

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA,
TO THE PERMANENT SECRETARIES**

15 JUNE 2010

WINDHOEK
**Check Against Delivery*

Director of Ceremonies,
Right Honourable Prime Minister, Comrade Nahas Angula
Comrade Frans Kapofi, Secretary to the Cabinet
Esteemed Permanent Secretaries
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to State House this morning. I also wish to congratulate those who have been promoted recently to serve the nation as Permanent Secretaries as well as those who have been assigned new duties. I trust that you will use your experiences to improve service delivery in our public institutions.

As Permanent Secretaries and Accounting Officers, you all have important duties on your shoulders. You hold vital positions in the civil service and are tasked with the proper and efficient functioning of Government Offices, Ministries and Agencies. In fact, the efficient management and administration of our public institutions depend, in large measure, on the commitment, hard work and competency of our Permanent Secretaries as well as the quality of leadership that you can provide to civil servants to do their work effectively.

It is your duty as Chief Executive Officers of our public institutions, to provide strategic leadership to your staff members and to be fully acquainted with the various aspects and pace of implementation of policies in which your institutions are involved. This will enable you to fully account for the management of the human and financial resources as well as the public assets entrusted in your care.

Corrupt practices, either by yourselves or your staff members must be avoided at all costs. Where such practices are detected, they must be stamped out forcefully. Remember that the Namibian public and the Anti-Corruption Commission are keeping eyes on your performance and the performance of the civil service. Perform your duties in a manner that strengthens public confidence in the actions of our Government.

You must also continue to strengthen measures aimed at proper utilization of all public assets entrusted in your care. Wastage and misuse of public resources such as vehicles and other items must be avoided. Lead by example and encourage your staff members to conserve resources such as electricity, water, stationery and other public assets. You must also inculcate the culture of proper time management.

Time is an asset that once it is lost, it cannot be reclaimed. You must, therefore, cultivate a change of mindset and attitudes among all civil servants to deliver quality services at all times.

Accounting Officers are also expected to do all that you can so that public services can reach all our people in different parts of the country. This demands a deep understanding and appreciation of the policy implementation measures that Government has put in place, as well as the kinds of improvements that we can initiate in order to make policy implementation more effective. This underscores the need to make sure that the process of introducing policy monitoring and evaluation tools in the public service, which started a few years ago, is finalised.

These tools will enable you to manage the limited public resources better. They will also put our government in a position to measure the rate of success of our efforts.

Director of Ceremonies,

I have invited you, as our Accounting Officers to the State House today as part of an ongoing process of consultation and to exchange views on important matters related to your work. You are all aware that in modern public management, leaders and managers such as yourselves are encouraged to be innovative in finding new and more effective solutions to the problems of public administration. As Accounting Officers, you are in direct contact with public managers, experts and technocrats who are involved in day-to-day implementation of policies. You should, therefore, utilise your interactions with these professionals, both within your institutions and other entities, to identify better ways for speedy policy implementation for the benefit of our citizens.

We expect you to ensure that your institutions are appropriately staffed and positioned to achieve our country's developmental objectives and priorities. In this light, you should ensure that you have the right people with right skills, capacities and technical abilities in critical areas that are vital for the successful implementation of our policies. Where shortcomings are detected, they must be corrected as a matter of urgency.

You have been put in these positions of leadership and trust to implement Cabinet decisions for the benefit of our nation and to provide administrative leadership to your respective institutions. Thus, do not shy away from this responsibility. Have the courage to carry out your duties and thereby advance our best national interests, while bringing about greater efficiencies, better utilization of resources and the achievement of our national priorities.

Director of Ceremonies,

Our nation stands at a critical juncture, where effective leadership must be provided at all levels as we address the development challenges facing our nation. Some of the critical issues include the ongoing negotiations towards the Economic Partnership Agreements, the search for new electricity generation options, the search for new markets for our products and other economic development issues.

We must also provide visionary leadership to bring socio-economic development to the rural and peri-urban areas of our country. Against this background, Namibians must search deeper to find ways in which we can improve and strengthen our country's competitiveness, both regionally and internationally. The EPA negotiations present our country with a set of challenges in the short-as well as the long term. This is because of the vast economic implications that are inherent in these negotiations for our country.

This challenge should inspire policy makers and administrators to consider different options that are available to our country to realize its competitive advantage and potential to harness our natural resources for the benefit of our nation. We must work harder to create opportunities for value addition to our natural resources and to attract investors and tourists to Namibia.

As competition for scarce foreign direct investment increases, Namibia is challenged to offer faster, better and more efficient services in all sectors.

This means eliminating bureaucratic red tape in our public institutions, faster processes in handling requests for information from members of the public and friendlier frontline staff in all public institutions. It means ensuring the availability of modern services that are required by investors and Namibia's trading partners.

We would like to see that, from our points of entry and public offices, to our accommodation establishments, civil servants are committed and capable to provide services that are second to none. This is the only way we can make Namibia more competitive and attractive to investors. It is also the best strategy to enable us fast-track the process of social and economic transformation of our society.

Director of Ceremonies,

There are many priority areas where urgent Government action is needed. These include the challenges of unemployment, poverty reduction, broader economic empowerment of our people, the development of the SME sector, education, health care, provision of water, housing, food production and the problem of informal settlements in our cities and towns. All these areas must continue to enjoy the attention of our Government.

With regard to the unemployment situation, we all agree that it has become one of the greatest challenges facing our nation today. It is, therefore, imperative that all public institutions work hand-in-hand with a view to creating a co-ordinated response to this challenge. Our Government should continue to engage fully with the private sector in order to co-ordinate an effective national response to the problem of unemployment. Secondly, public procurement should be used as a core strategy to address unemployment through the creation of new jobs, the retention of existing jobs and creation of opportunities for the SMEs sector to grow, expand and join the mainstream economy.

I have spoken to you in the past about the importance and the need to ensure speedy implementation of capital projects. These projects generate much-needed employment opportunities and create vital infrastructure that are necessary for the socio-economic development of our country. They are also vital for the attainment of our nation's long-term development strategies.

I am concerned that many delays and bottlenecks continue to be experienced in the process of public tender procedures. In this context, I call on all of you to ensure that capital projects are executed on time and within budget. As members of the Tender Board, you must take this matter up and propose effective solutions.

Many concerns also have been raised concerning the delay in payments by public institutions to suppliers for services rendered to Government. This situation creates cash flow problems, especially for SMEs. It must be addressed in line with the Public Service Charters and the Strategic Plans that your respective institutions have adopted.

Director of Ceremonies,

It is very important to ensure that all your actions and those of your staff members comply with the Public Service Act of 1995, Personnel Administrative Measures, the State Finance Act of 1991, Treasury Instructions and all other relevant laws and Regulations that pertain to your work.

I also wish to highlight the importance of co-ordination, regular consultations and information sharing between Permanent Secretaries and their political principals. The administrative functions of Permanent Secretaries are clearly spelled out in relevant laws, while Article 41 of the Namibian Constitution provides for the responsibilities of Ministers to determine Government policies and for their accountability to the President and to the Parliament. It is for this reason that you must, at all times ensure that your political principals are fully informed about all relevant administrative issues in your respective institutions.

There is also a need for co-operation, co-ordination and teamwork amongst all government entities. I have often said that in everything that we do, the right hand must know what the left hand is doing and *vice versa*. This is in line with the sector-wide approach that we have adopted under the Third National Development Plan (NDP3). Our aim is to ensure that all relevant institutions are adequately informed about the implementation of policies in which they are involved in one way or another.

While many challenges remain, I am encouraged by your continued commitment to serve our nation. I encourage you to work harder in order to make Namibia a winning nation. It is only through hard work that we can improve the living conditions of our people and effectively combat the challenges of poverty, unemployment and under-development.

I trust that you will continue to work hard for the best interests of our country and her people.

I thank you.