

Ipumbu Shiimi: Currency conversion agreement between Bank of Namibia and National Bank of Angola

Remarks by Mr Ipumbu Shiimi, Governor of the Bank of Namibia, at the signing ceremony “Currency conversion agreement between Bank of Namibia and National Bank of Angola”, Santa Clara, 22 September 2014.

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Director of Ceremonies

Ms Rosa Pacavia, Minister of Trade

Dr Jose de Lima Massano, Governor of Banco Nacional de Angola

Mr Antonio Didalelwa, Governor of the Province of Cunene

Mr Usko Nghaamwa, Governor of the Ohangwena Region

Mr António Tiago Gomes, Executive Secretary of the Angolan Chamber of Commerce;

Mr Tomas Indjii, Chairperson of the Namibia Chamber of Commerce:

Ongwediva Branch

Distinguished Invited Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen, Bondia

It is a pleasure to address you today at this important occasion of the signing of the Currency Conversion agreement between the Bank of Namibia and Banco Nacional de Angola. This heralds a significant milestone in the creation of an enabling business environment for Namibia and Angola and is among the many steps we need to take towards winning the economic struggle and achieve prosperity for our two countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To contextualise this signing ceremony, we need to reflect on our history. Namibia and Angola are much more than just mere geographical neighbours. These two nations share a long history and common heritage that cannot be severed.

During Namibia’s long and stretched out liberation struggle for independence, Angola became the refuge for many Namibians and served as the strategic military base from which to fight the war. After Namibia gained independence; Namibia in turn supported the government of Angola during their civil war and provided a home for Angolans seeking refuge. This support to each other in times of need has created a strong bond that it is cemented by blood. Since then, both countries have emerged from bitter wars.

With the return of peace to both countries, we are vigorously pursuing the second phase of the struggle, the economic emancipation of our citizens. Hence the need to create the necessary platforms, including payment system infrastructures, that will enhance trade among the people of our two countries.

Against this background, this Agreement will allow for the conversion of the national currencies of the Republic of Angola and the Republic of Namibia with the aim to stimulate trade between the two countries. This means the Kwanza and the Namibia dollar will now be acceptable on both sides of the borders. The Agreement will thus further strengthen the economic relations between our two countries and specifically our two Central Banks.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This is indeed a first step in that the conversion of the currencies under this Agreement will be applicable only to the border towns of Oshikango and Santa Clara. The possibility of extending the arrangement to other towns along the border will be investigated at a later stage.

Further, we will continue to work hard under the SADC agenda to enhance the region's payment system infrastructures, not only for smaller traders as we have done now under this Agreement but also for bigger traders. In this regard, we will endeavour to refine the recently developed SIRESS payment system platform to ensure that it meets the needs of all member countries in SADC, including the needs of Angola. Once SIRESS is rolled out to all countries in the region it will go a long way in facilitating safer and faster payments among the people of SADC.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Governor Massano and his team for their pragmatic and responsive approach during the period of our engagements on this Agreement. With people like Governor Massano and his team Africa will have a brighter future.

The Bank of Namibia looks forward to the continued co-operation and good working relationship between our two Central Banks; as together we can make our countries better, together we will be stronger and together our countries will continue to prosper.

OBRIGADO!