2024, with many smuggled into **Angola**, highlighting growing cross-border car theft syndicates;

4 Aug 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia) *Ministry of International Relations***. International relations and trade minister, **Selma Ashipala-Musavyi**, receives a call from the **Namibia Atomic Energy Board** to discuss the board's progress in aligning with the inclusion of nuclear energy as outlined in Namibia's **Sixth National Development Plan**;

4 Aug 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia) *Ministry of International Relations***. **Zimbabwe's** ambassador to Namibia, **Melody Chaurura** pays a courtesy call to international relations and trade minister, **Selma Ashipala-Musavyi**, to discuss bilateral relations between the two countries;

2 Aug 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia) *Ministry of International Relations***. International relations and trade ministry in conjunction with the industries, mines and energy ministry announces

it will host regional business engagements from 6 to 8 August in the **Zambezi, Kavango East and Kavango West** to promote participation in the **African Continental Free Trade Agreement**;

1 Aug 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *The Namibian*. Outgoing **Brazilian** ambassador to Namibia, **Vivian Loss Sanmartin**, affirms Brazil's commitment to assisting Namibia in safeguarding the country's coastline, especially in light of recent oil and gas discoveries;

31 Jul 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *The Namibian*. The **Namibia Green Hydrogen Programme (NGH2P)** says it is in advanced discussion with the **European Investment Bank** to finance N\$10.3 billion (\$577 million) to build green hydrogen and mineral infrastructure;

24 Jul 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *The Namibian*. Opposition **Affirmative Repositioning Movement** legally challenges the appointment of three **National Assembly** members—**Phillipus Katamelo, Uahekua Herunga and Rodney Cloete**—to the **Pan-African Parliament**, alleging the nominations were unlawful and bypassed required parliamentary procedures;

20 Jul 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *The Namibian*. **Electoral Commission of Namibia** denies allegations of electoral fraud related to the vacant **Outapi (Omusati Province)** constituency seat;

15 Jul 2025 **Walvis Bay (Namibia)** *The Namibian*. **South Africa**-headquartered **Airlink**, launches a second daily flight between **Johannesburg** (South Africa) and Walvis Bay to boost regional connectivity and support tourism and business travel;

14 Jul 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *The Namibian*. Opposition parties **Popular Democratic Movement** and **Landless People's Movement** criticise the government's sudden decision to end the 2024/25 drought relief programme without consulting affected communities or assessing the real impact of recent rains on vulnerable households;

10 Jul 2025 **Windhoek (Namibia)** *The Namibian*. Agriculture, fisheries, water and land reform minister, **Inge Zaamwaani-Kamwi**, announces that a comprehensive land bill prohibiting foreign acquisition of commercial agricultural land will be tabled in the **National Assembly** in September;

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