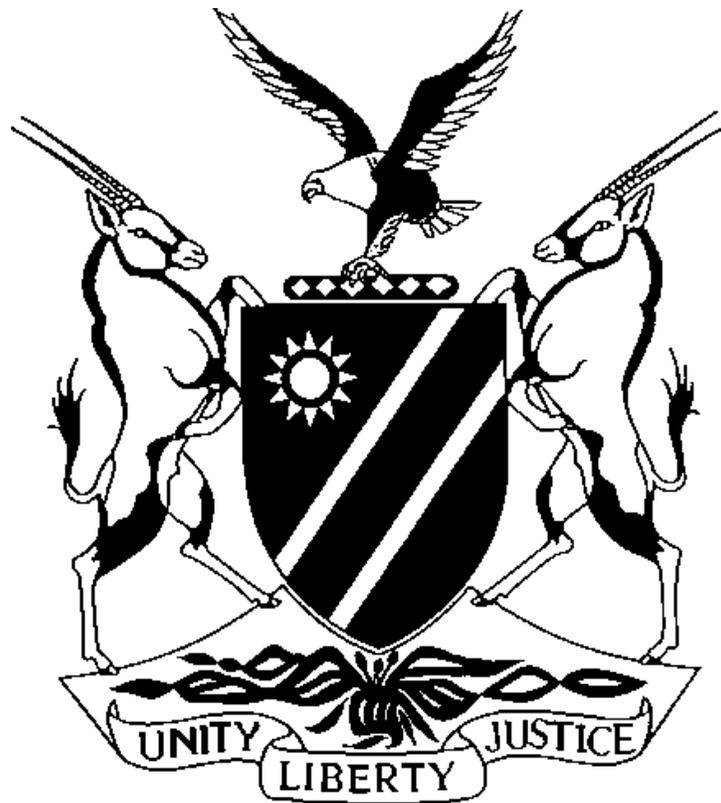


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBAMBA, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE MEETING
WITH PERMANENT SECRETARIES**

20 MAY 2009

NEW STATE HOUSE

**Check Against Delivery*

Director of Ceremonies
Honourable Dr Albert Kawana, Minister of Presidential Affairs
Comrade Frans Kapofi, Secretary to Cabinet
Permanent Secretaries
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome all of you to the State House this morning. I have invited you here in order to provide another platform for consultation and exchange of views on issues of national importance that relate to the carrying out of your duties and functions as Accounting Officers in our Offices, Ministries and Agencies.

Our Government has an important duty at hand. The duty of delivering on the promise of service delivery that we have made to the Namibian people. I am talking about the duty of fulfilling the mandate which the electorate has given to us. To this end, your role as Accounting Officers and Chief Administrators in our public institutions remains critical.

The success or failure in the implementation of Government policies and programmes will, to a large extent, depend on your dedication and commitment to achieve the goals and objectives of your respective institutions. It will equally depend on your readiness to go the extra mile in whatever you do in the course of your duties.

You are entrusted with a huge responsibility not only to ensure that the funds allocated to your institutions are utilised for their intended purposes, but also to ensure that you put in place strong and effective mechanisms to get the best out of your staff members. The Government and people of Namibia expect efficient service delivery, as well as reliable and efficient leadership, which you must provide in the institutions that you are entrusted to manage.

The new financial year started last month. We all know that the budget is indeed one of the critical tools in your arsenals as managers, entrusted with the execution and implementation of Government policies and programmes. The question that we must always ask is, how effective is the process of budget execution in our public service? The answer to this question is not simple. It requires a broad view, taking into account the performance of different Offices/Ministries and Agencies. I have often spoken about the need for co-ordination in order to avoid duplication and the waste of scarce resources.

The effective execution of the budget can also only be realized with greater co-ordination and co-operation at the level of public institutions as well as those who are responsible for managing and leading such institutions

I encourage you as Accounting Officers to foster a spirit of co-operation and information sharing. Ministries and Government Agencies cannot be managed like independent islands. All public institutions are connected to each other in one way or another. As such, their success is linked in more than one way. So is their failure. The success in one Office/Ministry or Agency must therefore contribute to the collective success of the entire Government.

Director of Ceremonies,

Our accounting officers must work harder than ever in order to address the problems brought about by the global economic crisis. This is indeed a challenge which calls for innovation and creativity in dealing with these challenges. Our priorities should be driven by the needs of our people, especially those who are affected by unemployment and job losses.

The budgetary resources allocated to your institutions should be utilised to meet the goals identified in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework and in our medium and long term strategies such as NDP3 and Vision 2030. There must be effective control and supervision to ensure that budgetary allocations are utilised fully. It is a sign of poor planning and inefficiency if budgeted resources are returned to Treasury at the end of the Financial Year. It is as if all the challenges facing our people have been addressed.

I am pleased that the process of strengthening local capacity for policy monitoring and evaluation as I emphasised during the launching of NDP3, is taking shape. This is necessary to enable managers to know exactly whether government policies and programmes are achieving the required outcomes and bringing about the expected impacts.

Increased capacity for monitoring and evaluation will indeed go a long way in contributing towards the efficient utilization of resources. It will also enable our government to plan and manage better. As a management tool, it is something that all Accounting Officers must understand and utilise to inform their decision making options. A common and system wide monitoring and evaluation mechanism will also complement the ongoing activities aimed at implementing the Strategic Plans for Government Offices/Ministries and Agencies.

I am concerned about the delay in the full roll-out of Strategic Plans in all public institutions. The Strategic Planning Process is a worthwhile initiative that you, as Accounting Officers must champion and promote. When fully implemented, it will propel public administration and policy implementation in Namibia to a new level. Against this background, all Accounting Officers must ensure that the process of preparing the Strategic Plans for Offices/Ministries and Agencies is completed as soon as possible. If there are difficulties and bottlenecks, they must be identified so that they can be addressed timeously to ensure that we remain on track.

Director of Ceremonies,

Our Accounting Officers are expected to lead by example at all times. They must set the tone and instill a culture of hard work, punctuality and dedication in staff members in their respective institutions. I will say this to you. Your Offices/Ministries and Agencies will not succeed by default.

You must put in place deliberate plans of action for each and every activity that you have planned. This must be accompanied by a clear assignment of duties to the responsible staff members or group of staff members who should be held accountable.

The attitude of “*business as usual*” in government must come to an end. There is no other choice but to manage the affairs of government by harnessing the tools and practices that can yield the best results and deliver value for money for the Namibian people. All staff members in your respective institutions must know that they are employed to do their part to contribute to the success of government.

Each and everyone of them must be seen as an important cog in the wider machinery of the public service. It goes without saying that if one cog or one part in the machinery is defective and is not operating as it ought to, then the entire machinery is affected. This may slow down its performance, or it may bring it to a complete halt. This cannot be allowed to happen. Therefore, you have a duty to instill discipline and compliance with the Public Service Staff Rules by each and every civil servant. Absenteeism, late-coming, and poor performance must be stamped out.

As you are well aware, the 2004 SWAPO PARTY Election Manifesto was adopted by Cabinet as a Government Programme in 2005. I am proud to say that a Review by the SWAPO PARTY on the implementation of the 2004 SWAPO PARTY Election Manifesto has shown that we have made good progress on delivering on the promise that we made to the Namibian people. In many instances, we have even exceeded our pledges. You must continue to work hard because more needs to be done to serve our people and improve their living standards.

While successes have been achieved, we cannot afford to sit on our laurels. On my visits to different parts of the country, I have on some occasions been disappointed by the state of some public infrastructures such as school buildings, hospitals and clinics. I have also received reports of some citizens not having access to basic public amenities.

Some facilities have been built but have not been put to optimal use. In some instances, rural electrification infrastructure has been built but it has not been energized. Some project to kick start the green scheme have not yet been fully implemented. It is your duty to ensure that the problems hampering the process of service delivery are ironed out urgently. I entrust the Secretary to Cabinet to co-ordinate with you, and to produce a “*Status of Implementation Report*” on all our priority projects. This must be done to ensure that all our planned projects in this Financial Year, and the entire MTEF period are implemented fully and on time.

Another vital aspect that you must always consider is the importance of ensuring that projects are implemented in a manner that brings about the intended impact on the lives of the people who are the targeted beneficiaries. Wherever we build a school or a clinic, we must ensure that such facilities are well-equipped with qualified staff and resources to serve the people.

We must ensure that marketing and storage infrastructure are in place to support the Green Scheme. We must ensure that the newly proclaimed towns have adequate infrastructure to cater for the growing numbers of new urban dwellers.

Likewise, programmes must be put in place to ensure that our youth who graduate from our vocational training institutions, tertiary education institutions and the National Youth Service are able to be absorbed by the labour market or to be assisted with access to capital to start their own businesses.

I have stated these examples to illustrate and underscore the need for integrated planning and co-ordination. We will continue to succeed and make Namibia a better place if the right hand works effectively with the left hand. It is important to remain focused on the tasks at hand and to work within the parameters of our stated plans. Our Medium Term Expenditure Framework is clear on the targets that must be met and the outcomes that must be achieved. Make it your task to ensure that those targets are met within the stated timelines.

Accountability must be one of the important hallmarks in your work. The implementation of the Strategic Plans and the Balanced Score Card Approach in all Offices/Ministries and Agencies, will be an important management tool because it will transform public sector management in Namibia.

More specifically, it is vital for civil servants to sign performance contracts with Government, according to which their performance will be measured. This will enable Government, in fact it will enable you as Accounting Officers to hold all staff members accountable for their work. As a Government we expect you to do your work diligently and to fulfill all the duties assigned you with dedication.

I have invited you to the State House not only to exchange views and ideas, but also to encourage you to serve the people of Namibia to the best of your abilities. They do not expect anything less. In the next few hours that we are going to be here this morning, I expect you to be frank about the challenges that we face, to point out the constraints and to suggest solutions as to how the challenges can be overcome in the interest of all our people.

I thank you.