

Roux-ché Locke

Group Manager: External Relations

Tel: +264 (0)61 207 5207

E-mail: roux-che.locke@ol.na

Francios Olivier

Group Journalist and Creative Writer

Tel: +264 (0)61 2075314

E-mail: francios.olivier@ol.na

www.ohlthaverlist.com



MEDIA RELEASE

Ref: No. 229

"DO THE RIGHTS THINGS RIGHT" – SVEN THIEME

WINDHOEK, 19 APRIL 2017

"The general public's support of growth at home, and the importance of the business fraternity, both public and private to do the right things right are critical for the Namibian economy going forward", said Sven Thieme, Executive Chairman of the Ohlthaver & List (O&L) Group, and President of the Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI) at a recent visit to the Roama Gates Manufacturing plant in Ondangwa. Thieme accompanied the Prime Minister, Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila who represented the Head of State, Dr. Hage Geingob on an official invitation of Robby Amadhila, Managing Director and owner of Roama Gates Manufacturing.

Thieme did not hold back on his applauds to the Namibian government for the excellent environment created for Business Namibia in particular, to flourish and make a positive contribution to the future of the country, as well as for taking a stand to implement and apply due processes and procedures - in the best interest of Namibia. Thieme: "A great example is the process followed and resulting in the setting aside of the airport tender. Doing the right thing is not always the popular thing, but it is the impact, the resilience to push through and create a better future not only for a handful, but for all, and for the greater good, that matters. Abuses are common, both by corporations and in the public sphere. So many times people ask questions about how to deal with corruption and demands for kickbacks, as they try to penetrate the business arena. Across the world we have seen what happens when companies and corrupt officials conspire to serve their own selfish interests: They wreak havoc on our planet and its fragile ecosystems, destroy communities and perpetuate the cycle of poverty. As a result, many people distrust business and public institutions. And why wouldn't they? Such practices aren't only morally wrong, they are bad for business. Business should be a champion of good governance, taking a strong stand against corruption and lobbying for a better world. We should be fighting to build and support strong and healthy communities because the people who live in them are our employees and our customers, our suppliers and investors - a business and the community it serves, together with government, are interdependent."

Kuugongelwa-Amadhila stressed that the private sector (through organized and informal business) has a key function in Namibia's economic development and industrialization. She emphasized that the business sector is expected to respond adequately to the challenge of making realistic inputs into formulating development plans at a national and regional level, contribute to the implementation of such plans and that government would like to see a profitable and flourishing private sector, stressing that in the spirit of reciprocity, Government expects the private sector to contribute holistically to development through solid corporate social responsibility initiatives. Kuugongelwa-Amadhila: "It is quite pleasing to witness and recognize that our own business people are finally manufacturing and producing goods of

INTRODUCING THE O&L PORTFOLIO



high quality, which is an ambition advocated in our Vision 2030 and Development Plans, such as the NDP5 and Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP). When the government and private sector are pulling in the same direction, then our country is heading into the right direction, namely to be characterized as 'a prosperous and industrialized country, developed by her human resources, enjoying peace, harmony and political stability' to use the foresight of Vision 2030."

In support of the Prime Minister, Thieme stressed the role and support of the public at large, and the Namibian consumer as critical in the future of local industries and the nation's economy. Thieme: "One would think that it is common sense that we add as much value locally as possible, and realize that creating jobs locally is an investment at home. Surely manufacturing locally and procuring from home supports growth at home. Yet, we still find that some of us are happy to save a dollar by procuring an imported product that may be a little cheaper (whether it is because the country of origin has economies of scale, provides subsidies, or has some competitive advantage – this doesn't matter.) The bottom line is that we need to understand the multiplier effect of the opportunity cost of not supporting local – on future jobs, on our ability to develop skills, on our ability to become economically independent, on poverty eradication, - and how our children will pay this price. Can you imagine if everyone has an understanding that every time I buy a local product, I contribute to the eradication of poverty and address income inequality?"

Thieme continued to praise government for its efforts – in the midst of the global economic crunch - to ensure the protection of the fortunes of Namibia. "The strict fiscal measures that have been put in place is but one of the interventions that will pull us through these difficult economic times but is necessary for the benefit of our children, and their children. However, it is the collective responsibility of you and me, of each and every Namibian to uphold this status. Human rights, gender equality, the rule of law and transparency, ending corruption, decisive climate action - these are just some of the areas where businesses – whether big or small - can drive change, and at the same time shape its own long-term success."

Roama Gates Manufacturing produces fencing material such as gates, steel posts, stays and palisade panels. It also manufactures hostel and domestic beds, door frames and steel doors, as well as braai stands and burglary doors. They supply to mostly hardware stores which include Chicco, BH, Kambwa, Build-It, Pupkewitz Namibia, Kaap Agri and to individual customers with fencing tenders. The plant employs 43 Namibians. Owner and Managing Director (MD) of Roama Gates Manufacturing, Robby Amadhila: "We opened the plant in 2005 and today we manufacture up to 500 items a day depending on the product, and account for 80% of Namibia's Gate needs. I have no doubt about the potential of this business today, or going into the future. However, much needs to be done on the industrialization drive to ensure productivity, bigger market access and public procurement."

Ends,



INTRODUCING THE O&L PORTFOLIO

