



PROFILE

MONICA GEINGOS, FIRST LADY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Monica Geingos is a qualified lawyer. Before assuming the First Lady role in 2015, she was a co-shareholder and Managing Director of Namibia's largest private equity fund for over a decade. During this time, she served on the Boards of large public and private sector companies as either Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson.

Due to her extensive corporate experience, she was a long-standing member of high-level policy advisory Boards such as the President's Economic Advisory Council, the governing Party's Think Tank, and the National Council of the Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with the mandate to advise on national policy formulation and implementation.

She also made time to serve on Boards such as the Association of Unlisted Investment Managers (Chairperson), the Steering Committee for the Namibian Financial Sector Charter (Secretary), and the Public Office Bearers Commission (Vice-Chairperson).

Monica has close to 20 years' experience in the financial sector and was awarded National Honours (Most Distinguished Order of Namibia), by Former President Pohamba, for her "outstanding contribution to the socio-economic development of Namibia." She was inducted into the Namibian Business Hall of Fame and received numerous awards, such as the Namibian Business Personality of the Year and Most Innovative Entrepreneur, and was regularly rated by local media publications as one of the most influential Namibians.

Monica transitioned into her role as First Lady with the advice of PriceWaterhouseCoopers. They were mandated to assess her business interests, potential conflicts of interest, and prepare her assets for public disclosure. As Namibian legislation does not require the First Lady to disclose her business interests, this process was self-initiated and voluntary. Despite no identified conflict of interest, Monica decided not to entertain any new business interests, disposed of substantial investment assets, resigned from numerous Boards, and utilises a decision tree, based on global best practice, to do continuous assessment of ongoing business interests.

As First Lady, Mrs. Geingos has combined her high-level expertise with President Geingob's war on poverty and inequality. Through the One Economy Foundation, the First Lady has initiated numerous programs that focus on sustainably lifting vulnerable populations out of poverty traps. In this regard, a flagship project is the One Nation Fund, which provides micro-entrepreneurs responsible, sustainable access to collateral and interest-free loans, entrepreneurial training, and mentorship. Another flagship program is the Talented Individual Programme. This academic fellowship provides talented children from low-income families access to quality education while concurrently providing them with the full spectrum of clinical and psychosocial support.

Monica's appointment as a UNAIDS Special Advocate for Young Women and Adolescent Girls is a perfect fit for the One Economy Foundation's #BeFree Movement. This youth-driven program facilitates a non-judgemental platform for adolescents and young adults to freely discuss their challenges while assisting them with access to information and appropriate

services. Monica is currently overseeing the institutionalisation of #BeFree key learnings into Project #BeFree - a one-stop youth centre of excellence. Project Be Free intends to provide a continuum of holistic services including life skills programs, psychosocial support, the full spectrum of sexual and reproductive health services (including comprehensive sexuality education), skills and leadership development, adolescent-friendly edutainment, and youth accommodation. Project Be Free has signed up smart partnerships in the public, private, and non-profit space to ensure that the Project can meaningfully close service delivery gaps experienced by young people.

In terms of current obligations, Mrs. Geingos is the Patron of the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia. She plays an active role in the attainment of a pro-poor policy environment for shack/slum dwellers. In terms of her international obligations, Mrs. Geingos is the Chairperson of the Board of the Urban Poor Fund International, an international financing facility linked to Slum Dwellers International. She further serves as a Director of the Oxford African Studies Centre International Advisory Board and is a Co-Patron of the PLO Lumumba Foundation Africa Mentorship Programme. She is also a member of the Concordia Leadership Council, which draws its leadership from former government leaders, policy experts, and industry leaders who are charged with the mandate of offering strategic guidance on global issues.

As First Lady, Mrs. Geingos is the recipient of the “Change the World Award” from the Professional Speakers Association of Namibia. She was also awarded the Concordia Leadership Award for her global leadership and “unique and powerful efforts to lead the way for health and socio-economic empowerment.” Various international organisations and publications have previously ranked Mrs. Geingos as one of Africa’s top 100 Economic Leaders, one of the 100 Most Reputable Africans, and one of the 100 Most Influential African Women 2020.