

## Media Statement

Thursday, 13 February 2025

### CLARIFICATION ON NEWSPAPER ARTICLE: “SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS ABOUT UAANDJA'S MANAGEMENT STYLE”

#### Background:

The Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB) has noted the newspaper article with the headline “*Ernstige bewerings oor Uaandja se bestuurstyl*” (translating to: “Serious allegations about Uaandja's management style”), published on the front page of Die Repulkein newspaper on Thursday, 06 February 2025.

Regrettably, the content of this article is both misleading and factually incorrect. The NIPDB provided all the requested information to the Journalist/Author within the agreed upon timeframe, which would have corrected the inaccuracies presented in the article. It is disappointing that instead of providing the facts and giving the readers a balanced view, the journalist chose to selectively omit crucial details, thus creating a distorted and unfavourable perception about the NIPDB.

In light of this, the NIPDB hereby wishes to set the record straight by providing the accurate information regarding the points raised in the aforementioned article.

Below is the list of questions received from the newspaper, and the exact responses provided by the NIPDB.

#### Questions:

1. I have learned that 25 staff members have allegedly left NIPDB in three years, citing a toxic work environment under your leadership. Why are so many people resigning?
2. Employees allegedly call you the "Alpha and Omega" of NIPDB, saying you control everything and make it impossible for them to do their jobs, making them believe that you answer to no one. Please comment on this?
3. Have employees allegedly been forced out or blacklisted for raising concerns?
4. How did your former personal assistant at PwC, Jessica Hauuanga, get promoted to Executive Director for Investor Experience? I understand Hauuanga was automatically employed without an interview as Senior Manager: Investment Experience Retention & Aftercare and within seven months, after completing the 6 months probation period, she was automatically promoted to Executive: Investor Experience, Retention & Aftercare, without being in the Senior Manager position for at least 12 months). Could you comment on this?

5. Ndeyapo Shilongo, who headed Quest Consulting, a company NIPDB contracted for management consulting services, is from my understanding now Senior Manager: Strategy and Project Management. Allegations suggest she was promoted before completing the required probation period, contrary to NIPDB's Conditions of Service Policy. On which basis has she been appointed in this position?
6. Your former PwC colleague Ndapewa Hangula is now Senior Manager: Public Investments and Local Content. I understand she was appointed in this position before completing the required probation period of six months as stated in NIPDB's Conditions of Service Policy.
7. There have been allegations that Mr. Tinus Fourie was hired at NIPDB just two days after his father, Dawie Fourie—your former mentor at PwC—reached out to you, without any recruitment process. It is also claimed that after leaving NIPDB for a period, he returned to work as a consultant for NIPDB in the position of Consultant, Operations Efficiency in the Office of the CEO, despite this role not being publicly advertised or following transparent recruitment processes. Could you provide clarity on this situation?
8. It is alleged that you assured Dino Ballotti he would always have a place at NIPDB, leading to his return after resigning from FNB. Could you comment on this?
9. NIPDB is allegedly paying for your PhD and Jessica Hauuanga's MBA, while denying staff funding for foreign direct investment courses that would directly benefit the NIPDB. Could you comment on this?

## **NIPDB Response:**

### **1. Staff Turnover**

As an employer, NIPDB acknowledges that not all employees will remain with the organisation indefinitely. Employees may choose to resign for a variety of reasons, ranging from new career opportunities to personal or family commitments and of course there are some who do so because they feel their needs are not being met. Although NIPDB is a relatively new entity, we are committed to fostering a positive work culture that empowers our employees to thrive. To this end, we have implemented a series of strategic initiatives designed to embed this culture within our organisational DNA. Furthermore, we take pride in attracting and retaining some of the brightest talent in Namibia, making our employees highly sought after in the job market. Therefore, when they're presented with opportunities for professional advancement or career growth, we fully support our employees in exploring these opportunities to further their careers.

### **2. Recruitment Process**

The NIPDB's recruitment process is conducted in accordance with and in full compliance with the guidelines and principles outlined in our internal policy, which provides the framework for hiring and onboarding new employees. This policy is an integral part of our broader governance structure, and is therefore applied with the utmost diligence. The recruitment process is sensitive by nature as it involves confidential employee information, which we are obliged to safeguard, and thus cannot disclose publicly. However, as with all

other aspects of our operations, the recruitment process is intrinsically ethical and always anchored in the prevailing policy framework.

### **3. Staff Training and Development**

At NIPDB, we recognise the critical link between employee training and development, and organisational success. Continuous investment in developing our team not only enhances their skills, but also fosters innovation, thus enabling the NIPDB to remain agile in the execution of our mandate.

Our employee development is governed by the Learning and Development Policy, which ensures that this benefit is rolled out in a fair and equitable manner. In this regard, training assistance is available to all employees, with certain terms and conditions to ensure alignment to business goals and the employees' personal development plans. To date, a total of 17 employees have benefited from our training fund, pursuing various qualifications in diverse fields, including development finance, credit analysis and business administration, to mention a few.

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