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GIPF CEO VISITS KAVANGO WEST AND KAVANGO EAST REGIONS

The Chief Executive Officer/Principal Officer (CEO/PO) of the GIPF Mr Martin Inkumbi visited the Kavango West and East Regions last week as part of his familiarisation programme since taking the helm at the Fund earlier this year. The CEO/PO visited the Fund's Regional Office at Rundu and its Satellite Office at Nkurenkuru in Kavango West.

Mr Inkumbi paid courtesy visits and engaged the Governors, Chairpersons of the Regional Council Management Committees and the Chief Regional Officers of the two regions. The political leadership in the two regions are key stakeholders of the Fund as they are the custodians of the members whom the GIPF serves.

Mashare Blue Berries Farm

The regional visit afforded the CEO/PO and his Executive team an ideal opportunity for a stopover at Namibia's first ever commercial berry plantation, the Mashare Blue Berries Farm, in which the GIPF invested through the enterprise Spitz Capital. The Farm is managed by Fund Manager Königstein Capital.

The farmland on which Mashare Berries are produced is situated 45 kilometres outside of Rundu in the lush forests of Kavango East. Mashare Berries is currently in its fifth year of production, expecting another quality yield spanning over 60 hectares, enough to accommodate 84 football stadiums.

Four blueberry variants are produced here, namely AzraBlue, AtlasBlue, BiancaBlue, and Sekoya Pop, with two more variants in a testing stage. Inkumbi said "I do believe this is a sector that has potential, they continue trying a variety of blueberries, they have approximately six different varieties, with a scope for expanding". Inkumbi added his satisfaction with how the institutional savings, namely those of the GIPF have positively impacted the Namibian economy, by earning a return and benefiting the GIPF members in the long-term.

Currently the Mashare Berries Farm employs 100 permanent employees, with a capacity to employ 800 people seasonally during the harvesting period and injecting approximately N\$1 million to N\$1,5 million per month in the local economy in the region. “This has a positive impact on the livelihood of the employees, their family members and the region at large”, Inkumbi added.

The GIPF represents a significant proportion of the savings of the nation and therefore invests residue funds in a manner that reflects its responsibility and core mandate. The Fund’s investments consist of segregated and managed portfolios placed with investment managers as well as direct investments in unlisted Namibian companies.

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