Deputy Prime Minister Marco Pohamba on Monday.

Regional Councillors, members of the Diplomatic Corps, community leaders and people from all works of life

Since its inception, Ongwediva Annual Trade Fair (OATF) has presented a welcome and popular platform for businesses, especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), to sell and exhibit their products.

The challenge of unemployment is a major concern to our Government”, says President Pohamba.

He highlighted some of the measures initiated by the Government to fight unemployment and boost the performance of Namibia’s economy, especially the SME sub-sector, stating that “our Government has adopted strategies to support local SMEs so that they can establish viable and self-sustaining businesses in order to create employment and improve livelihood.”

“The aim is to transform the structure, content and character of the domestic economy away from high dependency on the primary sector and exports of commodities, towards more value addition, as well as securing of new export market.”

President Pohamba underlined that during the 2009/2010 Financial Year, more than 60 qualifying SME building contractors received training on tender procedures and project management. A system was designed to issue SMEs with certificates that enable them to receive preferential tender rating by public tender boards. Many SME certificates have already been issued. Another initiative is the Equipment Aid Scheme, which the President said, assists SMEs to acquire operational equipment for their businesses.

We want to ensure that our SMEs can operate in a competitive environment. In this regard, Cabinet has approved restrictions on the involvement of foreign nationals in the sub-sectors of retailing, hair dressing and intra-Namibia transport in order to open up more opportunities for our people”, President Pohamba reveals.

He said the Head of State: “The efforts by our local authorities to host trade fairs as a means of promoting economic development are commendable indeed.” He urged all stakeholders to establish strategic partnerships that can lead to further successes of events such as the trade fair.

He has taken cognizance that several local companies have provided sponsorships to different aspects of this trade fair.

“We expect to see more involvement of the private sector in these initiatives as our country addresses the challenges of unemployment, poverty and provision of better services to our people, especially those in rural and urban areas.”

He also publicly announced that plans are at an advanced stage for the establishment of the Namibia Board of Trade (NBT) in keeping with a standing Southern African Customs Union (SACU) obligation.

The Board will be responsible for tariff setting and investigating cases of dumping of goods into the Namibian market”, he said.

One of the reasons of OATF’s popularity is because it offers exhibitors an opportunity to network with as well as access to a wide market of consumers.

He commended the organizers of the OATF for striving to improve its image and make it one of the most prominent and sought after trade exhibitions in the country.

The concept of the OATF was born in May 1994 with the sole purpose of creating awareness within the local business community about new ventures and to change the attitudes of people about the northern region.

This year marks a decade of the existence of OATF. It was an occasion to celebrate and commemorate the 10th anniversary of “exhibition of excellence”. It was a significant event, a memorable experience, a milestone and most importantly, the result of “freedom and hard work”.

The unrealizable hope and fantasy of former Mayor of Ongwediva and current Deputy Minister of Safety and Security, Erastus Arumutu Utomi became a living reality by October in the new millennium (2000).

Today, two decades later, it (OATF) is a flourishing trade business that has gained accolades from around the world, more especially Africa and Asia. Serious local, regional and international business is at play. The venue is none other than Ongwediva Trade Centre where business communities converge.

It is encouraging that the OATF’s international profile has continued to grow, with exhibitors coming from other countries. This demonstrates the confidence that the exhibitors have developed in the fair, as a good opportunity to market their products and services as well as to generate revenues.

Speaking at the same occasion, Her Worship Patricia Khaushpula, Mayor of Ongwediva town, welcomed all the dignitaries present, exhibitors and visitors to her town.

She minced no words as she heaped accolades on the development of OATF and the Government.

She said: “From humble beginnings, OATF has, over the years, grown in stature and now ranks as the prime multi-sectoral business exposition in Namibia”, adding that “We are indeed indebted to the Government of the Republic of Namibia for initiating and maintaining a conducive environment for business development”.

“We are currently promi-

nently building at the Shang-

haki World Expo 2010 at the Namibian Pavilion exhibiting under the sub-theme: "Remod-

eling of Urban Communities". We are indeed pioneers in that field”, says the Mayor.

She thanked the exhibitors, visitors and sponsors for their unwavering support and encouragement over the years.

In his vote of thanks message, the Governor of Oshana Region Clemens Khaushpula thanked the Deputy Prime Minister Haakusua, Attorney General and Minister of Justice Pendukeni Iivuha-thansi and other high pro-

file invited guests for having graced the occasion.

He has acknowledged the positive contribution the Gov-

ernment of Namibia has made over the years through the Min-

istry of Trade and Industry to-

ward the development, growth and stability of OATF.

“Are determined to take that OATF to the next level and transform the region into a vi-

brant business incubation cen-

tre in the years ahead”, said the Governor.

Several more American troops were over the weekend, pushing the 2010 American death toll to 308, just nine less than all of 2009.

Indicating the concerns in US policy toward Afghanistan, the Institute for the Study of War stated in a recent report on the situation in the major southern city of Kandahar “that the population views government institutions as predatory and illegitimate, representing the in-

terests of key power-brokers rather than the populace”.

Kandahar is essentially ruled by Karzai’s half-brother, Ahmed Wali Karzai, who has been publicly accused of both, overspending on a massive drug cartel and being on the CIA payroll. Karzai’s older brother, Mahmoud, who holds American citizenship, has become one of the richest men in the coun-

try, with Toyota dealerships and government-allocated contracts in the cement industry.

Any changes in the person-

nel of the Afghan government on the grounds of combating corruption or cleaning up the system will not alter the puppet character of the regime. The rampant payoffs, bribery and outright theft flow inexorably from a colonialist usurious establishment linked to the country. Several years before the Soviet military occupation of the country. Seven years before the Beijing’s stroke of 911, CIA agents were back in Afghan-

istan, bribing various groups and US to support an Afghan invasion.

In 2001, Mohammed Zia Saleh, who joined him in 2001, was one of the most powerful and murderous of the anti-Taliban warlords, Abdul Rashid Dostum, who was openly tak-

ing money from the US govern-

ment. CIA operatives worked with his militia during the invasion to crush Taliban forces in northern Afghanistan and took part in the cold-blooded murder of thousands of Taliban prisoners.

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According to the Wall Street Journal, the CIA has stood on the US embassy and the State Department, but they were even more powerful earlier in the year by Obama.

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