

President calls for an independent statistical system

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Namibia still faces challenges in expanding the contribution of secondary industries to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as the economy is still driven by the extraction and production of raw materials, president Hifikepunye Pohamba said this week.

"We must therefore work harder to change this undesirable situation so that secondary and manufacturing industries can take a lead in contributing to GDP. We should also do more to invest funds for the development of our country. It is a paradox that despite our pressing development needs our country remains a net exporter of capital," president Pohamba said at the celebration of this year's World Statistics day on Wednesday.

The 2008 National Accounts statistics indicate that the economic growth rate declined from 5.4% in 2007 to 4.3% in 2008 as a result of the global financial and economic crisis.

Its impact therefore negatively affected the country's economic performance. Many companies in Namibia experienced extensive retrenchments, scaling down of operations and in some cases, complete closures of companies.

The president, however, said there are signs of relief as the results of the first quarter of 2010 shown an improvement in economic performance.

He said, according to these figures, the GDP has grown by 0.8% during this quarter as compared to a decline of 1.4% reported in the same period in 2009.

Pohamba further said in the process of statistical production, due regard should be given to the promotion of core values of official statistics namely, relevance, impartiality, professional standards and ethics, accountability and transparency.

He expressed the need for Namibia to have an independence statistical system that offers support for professional integrity as it will promote the integrity of statistical services and the credibility of statistics produced.

According to the President, the professionalism echoed in the theme for this year's celebrations stresses the required technical and ethical capacity that official statisticians should possess in order to consistently observe the statistics' core values in the process of service delivery.

"At national level, these values are often written into statistical laws that guarantee the independence of the statistical system and offer support for professional integrity," president Pohamba said.

Reliable statistics are vital for planning purposes by government and industries as well as individual citizens.

"As we pursue the ideals of Vision 2030, statistics will enable us to properly monitor and evaluate our progress. Therefore, I call for the strengthening of both our statistical and planning systems and for the creation of synergies between these two systems. A planning system that is not informed by quality and reliable statistical information cannot be expected to satisfactorily meet our Vision 2030 objectives," Pohamba said.