

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA, PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, ON THE
OCCASION OF HEROES DAY
COMMEMORATION**

26 AUGUST 2005

OPUWO
Check Against Delivery

**Your Excellency Comrade Sam Nujoma, Founding President and President of the SWAPO Party,
Comrade Libertina Amathila, Deputy Prime Minister
Comrade Ngarikutuke Tjiriange, Secretary General of the SWAPO Party,
Comrade John Pandeni, Deputy Secretary General of the SWAPO Party,
Comrades Members of the Central Committee of the SWAPO Party,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Members of Parliament,
Honourable Governor of the Kunene Region,
Comrades Regional and District Coordinators of the SWAPO Party,
Distinguished invited guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

- 1. First and foremost, I would like to request all present here to stand up and observe a moment of silence in honour of Namibian heroes and heroines who sacrificed their lives and shed their precious blood during our struggle for peace, justice, democracy and national independence. (Moment of silence – I thank you, you may be seated).**
- 2. Early this morning I had the privilege and honour to lay a wreath at the Heroes Acre in honour of the bravery, steadfastness, supreme sacrifice and dedication of our heroes and heroines who sacrificed their precious lives during the long and bitter struggle for freedom and national independence.**
- 3. The Heroes Acre is a place where all Namibians irrespective of their political, racial, ethnic or religious backgrounds should go and honour those brave sons and daughters of Namibia who sacrificed their lives, and those who, during their lifetimes, made tremendous and meaningful contributions to the liberation of the Land of the Brave and all her people in their diversity. It was built in the true African tradition of bestowing honour and dignity to our fallen forefathers and mothers. It represents the gallantry, courage and valour that inspired the people of this land to fight against apartheid colonialism with vigour and determination.**

Director of Ceremonies,

- 4. On this day, 26 August, thirty-nine years ago, the gallant combatants of the South West Africa Liberation Army (SWALA), the fore-runner of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) fired the first shots against the racist South African occupation troops, at Omugulugwombashe. This marked the beginning of a protracted and bitter armed liberation struggle. Those first shots sounded the impending defeat of apartheid colonialism and announced the courage and determination of the Namibian people, under the leadership of SWAPO, to liberate every inch of the Namibian soil.**
- 5. In subsequent years, from the first staccato of machinegun fire at Omugulugwombashe, many sons and daughters of Namibia joined SWAPO to fight apartheid colonialism, racial subjugation and exploitation.**
- 6. The historic journey to the battle of Omugulugwombashe took many years and thousands of miles, starting with the founding of SWAPO on 19 April 1960.**

The formation of SWAPO, as a vanguard nationwide political movement, was an answer to the call by our Forefathers to wage the struggle for freedom and independence to its logical conclusion.

- 7. We inherited the sacred duty to carry out the revolution for the attainment of independence from the anti-colonial resistance started by our forbears such as Hendrik Witbooi, Samuel Maharero, Nicodemus Kahimemua, Mandume ya Ndemufayo, Ipumbu ya Tshilongo, Jacob Marengo, Nehale Lya Mpingana and other heroes and heroines who fought against colonialism and foreign occupation. In our lifetime we carried out that noble duty and today, our country and people are forever free and independent.**

8. **It is on this basis that the people of Namibia, from all walks of life, supported by the progressive forces worldwide were able to wage a protracted political, diplomatic and armed struggle under the leadership of SWAPO, which ultimately brought about the birth of the sovereign Republic of Namibia on 21 March 1990.**
9. **We must never forget that during those difficult days of the struggle, many sons and daughters of Namibia – heroes and heroines of our revolution – sacrificed their lives and shed their precious blood in order to bring about Namibia’s freedom, national independence and better future for all our people.**
10. **We owe it to the martyrs of our revolution to remain united and with commitment and fortitude create a strong, united, and democratic society for which they have paid with their lives. We have a historic and national responsibility to ensure that Namibia should forever remain sovereign and independent.**

Director of Ceremonies

11. **Namibia shall never be a colony again. Our political victory can never be reversed. We have regained our nationhood and dignity. Since 1990, our SWAPO Party Government has embarked on the second phase of the struggle. The struggle for economic independence in order to eradicate poverty, disease and ignorance and to ensure the social and economic development of all our people.**
12. **This struggle requires total commitment and dedication by all our people to the cause of nation building. I am conscious that the peace and stability we enjoy today will have to be accompanied by sustainable economic growth and social development. The existing disparities in socio-economic development, caused by unemployment and poverty should be addressed effectively by growing the national economy in order to accelerate the social and economic development for the benefit of all our people.**
13. **It is our collective responsibility, as a people soaked in the sweat and blood of our heroes and heroines, to lay a strong social and**

- economic foundation on which future generations will build a prosperous, stable and peaceful society. I believe that through hard work and commitment, we can ensure that our people receive efficient and effective services and enjoy equal access to social and public amenities and thereby improve their living standards.
14. **On this solemn occasion of the commemoration of Heroes Day, allow me to once again, re-emphasize the commitment of our SWAPO Party Government to provide access to health care services, quality education, safe drinking water, electricity, roads, modern communication infrastructure, land and other public amenities to all our people, especially those in rural areas.**
 15. **There are many challenges facing our people that must be vigorously addressed, such as unemployment, crime, HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty and underdevelopment.**
 16. **As we remember our fallen heroes and heroines, we must once again rededicate ourselves to our policy of National Reconciliation.**
Let us honour our heroes and heroines by working hard, in unity of action and purpose to ensure a vibrant and prosperous Namibian nation. We should always remember, “*their blood waters our freedom.*”

Long Live Namibia’s Heroes and Heroines!
Long Live the Republic of Namibia!

I thank you.