

# REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



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

**25 MAY 2006**

**DR SAM NUJOMA  
STADIUM**

Director of Ceremonies  
Honourable Members of Parliament  
Honourable Governor of the Khomas Region  
Your Worship the Mayor of the City of  
Windhoek  
Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councilors  
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps  
Distinguished Invited Guests  
Members of the Media  
Ladies and Gentlemen

The commemoration of Africa Day is always a moment of profound celebration of the milestones that have shaped our history; a celebration of the tremendous political, social and economic strides that Africa has achieved under very difficult conditions. It is also a time to renew our commitment to a brighter and prosperous future for our continent and all its people.

I wish to take this opportunity, on this very important day in the history of the African people, to salute and honour all those forefathers who have spearheaded the ideals of a free and united Africa. Today, May 25, 2006, marks the 43<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Africa Day and the birth of the Organisation of African Unity, the OAU. The Namibian people, under the leadership of SWAPO enjoyed full material, political, moral and diplomatic support of all Member States of independent Africa directly and through the OAU's Liberation Committee during the struggle for national liberation. We will forever owe a debt of gratitude to the OAU Liberation Committee and the Frontline States who played a pivotal role during the difficult years of the struggle for the independence of Namibia.

Namibia joins hands with the rest of the continent to salute and honour the distinguished leaders of the heroic struggle for Africa's emancipation from the yoke of colonialism, apartheid and exploitation. We pay homage to Kwame Nkrumah, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Haile Selassie, Mbandi Azikiwe, Sekou Toure, Modibo Keita, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Augustinho Neto, Samora Machel, Amilcar Cabral, Patrice Lumumba, Sir Seretse Khama and many others.

Director of Ceremonies,

The bold vision of dedicated Pan Africanists gave birth to many initiatives including the Pan-African Conference in Manchester in 1960 and a succession of conferences in Casablanca, Abidjan, Brazzaville, Yaounde and Lagos which led to the setting up of a Permanent Secretariat in 1962 and the acceptance of a Draft Charter for the Continental Organisation. After extensive deliberations, 31 African States signed the Charter of the Organisation of African Unity on 25 May 1963.

The Charter committed the Organisation and future generations to the peaceful settlement of disputes, promotion of economic and social development, respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms, protection of refugees and above all, the intensification of the struggle against colonialism. From 1963 to 2002, the OAU successfully waged the struggle against colonialism and ethnic strife, while promoting multiculturalism and diversity.

Director of Ceremonies,

In order to provide a new direction to our collective efforts and to address the developmental challenges more effectively, the OAU was transformed into the African Union at the Summit held in July 2002, in the city of Durban, South Africa.

The founding of the African Union is a major milestone in the long march of the African people to reclaim their destiny towards social and economic development and ensure the realization of the full potential of our continent and its people.

Indeed, the birth of the African Union has brought new hope to millions of Africans who face difficult living conditions and poverty. Through the African Union, African leaders have vowed to continue the struggle started by the Founding Fathers of the OAU, the struggle 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.

The theme for this year's celebration of Africa Day is "*Working Together for Integration and Development*". This theme is a clarion call on all Africans to march together in unity and solidarity; to close ranks and gear all our efforts towards social and economic development.

It is encouraging to note that barely four years after the launching of the AU, we can already see visible signs of progress in the implementation of development programmes and initiatives under the banner of the African Union and its economic arm, NEPAD.

Several organs of the AU such as the AU Commission, the Pan African Parliament and the Peace and Security Council are already operational. The Chairperson of the Commission and the eight commissioners who are responsible for different portfolios and staff members of the commission has already been appointed.

The Peace and Security Council has also started to make a tangible impact in the prevention, resolution and management of conflicts as well as peace keeping operations on the continent.

Already, AU peace-keeping contingents have been deployed in places such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Sudan. These are clear signs that we as Africans have decided to become masters of our own destiny and architects of our own future.

The success of our continental efforts will depend largely on the extent to which we continue to shape, influence and manage our development agenda. It is, therefore, imperative that Africans must remain the initiators, owners and implementers of their own development priorities.

Director of Ceremonies,

The imperative for continental unity as espoused by the African Union encompasses every facet of our society. Therefore, we must, uphold the values, ideals and practices that represent and promote a common African identity. This should start in our schools, the media and other public institutions. We must continue to promote and broaden these practices because we are proud Africans.

As we celebrate Africa Day, let us use this occasion to rededicate ourselves to the unity of the African people and to the struggle for the social and economic prosperity for all Africans. We must focus on a brighter future for Africa.

The people of Africa and their Governments have resolved and are determined to make this century, the African Century. As we celebrate the achievements of our continental body, we must rededicate our efforts towards development while acknowledging that our continent still faces many problems. With determination, foresight and concrete action we shall make Africa a prosperous continent.

Director of Ceremonies,

Today, more than ever before, Africa must speak with one voice in our call for the reform of the United Nations in order to make the world body more responsive to challenges and realities of our time. Namibia supports efforts to reform the United Nations, particularly the Security Council to become more representative and democratic.

Furthermore, Africa must work harder to realize the Millennium Development Goals by embarking on effective programmes that address the economic and social plight of our people. We should spare no effort in our quest to ensure the full implementation and realisation of the Millennium Development Goals.

As a continent, we need to devise and implement pro-poor and realistic strategies to accelerate socio-economic growth. We must build stronger partnerships between governments and all segments of society, in particular women, youth and the private sector. Equally important, we must promote peace, security and stability on the continent because these are prerequisites for a united, stable, cohesive and harmonious society.

At the same time, I believe that developmental cooperation and partnerships in economic and social programmes should be enhanced between developed and developing countries.

I have no doubt that the unity of the African people is the strongest weapon available to us in our efforts to rid our continent of the scourges of degradation, poverty and underdevelopment.

It is my honour to take this opportunity to wish all Namibians and indeed all Africans a happy 43<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Africa Day.

I thank you.