NAMIBIA BUDGET for the 2025/26 Financial Year: Financing the SDGs

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Acknowledgements

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A Introduction

Namibia's newly appointed Finance Minister, Hon. Ericah Shafudah, presented the 2025/26 national budget on March 27, 2025, themed "Beyond 35: For a Prosperous Future," marking 35 years of Namibia's independence. The budget totals N$106.3 billion, a 4.9% increase from the previous fiscal year, reflecting a cautious yet growth-oriented fiscal approach, with a strategic focus on fiscal prudence, economic diversification, and social equity. The budget proposes key initiatives aimed at stimulating economic growth, enhancing social welfare, and ensuring sustainable fiscal management.

B Economic and Fiscal Context

1. Global Economy

The global economy is holding steady with growth projected at 3.3% for 2025 and 2026, slightly below historical averages — the pre-pandemic average of 3.2% recorded between 2010 and 2019, reflecting ongoing structural challenges including weak investment, slow productivity growth, high levels of debt, and demographic pressures. Risks emanate from subdued consumption, geopolitical tensions and protectionist trade policies; -while headline inflation rates have fallen towards target rates in most advanced economies, underlying inflation rates have been slower to fall, and the new tariffs threaten higher inflation.

2. Sub-Saharan Africa

Growth in the region is expected to increase to 4.2% in 2025 and 2026, driven by resilient domestic activities and reduced impact from negative weather shocks. However, persistent geopolitical tensions pose risks to supply chains, threatening livelihoods and access to essential public goods and services.

3. Domestic Economic Developments

A. GDP Growth

Namibia's GDP growth slowed to 3.7% in 2024 but is projected to pick up to 4.5% in 2025 and 4.7% in 2026, driven by mining, agriculture, and improved consumer confidence. While Namibia projects a domestic growth rebound, structural risks remain significant, including high public debt levels (66% of GDP in FY2024/25, projected to decrease to 62% in FY2025/26); climate-related shocks (e.g., droughts and flooding affecting agricultural output and diamond exports); persistent unemployment and income inequality, and constrained fiscal space, with interest payments outpacing development expenditure. Moreover, the fiscal Tables indicate a nominal GDP grew marginally from N$275.8B (2024/25) to N$277.9B (2025/26) – a slight increase (just 0.76%). The Bank of Namibia (BoN) has projected that the country will face a decline in SACU revenue, from N$28 billion in 2024 to N$21 billion in 2025 due to a downturn in global commodity prices(diamonds) and shifts in SACU's revenue-sharing formula.

B. Inflation

Inflation moderated to 4.2% in 2024, with further easing expected.

C Fiscal Policy Developments,

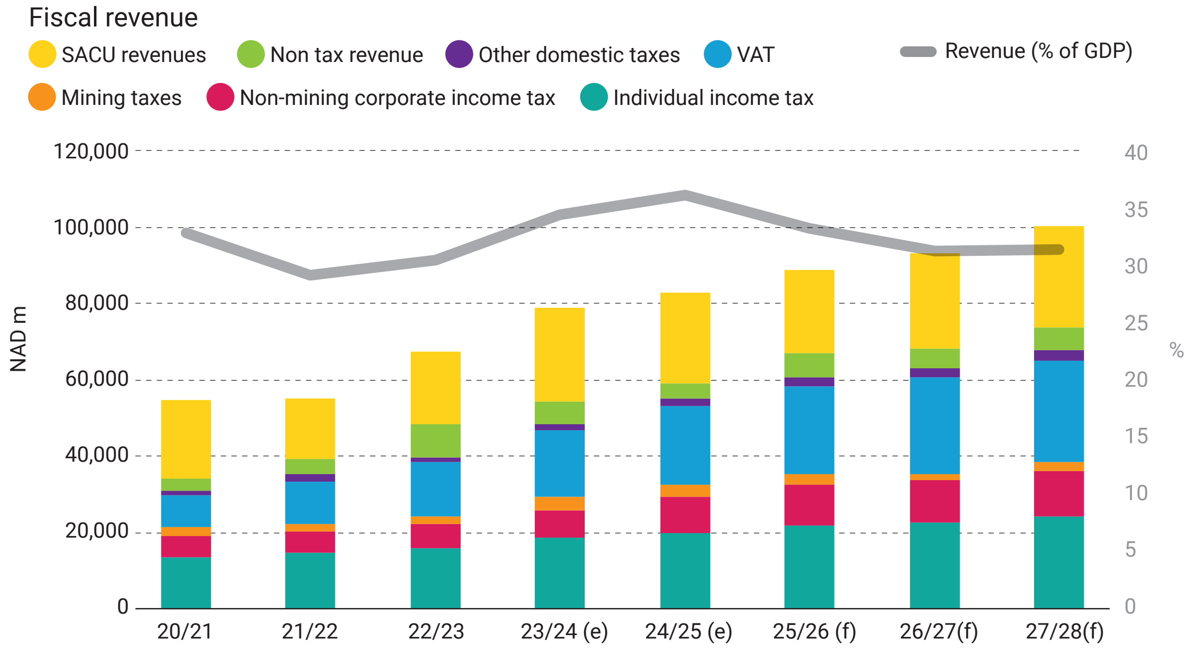
FY2025/ 26 Budget and Medium-Term Outlook

Revenue

Government revenue continues to show moderate but consistent growth, underpinned by robust tax administration and economic recovery (Figure 1). Namibia, revenue growth is driven by improved VAT and income tax collections.

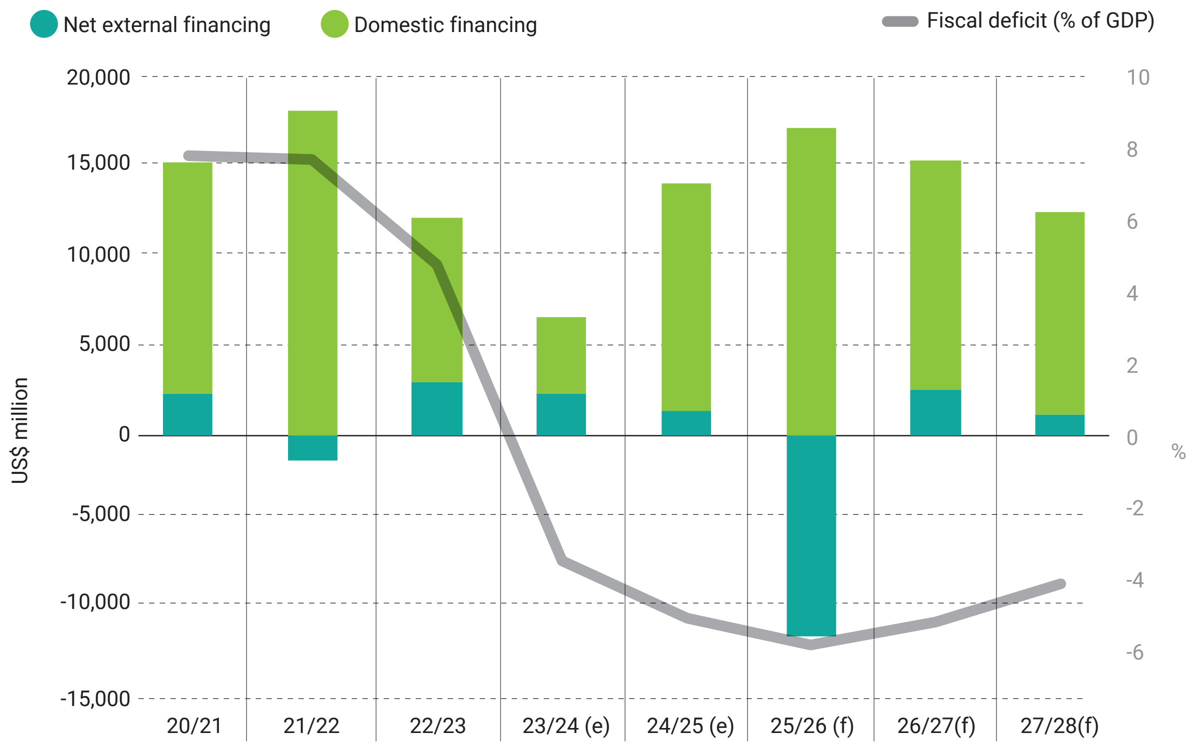
In FY2024/25, total revenue stood at N$90.9 billion, supported by strong performance in Corporate Income Tax (CIT), Value-Added Tax (VAT), and Individual Income Tax collections aided by the Tax Amnesty Program and indicative of strengthened domestic resource mobilization (DRM) Revenue as a percentage of GDP declines from 36.17% (2024/25) to 33.33% (2025/26). Although for FY2025/26, nominal revenue is projected to increase to N$92.6 billion, reflecting growth of approximately 1.9%. The growth is slower than GDP, suggesting weaker resource mobilization in relative terms.

Figure 1. **Revenue projections and composition**



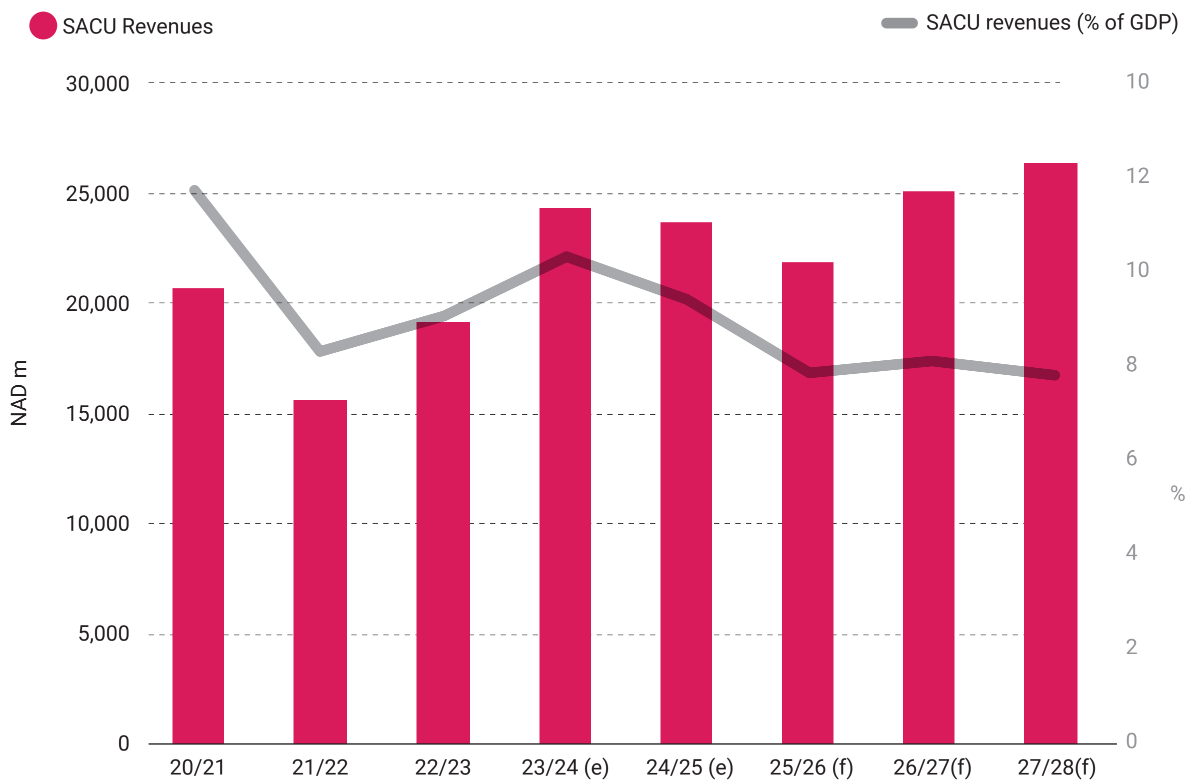
Source: Author with data from Ministry of Finance and Social Grants

Figure 2. **Sources of funding**



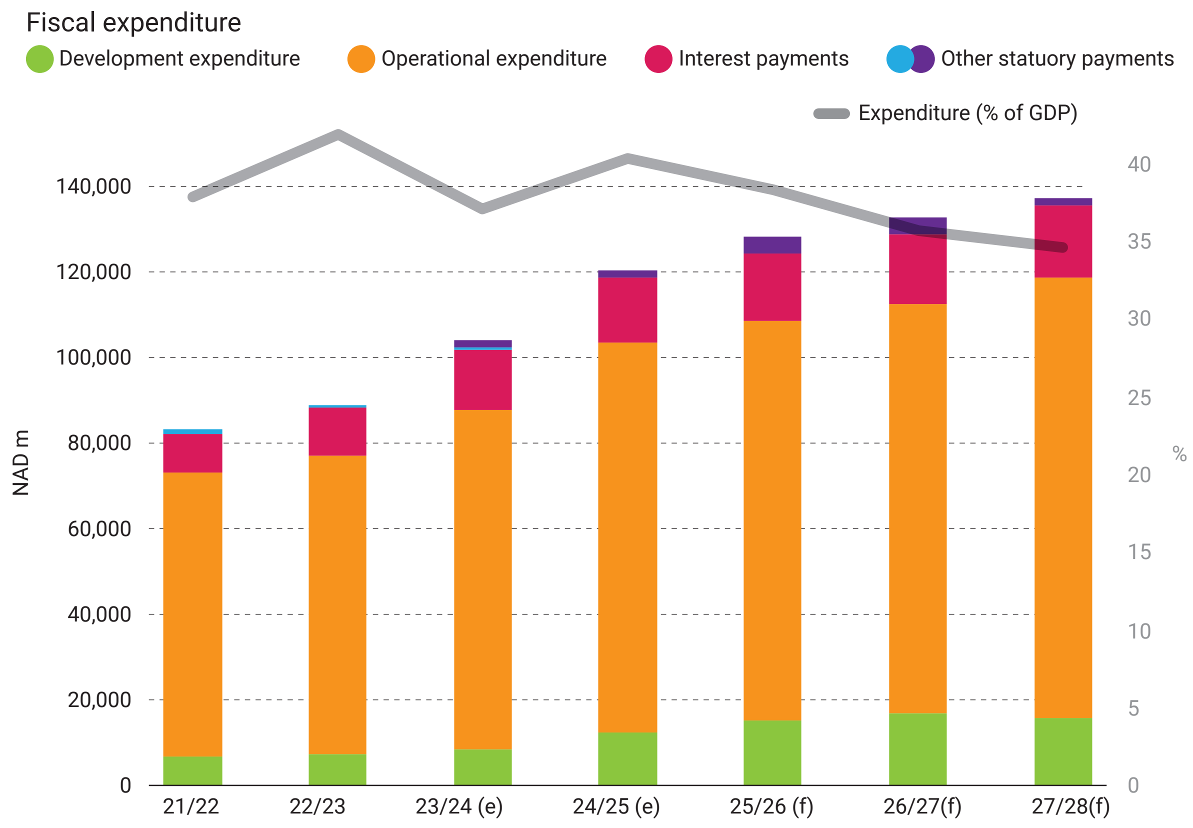
Source: Author with data from Ministry of Finance and Social Grants

Figure 3. **Trends in SACU Receipts**



Source: Author with data from Ministry of Finance and Social Grants

Figure 4. **Composition of expenditure**



Source: Author with data from Ministry of Finance and Social Grants

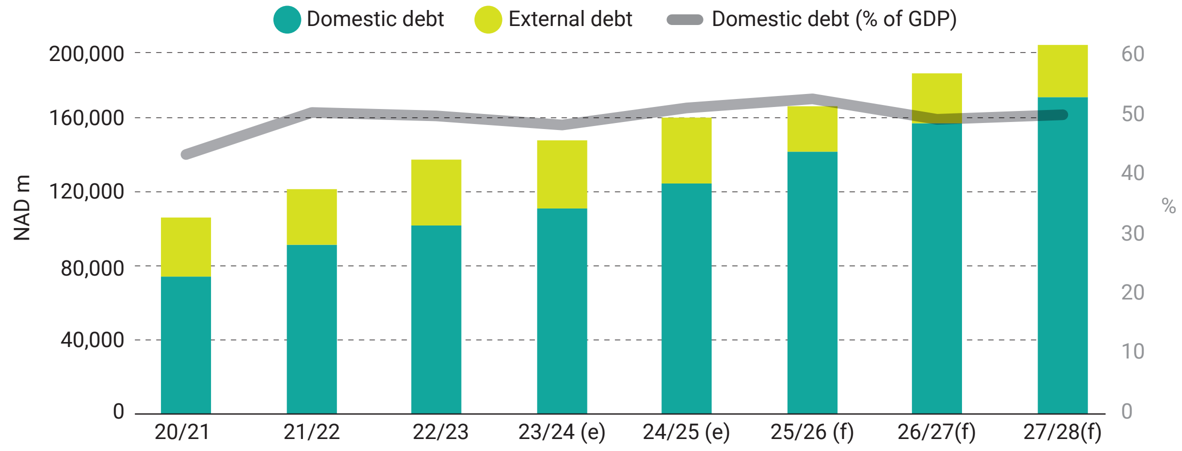
Expenditure

Total non-interest expenditure for FY2024/25 was recorded at N$72.9 billion, with a balanced focus on operational and developmental needs. In FY2025/26, total expenditure significantly increased to N$106.3 billion, reflecting the government's strong commitment to addressing infrastructure gaps, social protection, and long-term development priorities. Sustainability risk looms large - social protection is being preserved, but not expanded in a meaningful way that addresses emerging vulnerabilities or long-term structural inequities.

Of this, N$79.8 billion is allocated for operational expenditure, including public service delivery, grants, and subsidies, while N$12.8 billion is earmarked for development expenditure, including N$3.2 billion financed outside the State Revenue Fund through partnerships and donor support. This allocation reflects the government's dual approach of sustaining essential services while advancing transformative projects in sectors such as transport, energy, housing, and education. The budget indicates reforms will improve the business environment and promote private sector efficiency. PPPs and SME financing are emphasized. However, the allocations point to only N$50M for the Prime Minister's Office and N$245M for the President's Office.

Namibia Budget for the 2025/26 Financial Year

Figure 5. **Debt composition and Trends**



Source: Author with data from Ministry of Finance and Social Grants

Debt

In Namibia's 2025/26 budget, debt service costs are allocated N$13.7 billion, representing 14.8% of total revenue and 4.9% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This signifies a substantial portion of the national budget being committed to servicing debt, surpassing some allocations for essential public investments. Namibia's total public debt stock stood at N$165.9 billion, equivalent to 66.0% of GDP by the end of FY2024/25 a 10.2% rise from the start of the year. While this level remains high by historical standards, it is considered manageable in the short to medium term, especially considering recent improvements in debt transparency, management, and refinancing strategies. However, from a human rights perspective, the level of debt servicing raises concerns about the opportunity costs for public investment in sectors fundamental to the realization of economic and social rights. It is important to ensure debt obligations do not undermine access to health, education, and social protection, especially for marginalized groups.

Multilateral loans remained the largest portion of Namibia's external debt, accounting for 46.1 percent, whilst the Eurobond instruments made up 37.2 percent, and bilateral loans have increased to 15.9 percent, driven by disbursements from Germany's KfW Development Bank. Overall, the increase in total debt stock was driven by domestic borrowing through treasury bills and bonds, while foreign debt also rose due to currency depreciation.

The budget deficit for FY2024/25 was 3.9% of GDP, slightly higher than the previous estimate due to increased spending on social grants and public investment. For FY2025/26, the government has allocated N$13.7 billion for debt servicing, which accounts for a significant portion of expenditure, underscoring the urgency of containing further debt accumulation.

In response to looming maturities, most notably the Eurobond of N$14.3 billion due in 2025—the government has committed to building up the sinking fund and exploring domestic refinancing options to minimize rollover risk. Maintaining fiscal discipline while creating room for productive spending remains a central pillar of the medium-term fiscal strategy.

Budget Policy Pillars

Economic Development

Investments include in infrastructure, education, water, power generation, and health facilities. While this list includes critical development sectors, it reflects a traditional, infrastructure-centric approach to economic development. The merging of key Ministries has also diluted/ black boxed key mandates on employment promotion and social protection which would require a clear strategy and structure to support coordination and promotion of job creation efforts. What's missing is a human-centered design (HCD) approach—which prioritizes people's lived experiences, needs, inclusion, and agency in the planning and implementation of development interventions.

Social Protection

Sustained allocations include to social protection programmes, youth employment, and food production initiatives. While the budget continues existing grants, it does not introduce transformative or expanded protections, especially for informal sector workers, rural women and youth, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Additionally, there will be a need to intentionally evaluate the effectiveness of existing grants and social protection schemes.

Tax Policy and Administration Reforms

Proposals

Amendments to zero-rated commercial properties, increased retirement funds commutation threshold, VAT on imported digital services, and anti-avoidance provisions.

Tax Rate Adjustments

Reduction in non-mining company tax rate and introduction of a 10% dividend tax.

Administrative Efficiency Priorities

Reforms

Improvements in procurement systems, oversight measures for medical aid schemes, and digitalization of food relief distribution.

Namibia Budget for the 2025/26 Financial Year

D Trends in Sectoral Allocation

The sectoral allocations in Namibia's 2025/26 budget reflect a strategic approach to addressing economic development, social protection, infrastructure improvement, and governance with a focus on key sectors including education, health, transport, agriculture, and social grants, further highlighting the government's commitment to fostering a prosperous and inclusive future for all Namibians. Although the budget supports gender programmes, youth employment and empowerment, and digitalization, these priorities are not explicitly catered for to enable allocations for rural digital access or female entrepreneurship.

The budget reflects a notable increase in development and sectoral allocations compared to the previous year with key changes as follows:

Increase in Total Expenditure

The overall budget has increased by 4.9%, reflecting a commitment to expanding fiscal capacity despite revenue constraints.

Higher Development Expenditure

There is a significant increase in development expenditure, indicating a focus on infrastructure and long-term growth projects.

Sectoral Growth

Key sectors such as education, health, transport, and agriculture have seen increased allocations, emphasizing the government's priorities in these areas.

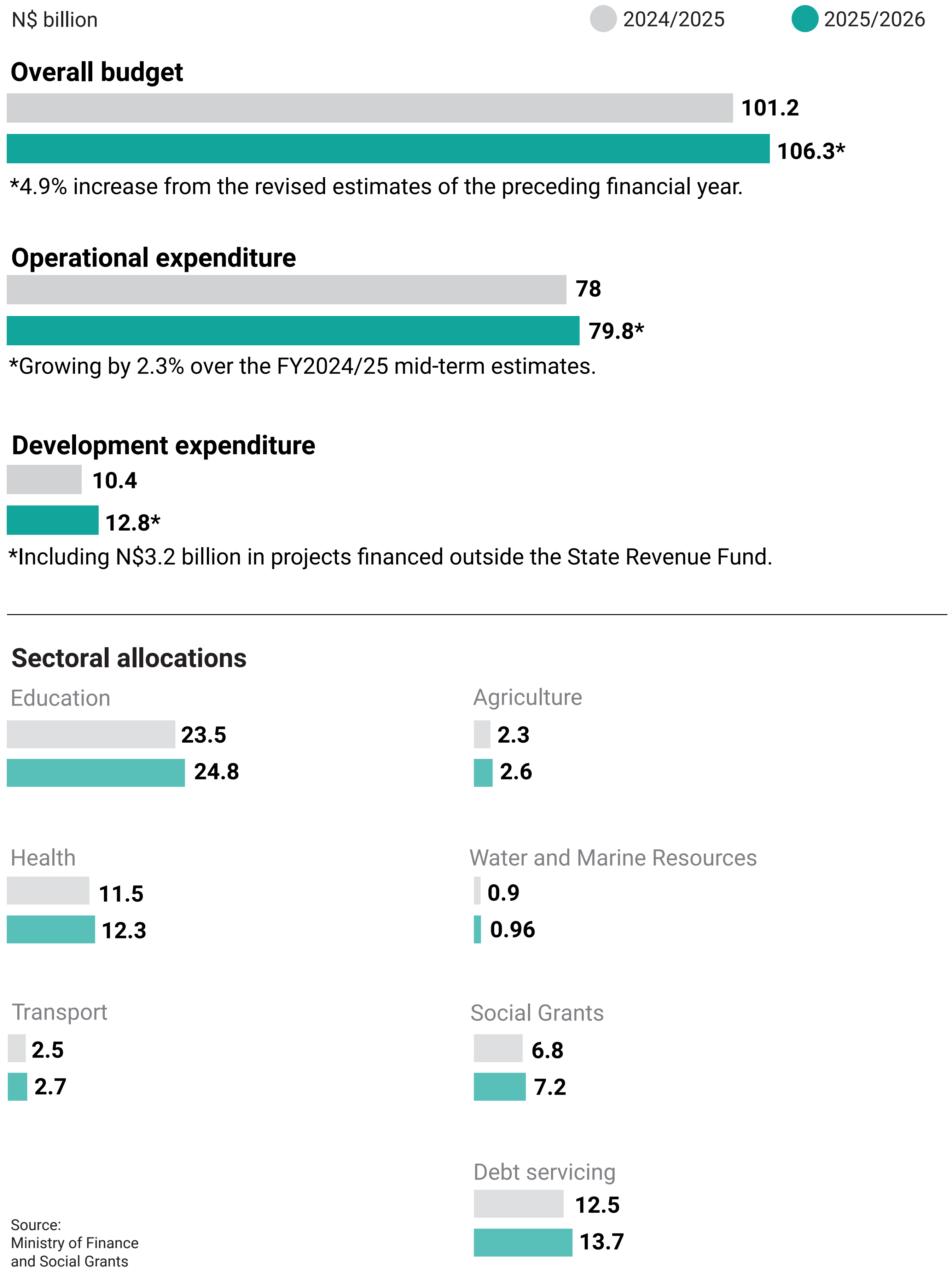
Debt Servicing

The allocation for debt servicing has increased, highlighting the government's efforts to manage and reduce debt accumulation, commitment to fiscal sustainability, "with the debt-to-GDP ratio expected to fall to 62% in 2025/26. Despite this, the budget deficit is widening to 4.6% of GDP, and interest payments (N$13.7B) exceed development spending (N$12.8B).

Social Protection

Sustained and increased allocations for social grants and protection programs show a continued focus on supporting vulnerable populations.

Table 1. **Trends**



Source:
Ministry of Finance
and Social Grants

E Allocation to the SDGs and alignment with the UNSDCF 2025 - 2029

The 2025/26 budget demonstrates Namibia's commitment to achieving the SDGs through targeted allocations and initiatives across various sectors. The focus on social protection, economic development, infrastructure, and environmental sustainability highlights the government's holistic approach to fostering a prosperous and inclusive future for all Namibians and contributing to Agendas 2030 and 2063. The budget's focus on fiscal prudence, economic diversification, and social equity aligns closely with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its collaborative efforts with Namibia through the UNSDCF 2025 – 2029 Pillars, and consequently with the SDGs (Annex, Table 1).

Pillar 1
Economic Transformation and Resilience
The budget's support for economic diversification and job creation complements the UN's goal of fostering economic resilience and transformation.

Pillar 3
Sustainable Development and Green Growth
Investments in renewable energy and climate-resilient infrastructure in the budget support the UN's commitment to environmental sustainability.

Pillar 2
Human Development and Community Resilience
Increased allocations for social sectors i.e. education, healthcare, and social protection in the budget align with the UN's focus on improving human development outcomes. Social sector spending is crucial for the realization of a human rights economy, and Agenda 2030.[1]

Pillar 4
Effective Governance
The budget's emphasis on enhancing governance frameworks and public service delivery aligns with the UN's efforts to promote transparent and accountable institutions.

1. Social sector spending is crucial for the fulfillment of economic and social rights, reducing inequalities and attaining the SDGs. The obligation to ensure the realization of ESC rights through adequate public spending is contained within key human rights treaties. It is also articulated in Agenda 2030—key indicator 1.a.2, the proportion of total government budgets allocated to social spending (defined as education, health, and social protection spending).

Namibia's SDG trajectory remains challenged by persistent poverty, inequality, and unemployment—reflected in the prioritization of SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities) under the national SDG Push framework.

These goals are considered critical yet off-track, with modelling showing that under a business-as-usual scenario, Namibia will not meet these targets by 2030. The 2025/26 national budget responds to these gaps through a dual strategy: stimulating inclusive economic growth and expanding targeted social protection. Notably, N$24.8 billion is allocated to education (SDG 4), N$12.3 billion to health (SDG 3), and N$7.2 billion to social grants (SDG 1 and 10), while N$2.6 billion supports agriculture and food security (SDG 2), and N$2.7 billion is directed toward urban development (SDG 11).

However, despite these allocations, inequality (SDG 10) remains stubbornly high, and the Gini coefficient shows only marginal improvement even under the SDG Push scenario. The budget's development expenditure of N$12.8 billion—though a step forward—remains overshadowed by debt servicing costs of N$13.7 billion, raising concerns about the fiscal space available for transformative SDG investments. Therefore, while the budget aligns with the SDGs in principle, especially through its support for human development and infrastructure, its impact on lagging Goals will depend on effective execution, targeted reforms, and sustained external financing.

Namibia Budget for the 2025/26 Financial Year

F Implications for UN Namibia

Namibia's 2025/26 national budget reflects a commitment to sustainable development, economic resilience, and social equity. These priorities align with the UN's mission in Namibia, offering avenues for strengthened collaboration to achieve shared goals. By leveraging each other's strengths, the UN and Namibia can work together to address the country's challenges and capitalize on opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth for all. Key themes to follow include:

I. Fiscal Space, Economic Growth Forecast and Fiscal Deficit

The government has revised its 2025 economic growth forecast down to 4.5%, a decrease from the earlier estimate of 5.4%. This adjustment is primarily attributed to ongoing weaknesses in the diamond sector, which adversely affect domestic activities. Consequently, the budget deficit for the fiscal year ending March 31 is projected at 3.9% of GDP, higher than the previous estimate of 3.2% posing enduring questions of fiscal space.

II. Social Progression & Welfare Enhancement

Speaking to commitment towards socio-development and to bolster social support, this adjustment aligns with President Nandi Netumbo-Ndaitwah's vision of uplifting marginalized communities. Additionally, significant resources are allocated to food distribution, education, healthcare, and infrastructure, aiming to mitigate vulnerabilities faced by the nation's most disadvantaged populations, supporting the Leaving No One Behind principle and a human rights economy, since food, social protection, education and health are fundamental human rights as enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

However, given the current US Government funding cuts, there is need to closely monitor the situation and understand the mitigation measures that will be put in place, especially for health and social protection as the most affected sectors / focus areas.

III. Domestic Resources Mobilisation and Tax Policy Reforms

Helping to support closing of the development financing gap through enhanced domestic resources mobilization (DRM), the budget introduces several tax policy reforms designed to stimulate economic activity and improve tax administration including:

- **Income Tax Threshold Adjustment:** The income tax threshold for individuals is increased from N$50,000 to N$100,000. This change is expected to inject approximately N$646 million into the local economy, providing immediate relief to low-income earners.

- **Corporate Tax Rate Reduction:** A phased reduction in the corporate tax rate from 31% to 28% by FY2026/27 is planned. This initiative aims to enhance Namibia's competitiveness and attract both domestic and foreign investment.

- **Dividend Tax Introduction:** A 10% dividend tax is set to be implemented from January 2026. This measure seeks to address disparities in tax treatment between resident and non-resident shareholders.

- **Alignment of tax reforms with empowerment:** Targeted tax incentives can directly promote economic empowerment by encouraging job creation for youth and supporting businesses in strategic development areas. Thus, analysis and concrete actions on aligning tax reforms to harnessing the demographic dividend, given that a significant portion of Namibia's population is under the age of 35 is critical which includes tailored gender-transformative investments in youth education, skills development, and employment opportunities.

IV. AfCFTA, Job Creation, and Investments in Infrastructure

The budget allocates funds to infrastructure and development projects which should support efforts towards job creation, skills development, and enhancing regional integration and the implementation of the AfCFTA. Thus, this link between infrastructure development, trade and regional integration and employment can be further advocated for by the UN with the opportunity for value chains development and employment intensive approaches. Furthermore, given the N$ 12.8 billion allocation to development budget, it is important to advance budget efficiency in order to promote timely planning and completion of projects within allocated budgets and align their actual impact on economic growth and social development while promoting the need for gender-sensitive infrastructure development and ensuring that projects benefit among others Persons with disabilities (PWDs), women and all vulnerable groups equitably. Planned infrastructure includes:

- **Railway Network Development:** An estimated N$6.6 billion is earmarked for railway network development over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), aiming to enhance transportation infrastructure.

- **Educational Infrastructure:** A capital budget of N$970 million is allocated to the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture for the construction and renovation of classrooms and other school facilities, supporting the government's commitment to improving educational infrastructure.

- **Housing and Urban Development:** N$700 million is dedicated to informal settlements upgrading, land servicing, and other programs to improve access to housing opportunities nationwide, aiming to enhance living standards and quality of life.

V. Gender

While gender-focused programs are mentioned, the N$473.6 million for the Ministry of Gender is less than 2% of the operational budget, and there's no clarity on how much directly empowers women economically.

VI. Renewable Energy & Green Growth

The expectations of declining international energy prices in 2025, due to subdued demand in China and increased non-OPEC oil production (as articulated in the budget statement) may contribute positively to domestic inflation control, but it holds both opportunities and risks for Namibia's emerging green hydrogen sector. As fossil fuel prices decline, countries heavily reliant on oil exports may face fiscal pressures. Namibia, aiming to position itself as a leader in Green Hydrogen production, can capitalize on this shift by offering a stable, clean alternative amid global energy transition efforts. Green Hydrogen could become more attractive to investors seeking long-term, resilient, low-carbon energy solutions. However, the risks include an anticipated increase in nonfuel commodity prices that could affect the critical minerals costs for hydrogen infrastructure (e.g., steel, copper, rare earth metals needed for renewables and electrolysers). This could inflate project development costs in the short to medium term. The geopolitical tensions and economic policy shifts may increase the cost of capital or dampen global risk appetite—particularly relevant for large-scale, long-horizon investments like green hydrogen projects. Strategic budget considerations for Namibia would be: i) Set aside strategic green hydrogen funds within the national budget and consider leveraging public-private partnerships to de-risk investments; ii) Prioritize policy clarity and investment facilitation, including infrastructure planning, licensing, and incentives for green hydrogen developers.

VII. Development Finance, Debt Management and Fiscal Sustainability

The budget acknowledges the challenges posed by the maturing N$14.3 billion Eurobond in 2025. To address this, the government plans to redirect a portion of increased revenues towards a sinking fund, aiming to manage rollover risks and contain future debt service obligations. This strategy is crucial to prevent potential strains on resources needed for infrastructure development and social programs.

Conclusion

The 2025/26 national budget, presented under the theme *"Beyond 35: For a Prosperous Future,"* reflects Namibia's resolute commitment to inclusive economic growth, fiscal sustainability, and social equity. Amidst a cautious global and regional outlook, the government has adopted an approach—expanding expenditure to support development and social protection, while pursuing critical tax reforms and strengthening debt management. The budget not only prioritizes investments in infrastructure, education, healthcare, and agriculture but also aligns closely with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for 2025–2029.

A focus on domestic resources mobilization and investment in economic, social and cultural rights such as the rights to work, social protection, education and health align with a human rights economy. The momentum created by this people-centered budget should be maintained in budget execution particularly in essential public service including health, education, social protection etc. which should include meaningful participation of all rights-holders in Namibia in policy formulation and implementation.

With key reforms including income tax threshold increases, corporate tax reductions, and the introduction of a dividend tax, the budget seeks to stimulate domestic demand and attract investment. Strategic investments in rail, education infrastructure, and housing signal a drive toward long-term transformation, job creation, and regional integration. However, rising debt levels and a narrowing fiscal space—exacerbated by a downward revision in economic growth—underline the importance of prudent fiscal management and targeted expenditure.

For the United Nations, the budget offers a platform for continued collaboration to accelerate sustainable development outcomes, build resilience, promote a human rights economy, and ensure that no one is left behind. Going forward, the successful implementation of the budget's priorities will depend on effective governance, robust revenue mobilization, and a sustained focus on human development and green growth.

Namibia Budget for the 2025/26 Financial Year

Annexes

Table 1. **Aligning the budget to the SDGs**

SDGs	Allocation
No Poverty (SDG 1)	Social Protection Programs: Sustained allocations to social protection programs to safeguard livelihoods and support the most vulnerable sectors of society. Youth Empowerment: Specific provisions for youth empowerment programs and capacity enhancement activities.
Zero Hunger (SDG 2)	Agriculture and Food Security: N$2.6 billion allocated to the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reform, including initiatives to promote food production and stimulate agricultural activities.
Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3)	Health Sector: N$12.3 billion allocated to the Ministry of Health and Social Services, with N$780 million for expanding health infrastructure.
Quality Education (SDG 4)	Education Sector: N$24.8 billion allocated to Education, Innovation, Arts, and Culture.
Gender Equality (SDG 5)	Gender Equality Programs: N$473.6 million allocated to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare.
Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6)	Water Resources: N$956.5 million allocated to the Ministry of Water and Marine Resources.
Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7)	Energy Sector: N$939.5 million allocated to the Ministry of Mines, Energy, and Industry.
Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)	Railway Network: N$6.6 billion (Medium-Term Expenditure Framework). Educational Infrastructure: N$970 million, Housing and Urban. Development: N$700 million.
Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure (SDG 9)	Infrastructure Development: N$12.8 billion allocated for development expenditure, including projects funded through external loans and grants.
Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)	Social Grants: N$7.2 billion allocated for various social grants.
Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)	Urban Development: N$2.7 billion allocated to the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development.
Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12)	Environmental Initiatives: N$797.6 million allocated to the Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism.
Climate Action (SDG 13)	Climate Adaptation: Emphasis on adopting climate change adaptation measures.
Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (SDG 16)	Governance and Security: Allocations for the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety, and Security (N$7.9 billion) and the Judiciary (N$601 million).
Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17)	International Relations: N$1.2 billion allocated to the Ministry of International Relations and Trade.

Table 2. **Focus of Ministerial Allocations for FY2025/26**

Ministry	Allocation (N$ billion)	Focus
Education, Innovation, Arts and Culture	24.8	Sustaining ongoing operations and addressing emerging issues in education and cultural development.
Gender Equality and Child Welfare	0.47	Promoting gender equality and child welfare through various initiatives
Sport, Youth and National Service	1.3	Construction of Category 2 stadiums, basic sports infrastructure, sports leagues, and youth programs for skills development and capacity building.
Health and Social Services	12.3	Expanding health infrastructure, reducing congestion at state hospitals, improving service quality, and providing additional personnel, pharmaceuticals, and clinical supplies.
Transport	2.7	Upgrading the railway network, completing ongoing road construction projects, including rural feeder roads to schools and clinics.
Agriculture and Land Reform	2.6	Improving food systems, Green Scheme program, and Phase II of the Neckartal Dam Irrigation Project.
Water and Marine Resources	0.96	Enhancing water systems and marine resource management.
International Relations and Trade	1.2	Strengthening international partnerships and trade relations.
Mines, Energy and Industry	0.94	Supporting energy infrastructure and promoting clean energy solutions.
Environment, Forestry and Tourism	0.8	Sustainable environmental practices and conservation efforts.
Information and Communication Technology	0.9	Enhancing ICT infrastructure and services.
Finance	14.6	Supporting social grants, Meat Corporation of Namibia (MeatCo), and TransNamib.
Contingency Fund	0.35	Catering for unforeseen emergencies.
Anti-Corruption Commission	0.12	Strengthening anti-corruption measures.
Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security	7.9	Implementing a biometric system and enhancing safety and security measures.
Defence	7.5	Ensuring national defense and security.
Judiciary	0.6	Ensuring speedy delivery of judicial services.
Justice and Labour Relations	0.49	Supporting justice system operations, employment and labour reforms
Urban and Rural Development	2.7	Upgrading informal settlements and improving urban infrastructure.
Office of the Prime Minister	0.64	Supporting administrative functions and initiatives.
National Assembly	0.4	Supporting legislative functions.
Office of the President	1.5	Supporting executive functions.
Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN)	0.44	Ensuring smooth and timely voter registration and conducting Presidential and National Assembly elections.

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