

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBA, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA ON THE
OCCASION OF THE FIRST CABINET MEETING**

31 MARCH 2005

WINDHOEK

Right Honourable Prime Minister,
Honourable Deputy Prime Minister,
Honourable Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I would like to welcome all of you, this morning, to the first Cabinet meeting, since my assumption of office as President of the Republic of Namibia. Just over one week ago, our nation witnessed a smooth transition of power and my inauguration as President of the Republic of Namibia. That historic event is an eloquent testimony of the strength of our democracy, underpinned by the unity of our people in building a stable, peaceful and progressive society.

2. When I addressed you at the occasion of your swearing as Ministers, I stated that:

“our government will be fully committed to addressing the economic and social plight of our citizens, especially in the rural areas”. These will be the central values of our SWAPO Party Government. In broad terms we shall be guided by the following principles in our policies and actions.

- participatory democracy
- good governance
- sustainable socio-economic development
- justice and peace

These principles are enshrined in our Constitution. We must, therefore, at all times uphold these values.

3. In this regard, we must strive to be competitive, productive and conscientious workers. If we are able to promote sustainable socio-economic development, as we must, then the fruits of economic development should be shared fairly and justly. We must build our nation on the basis of justice and fairness. This will be the foundation of peace, stability and security.

4. The above stated core values should underpin the policies, programmes and actions of our government. As we move on to implement the programmes of our Second National Development Plan (NDP2), strive to achieve the goals of vision 2030 and implement the 2004 SWAPO Party Election Manifesto, we must be guided by these values.

5. Our country has now been free and independent for the past fifteen years. I stated in my inaugural statement that, during that period, the SWAPO Party Government, led by my predecessor and founding President Comrade Sam Nujoma, remained true to the objective and mission of building a united country according to the theme “*One Namibia, One Nation*”. This was an important period in consolidating the legal and administrative framework and public institutions necessary for democratic governance.

It was equally important in putting our country solidly on the path of reconstruction and transformation after many decades of colonial oppression, apartheid and underdevelopment.

6. When we look around Namibia today, we can see clearly that those noble objectives have largely been realised with a remarkable degree of success. This is due to the largely clear vision of the SWAPO Party Government that was led by my illustrious and selfless predecessor. Our SWAPO Party Government, under my presidency, will continue to build on the strong foundation laid by my predecessor by placing increased emphasis and focus on efficient service-delivery to all our people with special emphasis on our rural population.
7. The SWAPO Party has continued to receive overwhelming support at the polls from our people. They continue to give us their overwhelming support because of the programmes articulated in successive SWAPO Party Election Manifestos. Therefore, our success or failure will be measured by the extent to which we realize the programmes articulated in our Election Manifestos. We will move purposefully and steadily to address the unacceptably high rate of unemployment, particularly among women and the youth. We will also ensure the reliable provision of education, health services, electricity, safe drinking water, housing and other basic social amenities and services, especially to our rural population.
8. The public resources at our disposal are limited. It is, therefore, imperative that we are guided by prudent financial management. In other words, strict financial discipline will be enforced. In order to achieve this objective, I have decided to bring the following measures into effect:
 - 8.1 I have mandated the Right Honourable Prime Minister to closely coordinate and supervise the activities of Offices, Ministries and Agencies with a view to minimise and eventually abolish overlap, duplication and wastage.
 - 8.2 The principle of Ministerial Accountability will be strictly enforced in accordance with the Namibian Constitution. In this connection, Article 41 states that Ministers are responsible and answerable to the President, Cabinet and to Parliament in the management and performance of their portfolios and execution of their duties. This constitutional requirement and call to duty must be strictly adhered to at all times.
 - 8.3 I call upon all Members of Cabinet to become fully versed with the affairs, responsibilities and functions of their respective Offices, Ministries and Agencies. This will enable them to supervise and monitor the implementation of government programmes and projects as contained in the SWAPO Party Election Manifesto.

- 8.4 I direct all Offices, Ministries and Agencies to reduce drastically the number and frequency of international travels, and concomitantly, to reduce the size of delegations attending conferences and meetings outside the country.
- 8.5 I direct the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ensure that our Embassies and High Commissions abroad represent Namibia at some of international conferences and other meetings. This directive forms part of our overall strategy to eradicate wastage and duplication of our efforts.
- 8.6 I direct that the directive issued by my predecessor, whereby the international travels by Ministers and other Political Office Bearers receive prior approval by the President remains in place.
9. On corruption, we all know what destructive impact of this evil can do to our economy, the welfare of our citizens and Namibia's international image. As I pointed out in my Inaugural Statement, our SWAPO Party Government is fully committed to addressing corruption with a sledge-hammer. In this regard, very soon, the Anti-Corruption Commission which is provided for in the Anti-Corruption Act, will be established and become functional.
- 9.1 In liaison with existing structures, such as the Namibian Police, the Courts, the Ombudsman and the Parliament, the envisaged Anti-Corruption machinery will forcefully deal with corruption with the view to rooting it out from our society.
- 9.2 As we all know, those who engage in corrupt practices do so to enrich themselves or benefit a few individuals at the expense of the majority of our people. They use and abuse public resources for personal or private gain. The end result is the diminished ability of the State to deliver crucial services to the public. It also leads to the erosion of public confidence and trust, as well as public contempt for State and private institutions. Corruption is a cancer that eats away at our social and moral fabric. It must not be allowed to thrive. Corruption is detrimental to our goals of socio-economic progress. Thus, it must be fought at all levels and in all spheres of our society including the private sector.
10. Comrades, I am fully aware that we have a mammoth task ahead of us. The process of nation-building is an on-going process. Therefore, the fulfilment of our mandate will continue to demand more sacrifices and selfless dedication from all of us.

11. The policies of the SWAPO Party Government are clearly articulated in our Elections Manifesto. Implementation of these policies was started under the SWAPO Party Government led by my Predecessor. We will now build on that firm foundation to achieve higher levels of efficiency and success.
12. I have, therefore, decided to call this first Cabinet Meeting under my Chairmanship, at the beginning of this Government's mandate, with a view to adopt the 2004 SWAPO Party Election Manifesto as our Government's programme. Once adopted as a Government programme, it becomes part and parcel of our efforts to deliver public services and implement policies contained therein.
13. As a Government that is representing the interests of the Namibian State and people, we must supervise the activities of all parastatals. Parastatals are important public institutions capable of playing a vital role in the socio-economic development of the country. For the proper management of parastatals and for them to be able to function efficiently and effectively as vital socio-economic development catalysts, certain critical measures must be taken. The Boards parastatals must comprise not only of diligent and dedicated individuals, but people with technical know-how and professional acumen. They must also be people who have distinguished themselves in areas related to the activities of the parastatals of which they are Board members.
14. Chief Executive Officers and top management personnel of the parastatals must also be individuals who possess the requisite technical and professional knowledge and experience. It goes without saying that Chief Executive Officers who do not possess the requisite academic qualifications and who have little or no experience in the activities of the parastatals in question will be unable to lead, control, supervise and direct their subordinates to achieve the goals of the parastatals.
15. I now, therefore, mandate the Right Honourable Prime Minister to put in place immediately effective legislative measures necessary for the efficient and proper management of our parastatals.
16. As we have stated in our 2004 SWAPO Party Election Manifesto, the SWAPO Party Government appreciates the importance of sound labour relations in our country and the need to maintain good communication lines between all social partners in labour relations. These are essential ingredients for economic development. In this connection, the SWAPO Party Government promised to set up alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to ensure harmonious labour relations. To this end, the new Labour Act was passed in 2004. In my inaugural statement I said that the new Labour Act would be brought into force shortly. I now mandate the Honourable Minister of Labour and Social Welfare to ensure that the Labour Act is brought into force immediately.

17. We also stated in our 2004 SWAPO Party Election Manifesto and Resolution Number 21 of the Third SWAPO Party Congress of August 2002 that the SWAPO Party Government will speed up the implementation of measures aimed at addressing problems of inefficiency, corruption, negligence, abuse of government properties and other forms of administrative malpractices. I therefore, mandate the Right Honourable Prime Minister to cause amendments to be made to the Public Service Act 1995 aimed at streamlining and shortening the disciplinary procedures under the Public Service Act.
18. This will make it possible for disciplinary measures to be taken at the shortest possible time without disrupting the work of Offices/Ministries/Agencies. This will also ensure that public servants who are alleged to have misconducted themselves get to know their fate in the shortest possible time. Those public servants who feel aggrieved by decisions of disciplinary committees can take advantage of the dispute resolution mechanisms provided by the new Labour Act.
19. I, therefore, direct all public servants, especially civil servants, irrespective of their party political affiliation to ensure that the Manifesto as a Government programme is fully implemented without fail. I further direct that every public servant charged with important national duties of policy implementation must acquire a copy of that document, study it thoroughly and always keep it handy as a primary reference document.
20. It has become critical at this stage to institute effective measures to evaluate the performance of Government. We must place strong emphasis on implementation and service-delivery. We need to put mechanisms in place in order to determine whether resources are being utilised economically and efficiently, and whether we are receiving adequate returns from our efforts. Thus, we need to introduce policy evaluation mechanisms as soon as possible.
21. In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you all on your appointment as members of the Cabinet. I expect you all to work hard and conscientiously so as to live up to the expectations of our people.

I thank you.