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Namibia Summary 25 March 2020

President Hage Geingob (2015-present) announces a state of emergency to combat the spread of coronavirus (Covid-19) in mid-March, followed by a near-total lockdown fewer than two weeks later. Geingob's second-term inauguration goes ahead despite the cancellation of the 21 March independence anniversary event as he announces a government restructuring followed by a wide-ranging cabinet reshuffle. The Bank of Namibia (central bank) cuts the repurchase (repo) rate by 100 basis points to 6.25% immediately following South Africa's identical interest rate cut as an emergency response to Covid-19. The merchandise trade deficit slightly worsened last year. Inflation goes up to 2.5% in January.

A state of emergency is declared over Covid-19...

The escalating global spread of **coronavirus (Covid-19)** in the past month has obliged **Namibia** to implement successively tighter social mobility constraints, as have governments of most countries, including neighbouring **South Africa**, in an effort to protect the health of Namibians. These have yet to be accompanied by an economic stimulus package to protect economic livelihoods and businesses, although this is likely to happen very soon.

Initially, infection rates remained low with only four declared Covid-19 cases as of late March, although on 23 March health minister **Kalumbi Shangali** disclosed that a 19-year-old man who had returned from a trip to **London (United Kingdom)** had tested positive for the virus, becoming the first Namibian to contract the disease. The man was screened on arrival at **Windhoek's Hosea Kutako International Airport (HKIA)** on 18 March and although his temperature was normal he was advised to self-quarantine. After contracting symptoms the following day, he visited a private doctor, with the results from samples taken for testing proving positive. Shangali admitted that his ministry had been unable to establish how many people the patient had been in contact with since he went home from the airport, before he was quarantined the following day. He said the priority was to avoid local transmission of the virus and cautioned:

"Namibians must prepare for inconveniences for the future which will be to help prevent local transmission to protect Namibians so that we do not reach a stage where we have local transmission."¹

The first steps taken by the government in mid-March were to cancel the 21 March independence anniversary celebrations, with the money that would have been spent diverted to help combat the virus, while all "large" public gatherings were suspended for 30 days, and all travel by government and parastatal officials suspended. At the same time, the education ministry announced the closure of all schools until 15 April.² On 17 March, President **Hage Geingob** (2015-present) proclaimed a state of emergency with immediate effect, in terms of Article 26 (1) of Namibia's constitution.³ Initial measures taken by the cabinet to respond effectively to the Covid-19 public health emergency included:

¹ The Namibian, 23 Mar 2020.

² Statement by H.E. President Hage G. Geingob following Confirmation of Two Cases of COVID-19 on Namibian Soil, 14 March 2020; The Namibian, 15 Mar 2020.

³ Statement by His Excellency The President Dr Hage G. Geingob Upon Declaration of State of Emergency: Covid-19, 17 Mar 2020; Namibia Economist, 17 Mar 2020.

- a travel ban and suspension of the issuance of visas on arrival at HKIA from **European Union (EU) 'Schengen'** (borderless movement) countries, **China, Iran, Japan, South Korea**, the **UK** and the **United States (US)**;
- a temporary 30-day travel suspension for Namibians or permanent residents except for special cases with prior authorisation;
- mandatory screening for Covid-19 to be carried out at all points of entry; 'thermo' guns (heat detectors) to be available at all checkpoints and roadblocks for screening inland travelers;
- All leisure, business and social travel such as tourism is suspended, and Namibians who are residents in other countries considering to visit Namibia must postpone such visits;
- All returning Namibians and permanent residents arriving from countries at high risk or from affected other countries will be subject to supervised self-quarantine for 14 days;
- The only exceptions are the borders with South Africa, including air travel, which were to remain open to serve as points of entry for Namibians returning home and as exit points for visitors from Namibia, and to facilitate trade between the two countries;
- The ban on large public gatherings was clarified to mean more than 50 people, with events such as weddings and funerals suspended until further notice.

Geingob expressed confidence that by working collaboratively "*we will respond effectively to minimise the spread of the virus and minimise loss of life*", with the health ministry tasked with rolling out a comprehensive public education plan to "*empower our people with the necessary preventative measures*".⁴

... as subsequent tighter curbs fall short of a total lockdown

On 24 March, Geingob announced further measures at a Windhoek press conference where he revealed the number of Covid-19 cases had reached seven – still low by global standards – of which three were Namibians and four foreign nationals, the fifth and sixth cases, like the first four, being travel-related, with the seventh thought to be local transmission.⁵ Geingob said the latest extraordinary measures were adopted with the purpose of protecting the health, safety and security of Namibians, and urged all citizens "*to cooperate with the government and remain calm in order to ensure that public order is not compromised.*" Geingob also launched a solidarity fund to fight the pandemic to which he has pledged N\$250,000 (\$14,500) and urged Namibians to pledge donations.⁶ The principal measures included a near lockdown for **Erongo** and **Khomas** regions, the country's two economic hubs, with all travel banned in the two regions from 27 March to 16 April, excluding goods, services and trade. Other measures include:

- A 30-day international travel ban with all border points closed except HKIA;
- Government and private sector employees to work from home "*if possible*" for 14 days;
- Closure of all bars and *cuca* shops from 18:00 every evening, to be enforced by the police;
- All public gatherings at markets, bars, shebeens and nightclubs "*to be avoided*";
- Daily updates by the government, along with immediate reporting of suspected cases and test results.

National coordinator for Covid-19 **Bernhardt Haufiku** said Namibia is facing "*a new, formidable enemy and the rule of engagement needs to change*".⁷ Even so, the latest measures did not amount to

⁴ Statement by His Excellency The President Dr Hage G. Geingob Upon Declaration of State of Emergency: Covid-19, 17 Mar 2020.

⁵ The Namibian, 25 Mar 2020.

⁶ Briefing Statement by His Excellency the President Dr Hage G. Geingob on COVID-19 National Response Measure.

⁷ The Namibian, 25 Mar 2020.

the total lockdowns implemented from the start in China and in recent weeks in most **European** countries, since all shops – not just those providing essential supplies – were allowed to remain open and there was no suggestion that the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions should self-isolate even if they had no symptoms of the virus. But that may yet come in as all measures were stated to be subject to review.

Geingob restructures the government and slims down the cabinet

Geingob launched his second five-year term as Namibia's head of state by first announcing a government restructuring and a reduction in the number of cabinet ministers from 26 to 19. In a 16 March **State House** press conference, Geingob said the reduction had been made *"to achieve better alignment between sectors"* and *"to give fresh impetus for our plans for economic recovery and growth, while balancing the need for growth and continuity"*.⁸ Five cabinet posts have been merged and two – the ministries of gender equality and child welfare, poverty eradication and social welfare (also merged) – have transferred to the Presidency. The vice president, who remains **Nangolo Mbumba**, will oversee their functions with former gender equality minister **Doreen Sioka** exercising line responsibility.

Geingob ignored a demand made by **Popular Democratic Movement (PDM)** leader **McHenry Venaani** to abolish the posts of vice president and deputy prime minister as superfluous and a waste of government resources. The PDM has 16 of the 96 elected MPs in the **National Assembly (NA)** and is the official opposition.⁹ Mbumba has been given an increased workload, presumably in part to justify the retention of a vice president. The merged ministries are: home affairs and immigration with safety and security; defence with veterans' affairs; land reform, with agriculture and water (the latter's forestry affairs function was shifted to the environment and tourism portfolio).

Geingob also announced a new minister in the Presidency, responsible for parliamentary affairs and to act as the interface between Namibia's 14 regional governors (who are appointed by the president). **Christine Hoebes** – not previously in the government – was appointed to this post in the subsequent cabinet reshuffle.

Two days later, as well as confirming Mbumba's reappointment, Geingob retained **Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila** and **Ntumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah** as prime minister and deputy prime minister respectively. Geingob said *"some members of the public"* had advised him to appoint **Panduleni Itula** – who stood as an independent candidate and came a strong second against Geingob in last year's presidential election – as prime minister instead, so as to reunite the ruling **SWAPO Party of Namibia (SWAPO)** and maintain peace (see *ARC Briefing Namibia December 2019*). Geingob rejected this suggestion saying he had no reason to remove Kuugongelwa-Amadhila or the others.¹⁰ Kuugongelwa-Amadhila started her political career in the 1990s as a protégé of Namibia's founding president, **Sam Nujoma** (1990-2005), and is in the eyes of some, over-promoted. Her office is responsible for implementing Namibia's empowerment law, which has still to be enacted after over a decade of various proposed versions. She remains head of the public administration and leader of government business in parliament, leading some to question the need for a new parliamentary affairs minister within the Presidency.

Critics saw the decision as mainly designed to prop up Geingob's support base within the party ahead of the 2022 SWAPO elective congress at which all top posts will be up for grabs. In this interpretation, Geingob was anxious to prevent the emergence of another hostile faction in addition to the **'Team SWAPO'** group who swung their support behind Itula in last year's presidential election. Shortly afterwards, it was confirmed that Itula had been formally expelled from SWAPO for allegedly working with unspecified *"counter-revolutionary forces"* to destroy the party.¹¹ A letter delivered to Itula on 20

⁸ Statement by his Excellency the President Dr Hage G. Geingob on the Occasion of the Announcement of a New Government Structure, The Presidency, 16 Mar 2020; Namibia Economist, 17 Mar 2020.

⁹ The Namibian, 19 Mar 2020.

¹⁰ The Namibian, 19 Mar 2020.

¹¹ The Namibian, 20 Mar 2020, 24 Mar 2020.

March from SWAPO secretary general **Sophia Shaningwa**, a member of Geingob's inner circle, said the politburo had decided his expulsion from the party with immediate effect. It accused Itula of disruptive behaviour by not accepting SWAPO's choice of Geingob as its sole presidential candidate and sharing a platform with opposition parties. Under the party's constitution, Itula can appeal to the party's central committee within 14 days; he had not issued a response as this briefing went to press.

Central bank governor replaces Schlettwein as finance minister

Geingob unveiled his smaller, new-look, generally younger cabinet on 21 March, with the most important change being the replacement of long-standing finance minister **Calle Schlettwein** by the **Bank of Namibia (BoN)** (central bank) governor **Iipumbu Shiimi**. Schlettwein was moved to the agriculture, water and land reform ministry, with the former land reform minister **Utoni Nujoma** – Sam Nujoma's eldest son – shifted to the labour, industrial relations and employment creation ministry.

Shiimi's appointment, along with those of some new, younger MPs, was widely welcomed. Windhoek stockbrokers **IJG Securities** analyst **Dylan van Wyk** commented: *"On paper, he is probably one of the best-qualified people for the job."*¹² Van Wyk added that the appointment of Shiimi, who became BoN governor in 2010 and has an MA in financial economics from the **University of London** (UK), will be extremely beneficial in steering the country's economy in the right direction, *"and will make sure that we have eyes on the most important metrics of the economy's health"*.¹³ **Rowland Brown**, co-founder of financial services company **Cirrus Capital**, added:

*"We believe that he is an excellent appointment, and has a good grasp of what needs to be done to extricate Namibia from the current recession, tackle the major and immediate Covid-19 challenges, and to support growth and job creation and get the country back onto a positive development path long term."*¹⁴

Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) executive director **Graham Hopwood** noted the immediate and extreme challenges that ministers appointed to the economy-related and health portfolios face. Hopwood added that Shiimi faces a number of urgent issues and will have to come up with a budget that provides stimulus during the Covid-19 pandemic while not bankrupting the country:

*"He will have to be his own man and be strong when facing various spending demands from more experienced cabinet colleagues."*¹⁵

Although Schlettwein had said tabling of the 2020/21 budget would have to take place by 1 April, in line with the constitution, the Covid-19 lockdown announced on 24 March included postponement of the budget to an unspecified time along with a delay to the new parliamentary session until 15 April. When the budget is tabled, Shiimi is likely to implement a large fiscal stimulus, as have governments around the world, to prevent the economy sliding into an even deeper recession. However, Brown cautioned that the finance minister does not act alone:

*"There remains a risk that other policy makers in the country further derail recovery by continuing to push an anti-investments, anti-private sector agenda."*¹⁶

Fresh faces in the cabinet include a number of women, such as **Yvonne Dausab** as justice minister; **Lucia Iipumbu** at industrialisation and trade; **Anna Ngipondoko** at education, arts and culture; **Agnes Tjongarero** at sports, youth and national service. Geingob also made some attempt to bridge the political divide by naming **Esther Muinjangue**, president of the opposition party **National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO)**, which draws its support mainly from the **Ovaherero** community,

¹² The Namibian Sun, 24 Mar 2020.

¹³ The Namibian Sun, 24 Mar 2020.

¹⁴ The Namibian Sun, 24 Mar 2020.

¹⁵ The Namibian Sun, 24 Mar 2020.

¹⁶ The Namibian Sun, 24 Mar 2020.

as health deputy minister. Muinjangu became the first-ever female candidate to stand in a presidential election last year; her appointment to the cabinet puts NUDO in effective coalition with SWAPO and, crucially, its two MPs provide the ruling party with a two-thirds majority (65) of the 96 voting MPs again, which it had narrowly lost in last year's legislative election (see *ARC Briefing Namibia December 2019*).

Another notable deputy minister appointment was that of the youngest MP in parliament, **Emma Theophilus**, aged 23 years, at information and communication technology. Other new ministers include **Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN)** chief executive officer **Festus Mbandeke** as attorney general. In a break with precedent, Mbandeke will attend cabinet although will not be an MP. Rear admiral **Peter Hafeni Vilho**, who was commander of the **Namibian Navy** until becoming defence ministry permanent secretary in 2017, takes over as defence and veterans minister. Shiimi, Vilho, Dausab and Theophilus were among eight non-voting MPs nominated by Geingob to the new National Assembly. This is the first time a serving military officer has become a cabinet minister, and some see Vilho's appointment as a decision by Geingob to keep the armed forces onside as he will need their support if the Covid-19 pandemic and measures to contain it lead to civil unrest. Additionally, Vilho was closely involved in the high command decision to deploy the **Namibia Defence Force (NDF)** in the streets as a precautionary measure during last year's elections, and subsequently when the **Supreme Court** met to decide on Itula's legal challenge to the presidential election result.¹⁷

Some SWAPO veteran politicians survived the cull including the former attorney general (and before that justice minister) **Albert Kawana**, a member of every post-independence cabinet, who was appointed fisheries and marine resources minister. He took charge of this post on an acting basis following the enforced resignation of **Bernhard Esau** in November 2019 over his involvement in the so-called 'fishrot' scandal and has headed up a government investigation into fishing sector abuses and maladministration. Mines and energy minister **Tom Alweendo** – Shiimi's predecessor as central bank governor – retained his post, as did public enterprises minister **Leon Jooste**. The cabinet changes might have been even wider if Geingob had managed to persuade some private sector business leaders to become ministers. He had asked some with expertise and qualifications to become nominated MPs and be appointed as ministers but they had refused and the government could not match their earnings of "up to N\$3m (\$170,000) per year".¹⁸

Deputy BoN governor **Ebson Uanguta** has taken over as acting governor, until a full-time replacement for Shiimi is approved. The **Public Service Commission (PSC)** will recommend an appointment for a final decision by Geingob, after consultation with the finance minister, who is now Shiimi.¹⁹

Central bank slashes Namibia's repo rate to 5.25%

In an initial bid to mitigate the economic fall-out from the Covid-19 pandemic, the BoN implemented a crisis 100-basis-point reduction in Namibia's repurchase (repo) rate to 5.25% on 20 March. BoN governor Iipumbu Shiimi convened a special meeting of the **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** "in light of the recent extraordinary events emanating from the Covid-9 pandemic".²⁰ In his last monetary policy statement, Shiimi said the MPC decided to cut the repo rate in order to help cushion the anticipated impact of Covid-19 and support domestic economic activity, while maintaining the one-to-one link between the Namibia dollar and the South African rand.²¹

The move followed the aggressive rate-cutting by the US, UK and European Union (EU) central banks earlier in the month and a 100-basis-points cut in South Africa's repo rate to 5.25% by the **South**

¹⁷ The Namibian, 24 Mar 2020.

¹⁸ The Namibian, 19 Mar 2020.

¹⁹ The Namibian, 23 Mar 2020.

²⁰ Bank of Namibia, Monetary Policy Statement, 20 March 2020.

²¹ Bank of Namibia, Monetary Policy Statement, 20 March 2020.

African Reserve Bank (SARB) at its regular MPC meeting on 19 March.²² The BoN's prompt action in following suit – it would normally have waited until its scheduled MPC meeting in mid-April – highlighted how seriously Namibia's policy makers view the Covid-19 pandemic as a threat to the economy. The SARB's action exceeded market expectations of a 50-basis-points reduction and took the repo rate to its lowest level since 2013, even though it remains relatively high compared to the 0.25% or less that major global interest rates have been reduced to.

Local economists applauded the SARB's decision. According to **Standard Chartered Bank** chief Africa economist **Razia Khan**, it was "*fully justified*", given the very real growth threat that South Africa faces.²³ With inflation set to remain subdued in coming months (see below), the SARB could further loosen monetary policy soon, and the BoN would replicate another interest cut, probably as part of overall economic stimulus packages in both countries.

Shiimi noted that domestic economic output weakened during the first two months of 2020 compared to the same period of a year earlier, reflecting decreased activity in the mining, tourism, wholesale and retail sectors, only partially offset by an upturn in construction activity.²⁴ On the upside, private sector credit extension (PSCE) y/y growth accelerated to 7.3% in January 2020, from 6.4% a year earlier; Shiimi said it was "*encouraging*" that growth was mainly driven by higher business borrowing. Namibia's foreign reserves totalled N\$32.2 billion (\$1.8 billion) as of 29 February, up from N\$31.0 billion (\$1.8 billion) a month before; sufficient to cover 4.6 months of imports of goods and services, compared to 4.4 months previously.

Trade deficit widened last year

Preliminary annual trade statistics for 2019 published by the **Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA)** show that Namibia's merchandise trade deficit widened slightly to N\$19.5 billion (\$1.1 billion) last year, compared to \$1.0 billion in 2018.²⁵ The currency conversions are made using the current, depreciated Namibia dollar/South African rand exchange rate to the US dollar.²⁶ Total exports were worth N\$91.8 billion (\$5.2 billion), 1.5% down on 2018, with imports worth N\$111.3 billion (\$6.3 billion), up by 0.7%. Namibia's ten leading export markets – China (26%, mainly uranium, copper), South Africa (17%, mainly gold, beef and fish), **Botswana** (10%, mainly gem diamonds), **Belgium** (7.5%, mainly copper and diamonds), **Spain** (4.9%, mainly white fish), followed by the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**, **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, **Italy** and the **Netherlands** – accounted for 80.7% of total exports. Imports from ten leading suppliers – South Africa (45%), **Zambia** (16%), China (4%), **Bulgaria** (3%), **India** (3%), followed by Botswana, the US, **Peru**, DRC and **Chile** – made up 80.5% of total imports. Namibia's biggest trade surplus – N\$19.3 billion (\$1.1 billion) – was with China, while its biggest deficit – N\$34.6 billion (\$2.0 billion) – was with South Africa.²⁷

By commodity, the leading exports last year were copper ores, precious stones and metals (mainly diamonds 80% and gold 18%), metal ores (83% uranium, 13% zinc), and fish. Copper moved up to lead export due to an increase import volumes for re-export, either in original form for shipment from **Walvis Bay** (imports from Zambia and the DRC), or after being smelted from concentrate by **Canada's Dundee Precious Metals** at the **Tsumeb** smelter complex in north-eastern Namibia (imports from Bulgaria, Peru and Chile). Tsumeb smelted 215,000 tonnes of complex copper concentrates in 2019, slightly less than in the previous year due to a depressurisation event in the offgas system for the main Ausmelt smelter.²⁸

²² South African Reserve Bank Statement of the Monetary Policy Committee, 19 Mar 2020.

²³ Daily Maverick/Business Maverick, 19 Mar 2020.

²⁴ Bank of Namibia, Monetary Policy Statement, 20 March 2020.

²⁵ Namibia Statistics Agency, Annual Trade Statistics Bulletin.

²⁶ Xe.com/currency converter (online).

²⁷ Namibia Statistics Agency, Annual Trade Statistics Bulletin.

²⁸ Dundee Precious Metals, 2019 Fourth Quarter Report.

Inflation increased slightly in February

In what is likely have been only a near-term blip, year-on-year (y/y) inflation rose to 2.5% in February, having fallen to an historic low of 2.1% the previous month.²⁹ But 12-month inflation to end-February decreased to 3.3%, down from 3.5% over the 12 months to end-January. Any further upward trajectory in the short term is likely to remain weak, given the depressant impact on economic activity of measures to combat Covid-19, continued weak domestic demand and the sharp fall in oil prices since early March, with local analysts predicting that domestic fuel prices will be reduced in coming months. Windhoek stockbroker IJG Securities expects inflation to remain subdued in the coming months, given low inflationary pressure due to adequate rainfall in most parts of the country, an oil-price war and lack of domestic demand.³⁰ IJG forecasts an average inflation rate of 2.8% y/y in 2020.³¹ This is below its previous 3.3% annual average forecast, and one percentage point less than the 3.7% actual average inflation rate for 2019.

The collapse in global oil prices caused by falling demand following Covid-19's impact on world economies was intensified in early March with **Saudi Arabia's** launch of what traders described as an oil production "war" against **Russia** after it refused to agree to a reduction in oil output proposed by the **Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec)**. A three-year pact between Opec and Russia fell apart on 6 March, when Russia rejected any further cuts with its largest oil producer, **Rosneft**, confirming that any agreement or partnership between the two had now ended. In response, Saudi Arabia said it would raise production and offer cut-price oil in a bid to squeeze the high-cost US shale oil producers who have taken market share from Opec in recent years.³² This is good news for oil importers such as Namibia, as its fuel import bill will fall, although in practice this is likely to be largely offset by local exchange rate devaluation against the US dollar, in which oil sales are priced. Following an initial sharp fall – benchmark **Brent** crude closed at \$45 per barrel on 6 March, down by 15% on the week – prices continued to weaken. Oil prices took a further hit on 25 March with concerns about growing supply amidst the ongoing Saudi/Russia price war outweighing positive sentiment generated by the agreement by the **US Congress** on a \$2 trillion economic stimulus programme. Brent crude for May delivery was down to a new low of \$26.48 per barrel, with **West Texas Intermediate (WTI)** down by 3.4% at \$23.19 per barrel.³³

The foreign exchange value of the Namibia dollar/South African rand has fallen sharply against the US dollar since February. This has yet to feed into higher import prices and the depreciation may be cushioned by continued weak demand, which has reduced appetite for expensive consumer items such as high-end vehicles. The exchange rate was \$1= R17.20 on 25 March, a 13% depreciation from a month earlier (\$1=R14.901 on 17 February).³⁴

Goods inflation at 3.5% y/y (2.6% in January) was higher than services inflation at 1.1% (1.3%), for the second successive month, with the differential widening to over two percentage points. The food and non-alcoholic beverages category, with a 16.5% weighting in the **National Consumer Price Index (NCPI)** goods and services basket, along with transport (14.3% weighting) were the main inflation drivers in February. Food and beverages accelerated to 2.8% (food alone 2.9%) from 2.2% (2.1%) in January; most food sub-categories, especially fruit (15.0%) and fish (8.2%), recorded higher inflation in February. But staple food prices, for bread and cereals, were flat, and the high rainfall experienced throughout most of Namibia during February should boost the local output of cereal crops. Transport inflation moderated to 4.4% in February (from 5.0% in January); price rises for vehicle purchases slowed to 3.8% (from 4.4%), along with a marginally smaller cost increase of 5.9% (6.1% previously) for operating personal transport equipment. In contrast, housing and utilities, with

²⁹ Namibia Statistics Agency, National Consumer Price Index, February 2020.

³⁰ IJG Namibia, NCPI-February 2020.

³¹ IJG Namibia, NCPI-February 2020.

³² The Times, 9 Mar 2020.

³³ MarketWatch (online) 25 Mar 2020.

³⁴ XE.Corp, XE Currency Converter (online), 25 Mar 2020.

the biggest NCPI basket weighting (28.4%) recorded a second successive month of y/y deflation, -0.5% compared to -1.2% in January, mainly due to lower rental payments.³⁵

Planner

26 Mar 2020 **(Namibia) Statistics Agency**, Preliminary National Accounts 2019;
 14 April 2020 **(Namibia) Statistics Agency**, National Consumer Price Index, March 2020;
 2020 **(Namibia)** Regional council and local authority elections

Chronology

21 Mar 2020 **Swakopmund (Namibia) CNNC. Rossing Uranium** donates N\$200,000 (\$11,630) to the Namibian government to help combat the spread of **Covid-19**;

20 Mar 2020 **Oshakati (Namibia) The Namibian**. Oshakati town council becomes the first local municipality to implement the flexible land tenure scheme, which aims to help address the housing needs of people living in urban informal settlements;

17 Mar 2020 **Windhoek (Namibia) Namib Times**. President **Hage Geingob** declares a state of emergency with immediate effect and introduces a raft of measures to prevent the spread of **COVID-19**;

17 Mar 2020 **Windhoek (Namibia) Chamber of Mines Namibia**. The annual Mining Expo and Conference has been postponed from 22-23 April to 2-3 September, to be held at the **Windhoek Show Grounds**;

15 Mar 2020 **Windhoek (Namibia) Namib Times**. Government cancels **Independence Day** celebrations and flights linking **Namibia to Qatar, Ethiopia and Germany** as confirmed cases increase;

13 Mar 2020 **Swakopmund (Namibia) The Namibian**. **Swakop Uranium**, operator of the **Husab** mine, suspends all business trips by its employees and presents a 23-page **Covid-19** management plan to its staff.

12 Mar 2020 **Windhoek (Namibia) Namib Times**. **African Development Bank** approves a \$129m loan to finance the **Namibia Economic Governance and Competitiveness Support Programme**;

11 Mar 2020 **Windhoek (Namibia) Xinhua**. Health minister **Kalumbi Shangula** says all nine suspected cases of **Covid-19** have tested negative, and that the country's surveillance and screening measures are proving effective as evidenced by the number of suspected cases being attended to;

11 Mar 2020 **Windhoek (Namibia) The Observer**. The **High-Level Panel** on the economy publishes a set of proposals to boost the economy, including establishing two sovereign wealth funds, the transfer of land occupied in informal settlements by lower-income groups and construction of a second desalination plant;

28 Feb 2020 **Windhoek (Namibia) World Oil**. **Norway**-based geophysical services company **Electromagnetic Geoservices** receives a letter of intent with a minimum value of \$3.6m from an undisclosed customer on behalf of a **JV** block consortium, offshore **Namibia**;

³⁵ Namibia Statistics Agency, National Consumer Price Index, February 2020.

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