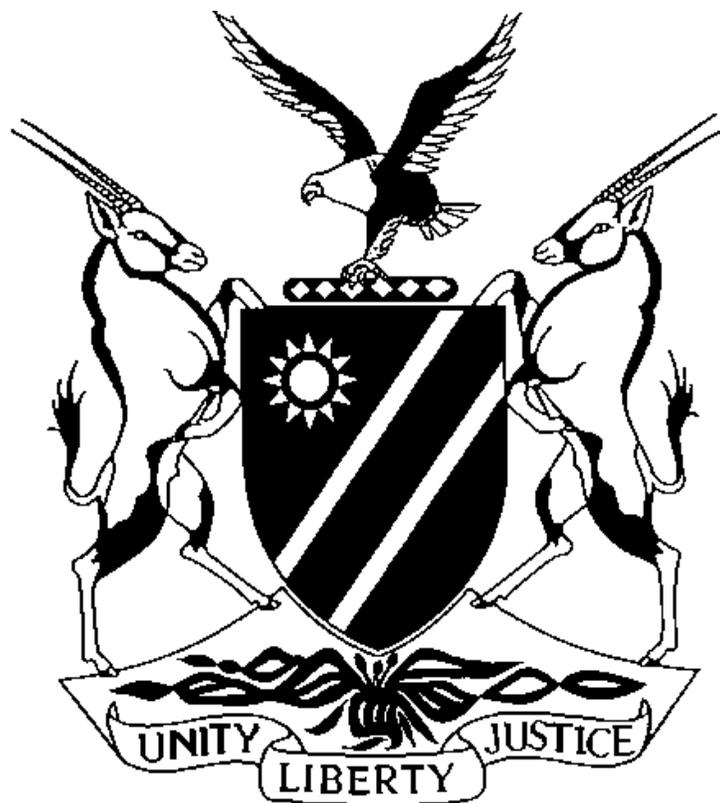


# REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY,  
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA, PRESIDENT  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA AT THE  
OCCASION OF MEETING WITH  
SENIOR PUBLIC SERVANTS**

**13 JUNE 2006**

**NAMPOWER  
CONVENTION CENTRE**

*\*Check Against Delivery*

Director of Ceremonies  
Right Honourable Nahas Angula, Prime Minister  
Honourable Ministers  
Secretary to Cabinet, Mr. Frans Kapofi  
Permanent Secretaries  
Senior Managers within the Namibian Public Service  
Members of the Media  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you all this morning to this important meeting with the purpose of exchanging views on how best we, as public servants can improve our work and deliver the required services to our citizens in an effective and efficient manner.

Since my inauguration, I have met with Permanent Secretaries and heads of state-owned enterprises. In a similar fashion, I deemed it necessary to meet with all senior public servants in order to further discuss ways and means of devising effective measures aimed at bringing services closer to the people. This must be seen as a forum to review how our public service is performing. I also hope that through these interactions, we can identify shortcomings and agree on what we need to do to improve our service delivery mechanisms.

Regular consultations are, indeed, vital in enhancing our collective drive to promote faster implementation of government policies and programmes towards the achievement of our stated goals and objectives. In this spirit, I welcome you all to this meeting this morning.

Since I took Office on 21 March 2005, I have placed emphasis on the importance of diligence and greater commitment to service delivery, discipline, honesty and integrity. I have talked about the need to strengthen efficiency and effectiveness in meeting the challenges of national development. I have also talked about the need to become more attuned to the needs and aspirations of our citizens.

Some progress has been made, however, more needs to be done in order to inculcate the values of diligence, honesty, hard work and fiscal discipline in the wider civil service. We recognise that there are obstacles. Therefore, we must be bold and resolute in our search for appropriate remedies.

Meeting the challenges facing our nation requires a new mindset. When I met with Permanent Secretaries, I emphasised four points. First was the need to inculcate work ethics to foster on-going improvement. Secondly, I emphasised the need for discipline, because discipline, effectiveness, and efficient service to citizens are all inter-linked. If discipline is lacking, every aspect of government's effort is compromised.

Thirdly, I highlighted the importance of fiscal discipline because we are working in an environment of limited resources, with competing priorities. There has been some improvement however, I would like us to do more to ensure that expenditure is within limits.

The fourth point was the need for commitment to service delivery as outlined in the service charters of each Office, Ministry and Agency.

It is my hope that in the on-going process of implementing these service charters, we will show the required zeal to bring about positive change. Improving service delivery also means improving the way we do business with our service providers.

Too often I hear concerns expressed by service providers to Government. Service providers are, at times, waiting for over 3 months before receiving payment for services rendered. This delay in payment negatively affects our dealings with service providers. In many instances, it has resulted in the suspension of vital services to Government departments. We must, therefore, review our system to ensure that those who provide professional services are, in return, treated in a professional and courteous manner.

Director of Ceremonies,

The Government plays a central role in creating an enabling environment for our people to prosper. It helps set the right conditions for economic stability and the climate for business and investment. Government provides the structures and rules within which public servants perform and are held to account. It initiates the laws and sets the framework for the administration of justice and the maintenance of law and order.

As public servants, you have to become instruments of change, by being able to adapt to the ever-changing world. You must stand ready to work in partnership with others, in order to deliver visible outcomes so that the public can enjoy a return on their investments, made through taxation. Let us, therefore, identify the causes of implementation delays and find solutions together. In so doing, we will be able to speed up policy implementation and achieve our overall goal of poverty alleviation and economic growth.

It is clear that we should, and we must follow the established procedures in order to have orderly, predictable and fair management processes. However, we should not allow these to slow down the achievement of our stated objectives.

Therefore, proper utilization of resources in a transparent and accountable manner is essential. This is critical because we need to address the problems facing our people with utmost urgency. We must increase the number of health centres and improve the quality of the services they provide, build more schools for our children, construct more roads, especially feeder roads, and create more jobs in order to ensure a brighter future for the youth of this country. Thus, as a matter of principle, we must have a common agreement about our priorities. We cannot afford to operate at cross-purposes or to operate in isolation. Coordination must be our watchword.

If we want the Public Service to be more entrepreneurial and to be more innovative, we must embrace best practices through which we can enhance productivity at all levels. Although the challenges are many, we should never opt for inertia.

I would like to encourage you to be bold in putting forward proposals. No one should be afraid to propose options, although they may appear to be difficult. It is my job and the job of my Ministers to weigh such options at Cabinet level, we are bound to seek the best solutions for the benefit of our people.

Director of Ceremonies,

We need to modernise public service delivery through the use of Information Technology to increase our competitive edge.

This will enable us to respond promptly, to provide high quality services to the public and to bring services closer to the people, while ensuring good governance and transparency through participatory democracy.

During my consultations with Permanent Secretaries earlier this year, I stated that good intentions, good policies and good programmes would be meaningless unless, they can make a positive impact on the lives of our citizens.

In our quest to improve the policy implementation cycle, the system of reporting to Cabinet by Offices, Ministries and Agencies has been strengthened. A bi-annual reporting mechanism on Cabinet decisions has been established to enhance accountability.

I call upon Offices, Ministries and Agencies to continually review the effectiveness of their reporting and implementation systems to ensure that Cabinet decisions are fully carried out, particularly with respect to the design and implementation of our capital projects.

In addition, mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of performance must be strengthened so that corrective action can be taken if performance falls short of the stated targets. I believe that we should move faster in our anti-poverty strategies and speed up the delivery of public services such as housing, clean water and sanitation, health facilities, electricity and education to all our people.

The Cabinet Retreat which was held in December last year, served as an important platform for wide consultations with various stakeholders. It added impetus to our efforts of identifying important national issues that need our urgent action and policy interventions. I urge you to work harder on all fronts to ensure that our good intentions are turned into concrete actions.

Director of Ceremonies,

We must work harder to unlock the economic potential of our rural areas. We can achieve this by expanding service delivery and provision of physical and communication infrastructure to all parts of the country.

Access to information, infrastructure and services will not only allow rural villagers to improve their quality of life, but also help to bring them into the economic mainstream of the country. Thus, I believe that our rural communities need a stronger social contract, whereby reliable infrastructure and other services such as access to information, e-Governance, micro-credit facilities, education and healthcare are readily available. This will form a solid foundation for the economic prosperity of rural Namibia.

We must take pragmatic action in taking development to the people. We must encourage employment creation in our rural communities through the utilisation of available natural resources. We should therefore continually encourage rural communities to participate in the sectors of tourism, agriculture and agro-processing, agro-forestry, dairy production, poultry, animal husbandry and other cottage industries.

Such initiatives can succeed through appropriate and sustained investments in the required infrastructure such as feeder roads, electricity, telecommunications and skills development. Our country is now experiencing higher rates of urbanisation, which could be unsustainable in the long run. It is for this reason that the development of our rural areas remains one of our important priorities. Rural-urban migration means that public services in urban areas are stretched to the limit. We must, therefore, find solutions while the challenge is still manageable.

Director of Ceremonies,

Our public service stands at the centre in our efforts to transform our society. We must, therefore, strengthen co-ordination and information sharing. The right hand must know what the left hand is doing in order to reduce duplication of efforts and overlap. Likewise, we must learn from our experience over the last sixteen years and use such lessons as a basis for better decision making.

We must also build stronger ties for the promotion of accountability, partnerships and co-operation between national, regional and local authorities. We must promote full participation of rural communities, the private sector and non-governmental organisations in the process of development. This is the basis of public-private partnerships (PPPs) that can create a win-win scenario. That should become the hallmark of our operations.

Director of Ceremonies,

Namibia is not an island. We must, therefore, effectively promote cooperation and partnerships within the SADC and the African Union as well as with all our cooperation partners such as the European Union, Asia and the Americas. These ties are vital in our drive to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the realisation of our Vision 2030 Strategy.

One such opportunity, as a result of international cooperation and partnership, is the recently announced Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) where Namibia qualified and is now eligible to access funding from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) of the United States of America. I met the Team Leader assigned to Namibia in March this year.

We are now at a stage where the MCA Namibia Office has been established to coordinate the drafting of the programme proposal with a view to access such funding. I wish to underscore the fact that being eligible does not mean that a country will automatically access the resources. Thus, there is an urgent need for commitment and hard work from all stakeholders in order to meet the September deadline, by which we are expected to submit our proposal. I am calling upon all of you, as Permanent Secretaries and senior officials to ensure that your ministries give full support to this endeavour, so that we can accomplish this important national task in good time.

I am aware that our Accounting Officers need consistent support and cooperation if we are to achieve our national objectives. That is why the Office of the Prime Minister is introducing a performance management system in order to improve human resources management in our civil service. Government will also institute periodic reviews in order to take stock of progress made in terms of implementation of capital projects.

Managers will thus be held directly accountable for the implementation of programmes and projects. To my mind, the first development management choice we must make as development managers is to deliberately choose to eliminate poverty in our country. We can only do this effectively if we set goals for ourselves. I, therefore, would like to encourage you all to strive towards 70% to 80% implementation rate with regard to capital projects budgeted for, in the current budgetary cycle.

During the past few weeks, Namibia experienced an outbreak of polio which has so far taken nine lives and infected 34 others. It is, indeed, disappointing to see that whereas Namibia has been polio free for more than 10 years, we are suddenly faced with this outbreak. We have invested significant resources in the immunization campaigns over the years. In fact the last case of polio infection in Namibia was reported in 1995.

It is critical that we continue to promote sanitation and hygiene among our people. We have already made preparations to immediately embark upon public education and vaccination campaigns to prevent any further spread of this disease. I also wish to thank our neighbours in particular the Republic of South Africa and the Republic of Botswana for their prompt response in making available critical resources to Namibia in fighting this outbreak.

Apart from the latest challenge, we are still faced with the scourge of HIV/Aids, whose impact is devastating. Given the magnitude of its spread and its erosion of human capital, HIV/Aids also brings with it an unthinkable stigma in human relations.

The HIV/Aids pandemic may very well be the greatest threat to survival of humanity today. It has left no part of the world untouched and Namibia is no exception. As such, we must form a united front to defeat HIV/Aids, polio, malaria, TB and all other threats to our peoples' health.

Director of Ceremonies,

I have come here today to encourage our civil servants to continue with hard work in our march towards achieving our collective vision – Vision 2030. I have also come here to commend them for the good work they have done over the years. We have a duty to develop our country and improve the standard of living of all our people. The Namibian people are looking up to us with justifiable expectations to help realise their aspirations. We must, therefore, do everything in our power to succeed.

Our goal is to create a responsive and effective Public Service, which is capable of serving the people. A Public Service that can deliver, adapt to change and innovate. Our duty is to meet and overcome all challenges that the future may bring above all. We must confront such challenges with a united resolve, resourcefulness and commitment.

With these thoughts, I look forward to a mutually rewarding and fruitful working relationship through which we can all play a meaningful role towards the second phase of our struggle – that of economic liberation. It is said that “*all things are ready, if our minds be so.*” Let us, therefore, gear our minds towards hard work and commitment. Let us join hands and march forward together and in readiness.

Long live the Republic of Namibia!

I thank you.