



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

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**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES**

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**COMMON PRINCIPLE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND GOOD PRACTICE:**

**DOCUMENT NUMBER 2/2016**

**SUBJECT:**

**THE USE OF PRIVATE E-MAIL ADDRESSES FOR OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION BY MANAGEMENT, STAFF MEMBERS, EMPLOYEES AND FUNCTIONARIES OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The Ministry of Public Enterprises has taken note of a practice that appears to have taken root in public enterprises whereby private e-mail addresses are being utilized for the receipt of official communication by management, staff members, employees and functionaries of public enterprises.

This practice is very much regrettable and dangerous in that it tends to compromise the integrity and secrecy of official communication that is meant to be highly confidential and not meant for public consumption.

Due to the seriousness of this matter, the Ministry of Public Enterprises forthwith urges all concerned to desist with immediate effect from this practice of using private e-mail addresses for official communication.

**STATUTORY BASIS FOR THIS DOCUMENT:**

This document is being issued in consonance with the clear provisions of section 4(1)(a) which stipulates that one of the functions of the Minister responsible for public enterprises is **"to establish generally accepted common principles of corporate governance and good practice governing public enterprises"**.

*All official Correspondence must be addressed to the Permanent Secretary*

## **THE NEED TO PRESERVE/RETAIN THE INTEGRITY OF E-MAIL COMMUNICATION WITHIN PUBLIC ENTERPRISES:**

1. It is advisable and also expected that every public enterprise has a policy on confidentiality and that every employee of such an entity has signed a confidentiality policy upon taking up employment.
2. The use of private e-mail addresses/accounts for official communication of public enterprises is therefore a direct contravention of any such confidentiality agreement for the following reasons:
  - 2.1 There is no guarantee that private e-mail accounts and or addresses are encrypted to protect the contents of official e-mails.
  - 2.2 Public enterprises compromise their security and by extension, that of the sole shareholder, by giving away key information about themselves.
  - 2.3 E-mail is sent and received as clear-text (visible to any computer on the network) and can be easily intercepted anywhere along its transmission on the internet. The same applies for the passwords we use to access our mail boxes.
  - 2.4 E-mail transmission could be routed via multiple servers on the internet so that anyone with a mail server could configure it to save copies.
  - 2.5 Unencrypted and or unsecure e-mail is equivalent to a "post-card written in pencil" thereby giving anyone along its path the ability/opportunity to either copy the data or even, **change it and re-send it as though it were from the original sender.**
  - 2.6 Personal e-mail accounts and or addresses are thus not secure because most are not encrypted. Therefore, public enterprises management, staff, officials and functionaries should not use them for sending or receiving official communication that may be of a sensitive nature.
  - 2.7 The use of private e-mail accounts/addresses circumvents the archival need to retain/preserve records of such e-mails contemporaneously for contingency purposes such as future court cases.

### **CONCLUSION:**

It is of the utmost critical importance that the practice of using private e-mail accounts/addresses for official communication be brought to an immediate halt without fail and without exception.

The management, staff, officials and functionaries of public enterprises must therefore exclusively use the official e-mail accounts/ addresses of their public enterprises when they are conducting the official business of public enterprises.

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**Leon Jooste**  
**(Minister)**

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