



**REMARKS BY Ms NILLIAN MULEMI, CHAIRPERSON OF THE
GIPF BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING
OF THE GIPF GROOTFONTEIN (SATELITE) REGIONAL OFFICE**

11 MARCH 2022

- **Hon. James Unomasa Uerikua, Governor of Otjozondjupa**
- **Your Worship the Mayor of Grootfontein Hon. Talitha Garises**
- **Local Authority Councillors present**
- **Chairperson of the Otjozondupa Regional Council Management Committee:
Councillor Marlyn Mbakera**
- **Regional Councillors present**
- **Chief Regional Officer: Honourable Ms Agatha Mweti**
- **Chief Executive Officer of the Grootfontein Town Council: Mr Kisco M Sinvula**
- **Army Commander: Major-General Matheus Alueendo**
- **Acting Senior Medical Officer: Dr Wilhelmina Kandenge**
- **Distinguished Stakeholders**
- **Fellow Trustees and Management**
- **Members of the Media**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good morning. I am delighted to join you this morning to celebrate the opening of the new GIPF satellite office in the beautiful town of Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa region. May I also extend a warm welcome to all those valued stakeholders who have travelled to be here with us on this happy occasion.

Grootfontein is well-known for its abundance of wildlife and game, and as of today, it will also be known as the venue of a one-stop GIPF office that strives to ensure excellent quality services to all its resident members through offering guaranteed pension benefits that are paid timeously and accurately.

The opening of this branch was necessitated by the outcry for more accessible services in the Otjozondjupa region and it is aligned to the Funds' overall corporate strategy to enhance service delivery and stakeholder engagement. In line with the town's vision "to be the GREAT FOUNTAIN in Namibia for socio-economic health and vibrancy for residents, investors and visitors", the GIPF has invested a total of n\$956.6 million in the region with over N\$20 million invested in the solar rooftop at the Grootfontein Mall, N\$91 million in the Grootfontein Shopping Mall and over N\$253.1 million in financing 451 home loans. Just as you do, we believe in the potential of the town to become an economic hub.

That being said, no region, town or village is without GIPF members and with our growing membership base which currently stands at over 146 000 members (active and annuitants), we are proud to bring our services closer to over 5000 GIPF members residing in Grootfontein and its surrounding areas.

The Fund continues to demonstrate consistently high performance across its four strategic themes of Sustainability, Excellent Service, Outcomes Based governance, and establishing itself as an employer of choice. This is possible through continuous monitoring of the external environment and trends that have an impact on the ability of the Fund to create value.

Driving responsible investment practices is a critical part of our commitment to good governance and to our vision of being a leading and model pension fund globally. While Covid-19 and the current situation in Ukraine has caused uncertainty. The Fund has had to adapt rapidly to prevailing economic condition. This being said, as a result of the Fund's robust investment strategy we continue to perform well, and our assets stands at N\$147.9 billion as at the end of January 2022. At this point it is crucial that I mention that the Fund has a large liability to members that is paid from this asset base. This liability is a result of the benefits/claims paid exceeding the contributions received. This is also a direct result of the Fund reaching maturity, with more members reaching the age of retirement and being paid their retirement benefits and no new members being admitted. It is for this reason that the Fund continues to invest in order to ensure benefits are paid when they become due.

Let me get back to the reason we are here today, to celebrate the Fund increasing its footprint and bringing much-needed services closer to our valued members.

Our new Grootfontein office is equipped to offer the following services:

- Pension enquiries
- Pension advice
- Biometric registration and verification
- Benefit and Income statements
- Submission of claim forms and supporting documents

The office will operate under the capable leadership of Mrs Merliza Jaars and we will grow the team as the need arises. Starting today, our office will be operational every first week of the month and during this week, our office hours will be between 08:00 am to 16:30 pm. We will however be closed during lunch, weekends, and on public holidays.

The theme for the year being, “The Final Stretch-Perfecting our Act”, which speaks to us working tirelessly to improve our mandate to provide retirement and ancillary benefits to its members and their dependents, I am pleased to inform you that GIPF offers electronic submission of funeral claims as of July 2021. This service has made the claiming process more convenient as members can now make use of email instead of traveling long distances to submit their funeral claims.

The change is inspired by the Fund’s vision of becoming a leading and model Pension Fund globally and by living its Service Excellency value of delivering the highest quality service (Right, Fast, and Humane) to all its stakeholders in an innovative, professional, and respectful manner. Funeral claims can be submitted at funeralclaims@gipf.com.na,

or to any regional office on the email addresses available on the GIPF website.

To further augment our efforts to “Perfect our Act”, our ongoing outreach programme, Pension on Wheels Mobile Van holds regular member education sessions which is aimed at reaching our members who reside in areas where office do not yet exist, and remote areas of Namibia. In fact, our team is currently in the Kunene and Otjozondjupa areas. The outreach programme which commenced on 28th February will conclude tomorrow at the Otavi Soccer Stadium. This has proven to be very successful and in future we wish to acquire more vans as we all know the vastness of our landscape.

It is important to the Fund that our members are well informed about their benefits thus we will constantly be engaging you with the latest Media Releases, Updates on the Fund and Updates

on the Fund's Investments, member education sessions roadshows and the external quarterly GIPF Newsletter which you are all welcome to contribute articles towards.

Indeed, an organisation must move with the times, in terms of its service delivery and software. As we share the joy of inaugurating the new office, we also embrace the shared vision, mission and commitment to safeguarding and growing the benefits of our members in becoming a model pension fund globally.

GIPF has worked relentlessly to improve our services and to date has improved on benefit payment turnaround times as follow:

1. Funeral benefits from 12 hrs to 7 hrs
2. Retirement benefits from 30 days to 9 days
3. Death benefits from 12 months to 7 months

We still strive to reduce these turnaround times further, and to achieve this we need you, our values members to work hand in hand with us.

The rapid movement of our members between employers combined with changes in personal circumstances have presented new challenges to the quality of member data, particularly in terms of accuracy. Members do not update their information regularly and this causes an unfortunate delay in the processing of claims. It is of outmost important for every GIPF member to ensure that their member records are up to date such as their full names, identity numbers, marital status, admission date and beneficiary nomination forms among others.

It is against this background that I appeal to you all to ensure that you reach out to your colleagues to update their personal details and beneficiary nomination forms on a regular basis.

Another challenge is that some members are not admitted on our systems, so please contact your nearest GIPF office to confirm that you are in fact admitted. If not, please submit your submission with supporting documents to your Human Resource Officer with haste. Another matter that needs to be mentioned, is the tracing of beneficiaries. The Fund has introduced an on-going campaign to trace beneficiaries, so please go to our website to see if you or someone you may know is a beneficiary who have not claimed their benefits. If so, please contact your nearest GIPF office for further information.

Internally, the Fund has implemented the Enterprise Software Solution: ESS for short, which is a Business Intelligence system which tracks key performance areas and indicators. The primary purpose of the solution is to make available various interactive reports at a strategic and operation level which will aid in monitoring performance areas. This enables the Fund to monitor productivity of staff and carry out basic business processes. In addition, the GIPF has moved to Microsoft Office 365 platform. Most notable of this suite is MS TEAMS and SharePoint. Both have increased collaboration and productivity in the office setting. These are just a few highlights of internal tools implemented to improve service delivery. As we continue to encourage innovation which is crucial to the continuing success of any organisation, the Fund is pleased to announce the new Biometrics Solution, which is a verification solution for the Funds' 50 000 active annuitants who receive monthly annuities. Whilst biometrics verification remains suspended due to Covid-19, the new Biometrics Solution will enable our members to verify remotely in the comfort of their homes. The solution will be rolled-out in April 2022 and enrolment dates will be communicated on various media platforms.

On this memorable occasion, I must thank and congratulate all those who have worked so hard in contributing to the inauguration of this new office. The office opens a new space for commitment, service excellence and teamwork, designed to meet the increasing demand and expectations of our members. May I wish all colleagues a very pleasant working environment and our valued members a wonderful day.

Thank you.