



WHISTLE BLOWER PLATFORM LAUNCH

**THE WIENBERG HOTEL, 13 JAN JONKER STREET, KLEIN WINDHOEK
6 SEPTEMBER 2022, 10H00**

ADDRESS BY MS. NILLIAN MULEMI, CHAIRPERSON OF THE GIPF BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Honourable Minister of Justice - **Madam Yvonne Dausab,**
- **Fellow trustees** of the GIPF Board;
- The Ombudsman of the Republic of Namibia - **Mr. Basilius Dyakugha,**
- Deputy Inspector-General of the Namibian Police - **Major General Anna-Marie Naida,**
- The Director General of the Anti-Corruption Commission - **Mr. Paulus Noah;**
- The Secretary General of NANTU - **Ms Loide Shaanika;**
- The Executive Director of the Retirement Funds Institute of Namibia - **Ms. Maria Gaomas;**
- The CEO of Namibia Savings and Investment Association - Mr Jason Hailonga;
- The CEO/Principal Officer of the GIPF - **Mr. David Nuyoma;**
- **Retired Members of the Fund** as well as those in **active services;**
- **Senior Management Team** of the GIPF;
- Our stakeholders from the various **press agencies;**
- **Invited guests** as well as all attendees who have **joined us virtually;**
- I hope I have adequately recognised everyone in attendance - **All protocol observed.**

It gives me a distinct pleasure to address you this morning as members of the GIPF(both retired and those in service, all other anuitants) and strategic stakeholders of the Fund

Guarding and growing a Pension Fund the size of the GIPF whose members are diverse and all serve the Government of Republic of Namibia in various roles and enjoys keen interest from the general public cannot be achieved by internal stakeholders alone. The role of external stakeholders is thus very critical.

We are thus very pleased that our stakeholders are able to join us as we launch a very important tool that will assist us to promptly address and deter unethical conduct that jeopardises the values and the mandate of the fund

The theme of this historic event is

“Towards fostering an ethical culture in GIPF: whistleblowing as an enabler for deterring unethical conduct”

Allow me to slightly amend the theme with added emphasis of my talk to read as follows:

“Setting the tone at the top in advancing whistleblowing as an enabler for deterring unethical conduct”

Honourable Minister, as the highest governance arm of the GIPF, the Board of Trustees and I recognised the idiom that says “A fish is demised from the head to the tail” This means that an organisation’s leadership can either be a success or a root cause of the organisation’s failure.

We have thus committed and will endeavour to ensure that:

- (i) We remain committed to ethical leadership by setting the tone at the top;
- (ii) We undertake to walk the talk by setting example in ensuring that, our actions and the decisions we take are guided by ethical values, particularly that of integrity.
- (iii) We undertake to support and follow through any whistleblower reports made at Board level by ensuring that matters are finalised within the shortest time reasonably possible, subject to a disclaimer that we will not interfere in any investigation where due process dictates that we should not.

Hon Minister, the whistle blower platform is being introduced as a means for our employees, members and stakeholders to report unethical activities carried out against the Fund in confidence without fear of retaliation. This is particularly significant when the Fund is currently investigating an unfortunate incident of breach of our internal financial controls by some of our staff members entrusted with managing our electronic payment system.

Without this platform, we resort to all other options such as approaching newspapers, corridor talk and social media to voice wrongdoings and any irregular activities carried out against the Fund.

This in turn does not help the cause because it results in reputational infringement on the part of the Fund, while the culprit or culprits for that matter are hardly made accountable for their conduct.

Let me take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of a number of stakeholders in our midst today.

- The Ministry of Justice represents the main constituency in that, the Ministry is the sponsor of the WhistleBlower Protection Act, which we all look forward to its ultimate implementation.

We have, however, opted to be proactive. Rather than wait on what the Government can do for us, we have chosen to meet the Government half-way in adopting and implementing the whistleblower policy and launching an electronic self service platform to use to report unethical incidents against the Fund.

Honorable Minister, Ladies and Gentleman, I am pleased to inform you that

- the application of the GIPF WhistleBlower Policy goes beyond just employees, it overs stakeholders as well. The Policy is crafted such that gipf members, service providers and external stakeholders can all use the platform.
- In the same vein, Whistleblowers shall be able to make reports to the authorized state agencies such as the Namibian Police, Anti-Corruption Commission and Financial Intelligence Centre, Whistle Blower Protection Office when it becomes operational.
- It should also be noted that, in terms of Section 8 of the Policy on reporting of Irregularities, GIPF may make referrals to authorised agencies such as the Namibian Police, ACC and the Financial Intelligence Centre.

It is within this spirit of collaboration that we implore on yourselves as critical stakeholders, to please afford us an ear when we do knock on your doors as we intensify the collective efforts to rid our services of unethical conduct and individuals who perpetuate such conduct.

Let me at this junction, thank all stakeholders who rendered your support to assist us to swiftly gather preliminary necessary evidence within a few days of us uncovering an incident of unethical conduct which was planned and perpetrated by own staff members entrusted to manage the payment system through collusion and circumvention. The law has since taken its full course. Further investigations are still on going.

Let me conclude by pointing out that the war against corruption will not be won by each one of us operating in silos, but rather each entity bringing their A-game.

Even if the whistle blower protection legislation is implemented tomorrow, we must still do our part as responsible and caring members of society. I thus encourage all of us to look after resourses accorded to us like they are our own.

Collectively, we can win the war against the scourge of corruption.

GIPF has taken the first step.

We invite all our members and stakeholders to join us in the fight against corruption

I thank you.