

## **PROFILE**

### **MONICA GEINGOS, FIRST LADY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

Monica Geingos is a qualified lawyer. Before assuming the First Lady role, she was a co-shareholder and Managing Director of Namibia's largest private equity fund. She served on the Boards of large public and private sector companies as either Chairperson or Deputy Chair and played a meaningful role in private sector development, including the rollout of Namibia's first digitally enabled Commercial Bank, of which she was a founding shareholder and founding Chairperson. Monica 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 Business Hall of Fame. She received numerous merit awards, such as the "Namibian Business Personality of the Year," awarded as the "Most Innovative Entrepreneur," and ranked by an international publication as one of "Africa's top 100 Economic Leaders."

Due to her extensive corporate experience, she was an influential member of high-level policy advisory Boards such as the Public Office Bearer's Commission (Vice-Chair), the President's Economic Advisory Council, the governing Party's Think Tank, and the National Council of the Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry. She also served on Boards such as the Association of Unlisted Investment Managers (Chair), the National Squash Association (President), and the industry-nominated Steering Committee for the Namibian Financial Sector Charter.

Monica transitioned into her role as First Lady with the independent advice of a "big-four" international audit firm, which, at her request and expense, assessed potential conflicts of interest and prepared her assets for voluntary public disclosure. Despite no identified conflict of interest, Monica implemented guidance to divest from most business interests, resign from numerous Boards, and utilise a global best practice decision for continuous assessments.

As First Lady, Mrs Geingos has leveraged her executive business expertise, and network, to complement President Geingob's poverty alleviation agenda. She implements her programs through the One Economy Foundation, focusing on public health, youth empowerment, education, entrepreneurial development, mental health, and Gender-Based Violence. This includes the successful youth program, the #BeFree movement. Mrs Geingos is overseeing the institutionalisation of key learnings from #BeFree into Project #BeFree. Project #BeFree is a one-stop youth centre of excellence where young people co-create sustainable interventions that respond to youth needs by strengthening the resilience and decision-making capacity of adolescents and young adults.

#ProjectBeFree will provide a continuum of holistic services, including life skills courses, psychosocial support, the full spectrum of sexual and reproductive health clinical services,

entrepreneurial development, 4IR skills development and adolescent-friendly edutainment focused on character development.

Mrs Geingos is currently the Patron of the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia. She serves on the Boards of Africa Reach (Chairperson), the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Presidential Centre, the Concordia Leadership Council, and WomenLift Health. She is a Co-Patron of the PLO Lumumba Foundation Africa Mentorship Programme. To accommodate new focus areas, Mrs Geingos stepped down as Board Chair of the Urban Poor Fund International, an international financing facility linked to Slum Dwellers International.

Mrs Geingos' work as First Lady was recognised through her recent election as the President of the Organisation of African First Ladies. She was also appointed as a UNAIDS Special Advocate and awarded the Berlin-based "World Without Aids Award," the US-based "Concordia Leadership Award" for global leadership, the "Change the World Award from the Namibian Professional Speakers Association," and is a leadership awardee of the Pan African Women's Organisation. In addition, Mrs Geingos is recognised as one of the "100 Most Reputable Africans" and one of the "100 Most Influential African Women."

