

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBA, PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE AFRICA DAY**

25 MAY 2005

WINDHOEK

***Check Against Delivery**

Fellow Namibians,

- 1. Forty Five years ago on 25 May 1963, the leaders of independent African states gathered in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, and signed the Charter of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). This historic signing resulted in the establishment of the OAU, with the objectives of freeing our continent from the remaining vestiges of colonialism and apartheid, promoting unity and solidarity among African States and peoples, co-ordinating and intensifying co-operation for development and promoting international co-operation within the framework of the United Nations, among others.**
- 2. In the intervening years, the people of Africa fought and won the struggle against colonialism and apartheid. Thus, in order to provide new direction to our collective efforts and to face the developmental challenges more effectively, the OAU was transformed into the African Union at the OAU/AU Summit, held on 10 July 2002 in Durban, South Africa.**

- 3. The birth of the African Union has brought new hope to millions of Africans who have faced difficult living conditions and conflicts for many years. Through the African Union, African leaders have vowed to continue the struggle started by the Founding Fathers of the OAU, against poverty, under-development and the marginalisation of our continent. Today as leaders we are driven by clear goals and objectives to bring about a new era where all Africans can enjoy socio-economic prosperity, peace and security.**

- 4. The Fourth Ordinary Summit of the African Union took place from 30 to 31st January in Abuja, Nigeria this year. Barely three years after the launching of the AU in Durban, we can already see visible signs of progress regarding the practical implementation of development programmes and initiatives under the banner of the African Union.**

- 5. Several organs of the AU such as the AU Commission, the Pan African Parliament and the Peace and Security Commission are already operational.**

The Chairperson of the Commission, eight commissioners who are responsible for different portfolios and staff members of the commission have already been appointed. As you may recall the Social Affairs portfolio of the AU Commission is headed by a Namibian citizen in the person of Advocate Bience Gawanas. This is one more way Namibia is contributing to the African development of our continent.

- 6. The Peace and Security Council has also started to make a tangible impact in conflict resolution and peace keeping operations on the continent. Already, AU peace-keeping contingents have been deployed in places such as Liberia, Sierra Leon and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These are clear signs that Africans have decided to become masters of their own destiny and architects of our own future.**
- 7. The success of our continental efforts will depend largely on the extent to which, we as Africans continue to determine, influence and shape our development agenda.**

Thus, it is important to ensure that Africans remain the shapers, owners and implementers of their own development priorities.

Compatriots,

- 8. The imperative for continental unity as espoused by the African Union reaches and touches every level of our society. Africans should internalise the values and practices that represent and promote a common African identity. This process of internalisation should start in our schools, the media and other public institutions.**

- 9. It is encouraging that here in Namibia the process of popularising Africanness and African unity has already started. The AU flag flies proudly along our National Flag at public buildings and the AU Anthem is sung in tandem with our National Anthem at all state functions. We must continue to promote and broaden these practices because we are proud Africans.**

10. As we celebrate Africa Day, let us use the occasion to rededicate ourselves to the upliftment of our continent and her people. Let us remember and pay tribute to the great sons and daughters of Africa, the Founding Fathers and Mothers of the OAU. Let us remember Gamal Abdel Naser, Modibo Keita, Nkwame Nkuruma, Julius Nyerere, Dr Kenneth Kaunda and all other African patriots who paved the way towards African unity. Let us pledge to work collectively and individually to make Africa a better place to live. That is what all Africans deserve, regardless of whether they are men, women or children, black or white.

11. I wish you all a Happy 42nd Anniversary of Africa Day.

Long Live the Republic of Namibia!

Long Live the African Union!

I thank you.