

# REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA, PRESIDENT OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE FIRST CABINET  
MEETING FOR THE YEAR 2006**

**17 JANUARY 2006**

**CABINET CHAMBERS  
WINDHOEK**

*\*check Against Delivery*

Right Honourable Prime Minister, Comrade Nahas Angula  
Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, Comrade Dr. Libertine Amathila  
Honourable Ministers  
Honourable Deputy Ministers  
Distinguished Secretary to the Cabinet, Comrade Frans Kapofi  
Staff Members of the Cabinet Secretariat  
Members of the Media  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is my great pleasure to welcome all of you to the first Cabinet meeting of 2006. I hope all of you have returned well-rested and rejuvenated from your holidays after a hectic 2005. May I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very happy and prosperous 2006. I also take this opportunity to thank all of you for your hard work, commitment and dedication in the past, which I will continue to count on in the future. I know that you will work hard to carry out your respective responsibilities, with the view to fulfill the expectations of the Namibian people.
2. In any organized institution, the beginning of the year is always a moment of sober reflection on achievements and setbacks of the previous year. It is also a time for new resolutions towards greater achievements for the new year and for the future. The Namibian Cabinet is no exception to this universal practice. An overview of developments last year shows that 2005 was, indeed, an eventful year for our nation. Most memorable among these developments was the smooth leadership transition from the Founding President to the second President of our Republic.
3. Article 40 of the Namibian Constitution spells out the functions of the Cabinet. One such function is to formulate policies for the Government. In this regard, since Namibia's independence in 1990, Cabinet has been constantly formulating and making policy decisions concerning the security and socio-economic well-being of all Namibians. Government's efforts have primarily been aimed at ensuring peace and security in the country, consolidating democracy, and achieving a general national consensus regarding the kind of society that Namibians seek to build and the values by which our country wants to be identified. It cannot, therefore, be overemphasized that Namibia's ability to hold itself together, without a major crisis, for nearly sixteen years of its liberation is the most important achievement for our country.
4. I am pleased that Government Offices, Ministries and Agencies have set out their objectives with clearly formulated vision and mission statements. However, in order remain effective and relevant, it is important to review different programmes adopted by the Government, subject them to consultation, and re-enforce the urgent need for achieving our stated targets within the timeframes that have been set. This should be done, keeping in mind our broader commitments as

articulated in the 2004 SWAPO Party Election Manifesto, our National Development Plans and Vision 2030.

5. I must admit that our output in terms of policy formulation has been substantial. However, it is a well-known fact that the implementation of policies by our Civil Service and the larger government machinery has fallen somewhat short of our collective expectations. In my view, the primary problems that have hampered progress can be summed up as follows: lack of follow-up action, duplication of duties, and lack of coordination. Thus, there is a need for Cabinet to receive regular feedback from relevant institutions regarding the implementation of policy decisions that we have taken. In this regard, I direct the Secretary to the Cabinet to submit reports to Cabinet or the line Ministries regarding the implementation of Cabinet decisions and Government policies at regular intervals.

Honourable Members of Cabinet,

6. I have stated that the prime consideration of our Government is to promote the socio-economic welfare of our nation. There is, therefore, a wide range of issues that require our Government's urgent attention. These include:
  - The need to grow our economy;
  - The need to expand economic opportunities through the creation of jobs with a view to addressing the plight of our youth, women; and to address socio-economic situation of our unemployed youth and other vulnerable groups in society including orphans and senior citizens;
  - The need to implement pro-active and innovative solutions in order to address the HIV/Aids pandemic effectively;
  - The need to improve our education system;
  - The need to expand and improve health services to all communities, especially to our citizens who live in rural areas;
  - The need to vigorously fight crime and address corruption both in public and private sectors;
  - The need to address the plight of the rural poor through the provision of public amenities, such as potable water, affordable housing and electricity;
  - The need to achieve self sufficiency in food production;
  - The need to build more physical and communication infrastructure, especially in our rural and peri-urban areas;
  - The need to promote gender equality and the welfare of our workers;
  - The need to promote public private partnerships; and
  - The need to involve all communities in the affairs of our Government and our country.
7. At present, unemployment, especially among the youth is one of our biggest challenges. We have more and more young people who are leaving school. They expect to join the workforce to earn a living. As we all know, however, many of them need to be equipped with relevant skills, competencies and know-how to enable them to fully participate in the economic activities of the country. There is,

therefore, an urgent need to put in place deliberate mechanisms to deal with these challenges. We must provide our youth with the necessary skills by putting more emphasis on vocational training programmes as well as the projects implemented through the National Youth Service Scheme.

8. In addition to existing programmes and interventions, we need to focus on innovative solutions in order to bring relief to thousands of our youth who leave school every year.
9. Our economy depends not only on educated citizens but also on a healthy work force. There is no doubt that the threat posed by HIV/AIDS pandemic presents the greatest challenge to our existence as a nation. If we want to build an economically prosperous nation, we need to adopt additional measures aimed at curbing the spread of this deadly disease. At the same time, we need to take drastic action with a view to alleviating the plight of our citizens who are living with HIV.

Honourable Members of Cabinet,

10. Time and again I have pointed out that a nation that is dependent on handouts or may I say a begging nation can hardly claim to be independent. It is for this reason that our Government puts special emphasis on food security and food self-sufficiency. Our agricultural sector needs to be engaged to its fullest capacity. I, therefore, hope that this year the Green Scheme will take off with full steam. There is a need to maximize the capacity and output of the existing agricultural projects at Etunda, Shadikongoro, Vungu-Vungu, Shitemo, Mushese and Aussenkehr. Similarly, we should establish new projects along our perennial rivers such as the Kunene, Okavango, Zambezi, Kwando/Linyanti/Chobe and Orange. There is no doubt that such efforts would create employment, reduce the volume of food imports and increase our export earnings.
11. Our scarce public financial resources should be directed, first and foremost, to priority areas we have identified. In this respect, we must continue to build on our ongoing efforts by drastically improving fiscal discipline at all levels within government offices, ministries and agencies. These measures should be the benchmarks against which we will measure, monitor and evaluate our service delivery by the public sector. I am confident that the private sector through the establishment of public private sector partnerships will also play its part in order to ensure that resources are directed to the productive sectors of our economy. In this regard, I will engage the private sector through the President's Economic Advisory Council with a view to finding common ground on issues of national interest.

Honourable Members of Cabinet,

12. The duty and mandate of governance is as complex as the socio-economic challenges that face our people. Our Government faces a wide range of issues and priorities that compete for the limited resources at our disposal. It is in this atmosphere of competing needs that we must outline our priorities and address them consistently. The Cabinet Retreat which took place towards the end of last year has highlighted and crystalised important national issues that need our urgent action and focused policy interventions. The Cabinet Retreat was held under a deliberate theme that underscored the importance of Economic Growth and Sustainable Development.  
The recommendations emanating from the Retreat have already been endorsed by this Cabinet.
13. It is important to note that some of the recommendations in question are far-reaching indeed. So much so that in some cases, there is a need for the passing of enabling legislation before the recommendations are brought into effect. This means that we must work harder on all fronts to ensure that our good intentions are turned into concrete action.
14. I believe that in view of the limited financial and other resources at our disposal, we must identify and prioritise the recommendations that warrant immediate implementation and mobilize the necessary resources. We must move speedily and purposefully. In fact, we should not waste another day.
15. I would also like to use this opportunity of the first Cabinet Session of 2006, to express my delight at the ongoing efforts aimed at streamlining the administrative affairs of the Cabinet. Our decision to hold Cabinet Meetings every fortnight has been effected. This has been implemented in tandem with the re-organization of Cabinet Committees which will now act as clearing houses for Cabinet work. We expect this re-organization to lead to, and result in greater efficiencies in respect of Cabinet business. We also hope that Cabinet Committees will provide the required assistance on all matters brought before Cabinet, particularly on issues of a technical nature. I trust that this new re-alignment will avail the members of Cabinet sufficient time to make necessary follow-ups and analyses of policy matters, especially those which fall directly under their respective jurisdictions.

Honourable Members of Cabinet,

16. The end of the current Financial Year is slowly approaching. We should, therefore, shift into a collective higher gear and position our selves for the new Financial Year. We must be ready to hit the ground running to ensure speedy implementation of all our policy initiatives. As you may recall, I stated in my New Year's message to the Nation that we should make 2006 a year of hard work, a year of commitment and a year of the full implementation of our programmes and policies.

17. In doing so, we must be guided by the values of honesty, integrity and selflessness. We were given a mandate by the electorate to govern this country on behalf of the people. Thus, we have a sacred duty to ensure that our people in all corners of the country receive public goods and services timely and in an efficient manner. We, the leaders, should continue to lead by example and espouse the timeless virtues of our Policy of National Reconciliation which has served our country well over the years. Indeed, this policy has stood as one of the strongest anchors supporting our system of democratic governance.
18. Our country has enjoyed political and social peace and stability since the historic dawn of our freedom and independence. This is a priceless and precious gift that we must continue to defend and protect with every ounce of our strength. Where there is no peace, no development can take place. Thus, peace and stability are necessary pre-conditions for social advancement and economic progress. It is the civic duty of each and every citizen to protect, defend and promote our hard-won independence and thereby promote peace, security and stability in our country.
19. As I have already pointed out, the New Year presents us with many challenges as well as opportunities. We must be ready to face the challenges and overcome them, just as we must be ready to welcome and maximize the opportunities that lie ahead. On this special occasion of the first Cabinet Session for the year 2006, I urge the executive team of Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers, spearheaded by the Right Honourable Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister to re-dedicate yourselves to hard work. Let us work as a united team to advance the interests of our country and all our people. These are but a few of the many challenges that we will have to deal with as Government. Let us, therefore, collectively redouble our efforts and commitment to achieve tangible results this year and beyond.
20. I would also like to encourage the Secretary to Cabinet and his entire team to work hard to ensure that technical services are provided to Cabinet in an efficient and professional manner. The work ahead of you will be demanding. However, I am confident that you will all rise to the occasion in the service of all our people.
21. Lastly, I would like to once again wish you all, your families and the entire Namibian nation a Happy and Prosperous 2006.

I thank you.