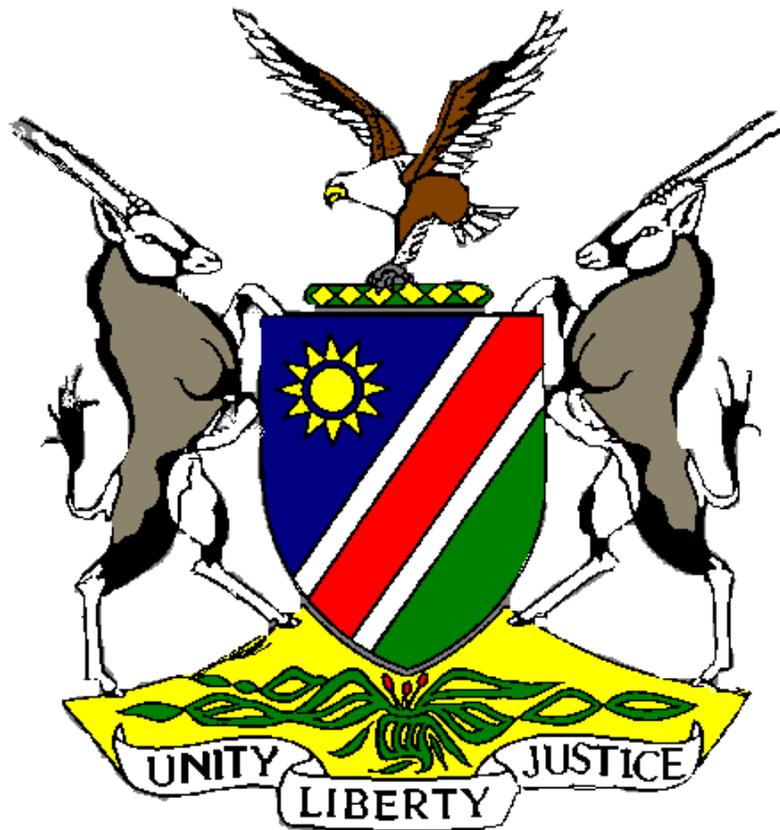


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY H.E. HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE STATE
BANQUET IN HONOUR
OF H.E. LT. GN SERETSE KHAMA IAN KHAMA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA
DURING THE STATE VISIT TO NAMIBIA**

25 JUNE 2012

WINDHOEK

**Check Against Delivery*

**Your Excellency Lieutenant General Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana,
Right Honourable Prime Minister and Madam Angula,
Honourable Chairperson of the National Council and Madam Kapere,
My Dear Wife, Madam Penehupifo Pohamba, First Lady,
Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Your Worship the Mayor of the City of Windhoek,
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentleman,**

It gives me great pleasure and honour to warmly welcome you, Your Excellency and your delegation to Namibia. Your State Visit to our country reinforces the excellent bilateral relations existing between our two countries and peoples, which are cemented in the long history of solidarity, friendship and good neighbourliness. It is on this strong foundation that we continue to expand co-operation in various areas. More specifically, the regular meetings of the Joint Commissions of Cooperation and the Joint Commission on Defence and Security have enabled our two countries to consult, share views and discuss issues of common interest since 1990.

Today, this cooperation covers a wide range of sectors, such as agriculture, mining and energy, health, trade and investment, environment, transport and communication. This State Visit is another welcome platform for our two countries to interact at the highest level, to review existing areas of co-operation and to consider new possibilities where our countries can work together, especially in light of the changing realities in the global economy.

It will also enable us to share information as to how we can improve the resilience of our national economies against external shocks that may negatively impact our countries. The ongoing financial crisis in Europe has the potential to negatively affect our economies. We should, therefore, be prepared to consider options such as identifying new markets for the products that we produce. In other words, we should not put all our eggs in one basket.

We should also take practical steps to boost trade and commercial activities, create new employment opportunities and reduce poverty in our communities. This should be backed by strong education and training systems to equip our youth with relevant skills and competencies that can enable them to operate effectively and be competitive in the modern economy.

Projects such as the TransKalahari Corridor, the development of a Dry Port for Botswana at Walvis Bay and the envisaged TransKalahari Railway from Botswana to Namibia can serve as effective catalysts for the achievement of these objectives.

I would like to add that it is vital for our two countries and indeed the SADC Region to expand and improve infrastructure to facilitate trade. At present, electricity trade between Botswana and Namibia is conducted via the Omaere-Ghanzi Transmission Line, which was completed in 2004.

This bilateral project supports regional efforts to improve power transmission infrastructure under the Southern African Power Pool. At the regional level, efforts should continue to strengthen the ZIZABONA Project and thereby enhance possibilities for trade in electricity.

Your Excellency,

Robust information communication technology has become an important driver and a vital tool for the effective operation of modern economies. We should, therefore, invest and acquire the necessary IT infrastructure. The Landing Point of the West Africa Cable System at Swakopmund, which Your Excellency and I will jointly inaugurate tomorrow, is a significant achievement in this regard.

Relevant authorities should now put mechanisms in place to ensure that our people have access to the benefits of this important investment in the form of faster internet connections and lower tariffs.

Other areas of co-operation that are vital in our bilateral relations include the tourism and agriculture sectors. We believe that it is important for our two countries to continue strengthening cooperation in these areas as part of addressing the challenges of unemployment and poverty.

Your Excellency,

I would like to express our profound appreciation to the generosity and solidarity of the Government and people of Botswana for supporting their Namibian brothers and sisters, especially during times of emergencies such as flood disasters. I also wish to express our readiness to work with the Republic of Botswana and other SADC member states to strengthen the *Regional Early Warning System*, which is designed to provide advance information on crop yields, weather forecasts and other related information.

Your Excellency,

SADC continues to play a critical role in promoting unity and strengthening economic and political integration in our region. However, we should also note that social stability and economic prosperity in the region depends on political stability and peace in each individual member state. Thus, all member states should strive to strengthen their domestic socio-economic and democratic institutions in order to make the SADC Region stronger as one of the building blocks of the African Union.

Instability in one part of the region affects us all. In this regard, we should continue to encourage the people of Madagascar to overcome their political differences and reach a peaceful and durable solution to the political stalemate in that country, through the speedy implementation of the Inclusive Roadmap.

Namibia calls on the lifting of sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe. We congratulate the government and people of the Kingdom of Lesotho for the conduct of free and fair elections, as well as the peaceful democratic transition in their country. This is a positive development for our Region.

Your Excellency,

The Outcome Document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, which was concluded recently in Rio de Janeiro, underscores the commitment of the international community to the 1992 Rio Principles and to help build *The Future We Want*.

We also welcome the establishment of the Green Climate Fund, which was created to mobilize financial resources to fund adaptation and mitigation measures, especially in developing countries. As part of the commitment of the Government and people of Namibia to this initiative, Namibia seeks the support of UN member states, to host the Green Climate Fund Secretariat here in our capital city, Windhoek. We appreciate SADC's endorsement of Namibia's intention to host the Secretariat. I would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for this vital support.

Once again, I would like to express our immense delight at Your Excellency's State Visit to our country.

May I now invite you all to join me in proposing a toast to the continued good health of H.E. Lieutenant General Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana, and to the lasting bonds of friendship and solidarity between the people of Botswana and Namibia.

I thank you.