

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA, PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE COMMEMORATION OF
THE 22nd INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY**

21 MARCH 2012

**MARIENTAL,
HARDAP REGION**

**Check Against Delivery*

**Director of Ceremonies,
Your Excellency, Dr Sam Nujoma, Founding
President and Father of the Nation,
Madam Penehupifo Pohamba, First Lady of the
Republic of Namibia,
Honourable Speaker of the National Asembly,
Your Honour, the Chief Justice,
Honourable Deputy Prime Minister,
Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Esteemed Former Prime Ministers and Deputy
Prime Minister,
Honourable Katrina Hanse-Himarwa, Our
Gracious Host and Governor of the Hardap
Region,
Honourable Governors,
Esteemed Traditional, Spiritual and Community
Leaders,
Honourable Regional and Local Authority
Councillors,
Your Worship, the Mayor of Mariental,
Distinguished Service Chiefs,
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic
Corps,
Esteemed Captains of Industries,
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Members of the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Today, the people of Namibia, from all walks of life, and all corners of the country, are standing tall. With great joy, we are singing praises as we commemorate the 22nd Anniversary of the attainment of our national freedom and independence.

I take this opportunity to commend the Honourable Governor of Hardap Region, our gracious host, Comrade Katrina Hanse-Himarwa and her entire team for their excellent work to host our nation's 22nd Independence Anniversary. I would also like to thank the residents of this Region for opening their hearts to their compatriots, and indeed to all other guests who have come to Mariental to celebrate this joyous occasion.

Compatriots,

At twenty-two years, Namibia has grown into a vibrant democracy, based on a solid constitutional order and a deep culture of the rule of law, fortified by a collective consensus that, we are all equal before the law.

Since the attainment of independence, Namibia has maintained social and political stability, making it possible for our people to contribute to the development of the country and for our national economy to grow steadily. We have also established ourselves as a proud member of the international community, making our voice heard in matters of regional development, continental integration and actively contributing to the promotion of world peace and security.

Our Government has articulated and pursued a focused national development agenda, aimed at over-coming the social and economic development challenges facing our country.

Starting with the Transitional National Development Plan in 1990, several policies and programmes have been put in place in order to develop our country and improving the living conditions of all our people. We have also crafted Vision 2030, which articulates our collective national aspirations to turn Namibia into a prosperous nation with an industrialized economy. Some of the specific policies that we have implemented include the developed new physical and communication infrastructure, expansion of the road and rail network around the country.

The expansion and modernization of our harbours and airports have made Namibia the preferred economic gateway to the southern African sub-continent and a destination of choice for investors and tourists from different parts of the world. Cellular and fixed line connectivity has also made communication easier for our people in all parts of the country.

In the area of public administration, we have strengthened our civil service to become more efficient and effective. In addition, as part of civil service reform, all civil servants are now required to sign Performance Agreements with their supervisors as a means of enforcing accountability.

The Anti-Corruption was established to root out corrupt activities at all levels in our public institutions. While, some successes have been recorded, more remains to be done. Once again, I call on all Namibians to report any corrupt activity to the Anti Corruption Commission, which, must carry out its duties without fear or favour.

Compatriots,

Our Government has also implemented various development initiatives here in the Hardap Region, over the years. These include the provision of housing and sanitation, safe drinking water, rural electrification, expansion of education and health facilities, decentralization, land reform as well as the implementation of several anti-poverty programmes. Efforts have also been made to attract investors to the Region in order to boost the performance of the economy.

In the area of housing and sanitation, financial resources have been allocated to implement projects at places such as Hoachanas, Klein Aub, Gibeon, Stampriet, Kalkrand, Mariental, Gochas, Aranos and Block E in Rehoboth.

Specific focus has been placed on the need to do away with the unsanitary bucket system. In this day and age, no Namibian citizen should be subjected to the indignity of having to resort to that demeaning system any longer. It must become a thing of the past.

Housing projects have also been implemented under the Build Together Programme, while land has been serviced to make it ready for the construction of houses, at places such as Hoachanas and Kries, among others.

Hardap Region is one of the Regions in the country with the highest rate of access to clean and safe drinking water per capita, where 85 percent of the residents have access to potable water. The distances that residents in rural areas have to travel to reach community water points have also been greatly reduced.

With regard to rural electrification, the Hardap Regional Council has so far facilitated the electrification of 24 settlements, including localities such as Kries, Asab, Middelpaas, Bahnhof and others.

Substantial financial resources have been allocated to purchase farming land for resettlement purposes. Here in the Hardap Region, an amount of N\$69 million has been spent on this initiative since independence. This is out of a total expenditure of N\$578 million, spent nationally over the same period.

In total, 267 families have been resettled on 56 farms purchased by Government in this Region.

Compatriots,

The provision of education and health care services has continued to enjoy Government attention. Today, the Hardap Region boasts of 17 health facilities including hospitals, health centres and clinics.

The two main hospitals at Mariental and Rehoboth are currently undergoing renovation. A new clinic is also under construction at Maltahöhe. This is part and parcel of expanding and improving the delivery of health services to our people.

Several anti-poverty measures have been introduced to assist community income generating projects in this region. These include community small stock farming, the commercialization of hoodia, the re-introduction of game to communal conservancies, and the construction of infrastructure to provide water for game in order to promote tourism.

In the agricultural sector, many positive developments have been recorded. We are particularly pleased with the ongoing cultivation of maize on a commercial basis and other crops at the Hardap Irrigation Scheme. It is reported that a bumper harvest is expected this year. I commend the farmers for their hard work.

Similarly, the establishment of the Hardap Super Farm not far away from this town, has not only created new jobs, but has also boosted our capacity to produce more milk for domestic consumption.

With regard to the implementation of TIPEEG, an amount of more than N\$441 million is earmarked for various projects in the Hardap Region, from the 2011/2012 to the 2013/2014 Financial Years.

I urge all institutions and officials tasked with the implementation of these projects to ensure that these resources are spent on the identified projects in order to create jobs and to improve the living conditions of our people in this region.

Compatriots,

I am proud to express my felicitations to all our people on this special day. I greet you all in the name of unity and patriotism as we remember our heroes and heroines who made the ultimate sacrifices, and those who endured imprisonment and torture during the fight against colonialism and apartheid.

We remember and pay homage to Hendrick Witbooi, Jakob Marengo, Samuel Maharero, Kahimemua Nguvauva, Nehale IyaMpingana, Mandume yaNdemufayo, Iipumbu yaTshilongo, and their contemporaries. Their heroism and gallantry inspired the younger generation to fight for the emancipation of our nation from the yoke of apartheid colonialism.

I wish to pay homage to the political leadership of our national liberation movement SWAPO, to the commanders and to the thousands of the cadres of SWAPO's military wing who fought against the enemy forces with bravery and total dedication.

We honour them all on this special day, from those who participated in the historic battle at Omugulu gwOmbashe on 26 August in 1966, when Namibia's armed liberation struggle was launched on home soil, to the brave young men and women who sacrificed their lives on 1st April 1989, just as Namibia was on the verge of attaining nationhood.

We will forever remember them for the sacrifices they have made and for bringing freedom and independence that we enjoy today.

I wish to mention the immense contribution made by Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma, a patriot who led our people to nationhood. It is a fitting tribute that today, we will launch new bank notes issued by the Bank of Namibia, bearing the portrait of this icon of our revolution. For a more than forty years, Comrade Nujoma led our people in the national liberation struggle and never wavered, until we achieved freedom and independence.

I will have a chance to say more on this subject during the launching ceremony of the new bank notes.

Compatriots,

Namibia is a product of international solidarity. During our struggle for national independence, our friends from the African Continent and the broader international community provided us with valuable material and diplomatic support. I would therefore like to express our gratitude to friendly countries and organizations that stood by our side and supported us during the national liberation struggle.

We thank you for standing with us and for continuing working with us, during this new phase for economic emancipation. We welcome and highly appreciate your presence here today.

Dear Compatriots,

While progress has been made in the areas of social and economic development during the past twenty-two years, more work remains to be done. It is our national duty to stand together, regardless of colour, creed, ethnic origin or gender to overcome all obstacles to our nation's development.

My message to you today is: Let us stand as a united people to overcome unemployment. Let us stand as a united people to overcome poverty, crime, alcohol and drug abuse, violence against women and children, and indeed other evils that can destroy our society. Work with me and with our Government to build a better society. As a united people, NOTHING can stop us.

This Independence Anniversary celebration must unite us as we rededicate ourselves to the enduring motto of *One Namibia One Nation*, and to our cherished *Policy of National Reconciliation*. As a united people, we shall overcome the challenges facing our nation. Let us turn our words into action and do all that is necessary to succeed in our efforts. Let us stand together as “*A Nation on the Move Towards Vision 2030*”.

I wish you all a peaceful and enjoyable 22nd Independence Anniversary.

Long Live Unity!

Long Live Namibia’s Heroes and Heroines!

Long Live the Republic of Namibia!

I thank you.