

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA, PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA ON THE
OCCASION OF THE ANNUAL RECEPTION
FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS**

15 JUNE 2012

WINDHOEK

**Check Against Delivery*

**Director of Ceremonies,
Honourable Chairperson of the National
Council,
Honourable Deputy Speaker of the National
Assembly,
Honourable Leaders of Parties represented in
our Parliament,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am delighted to welcome you to State House this morning for a Reception. This event provides a platform for us to interact in an informal atmosphere and to exchange views on the issues affecting our country today.

Our Parliament stands at the centre of our democratic system of governance. Constitutionally, Parliament is tasked with an important function of making laws for our nation. In this task, it is imperative for our lawmakers to enact laws that are responsive to the day-to-day needs of our people. It is imperative for Parliament to make laws that can help take our country forward on the path of socio-economic development by addressing the inequities of the past.

Equally important, our legislature should endeavor to promote a law making process that is accessible and participatory in nature. In this context, before Bills are tabled in Parliament, they should be subjected to public consultations so that citizens of our Republic can make their input and that their suggestions heard with regard to the content of such laws.

Gone are the days when unjust laws and repressive regulations were imposed on our people without their input. Namibia is now a democratic State. Our legislative process must, therefore, reflect this new dispensation.

Director of Ceremonies,

At 22 years, Namibia is still a young democracy, which is engaged in the process of building and strengthening our democratic institutions. This calls for dedication and commitment in all that we do so that we can build a strong foundation for future generations.

We should also be aware that our democracy can only be as strong and as resilient, as the institutions that we build and the manner in which we manage such institutions. A strong democracy requires a high level of political maturity, mutual respect and tolerance.

This is the spirit in which our Parliament must operate as its members work together to contribute to the task of nation building.

I would like to emphasize the point that the work of Parliamentarians should not only be restricted to the Houses of Parliament. Members should, from time to time, go out to interact with the voters in different parts of the country. Parliamentarians must interact with communities in order to hear the challenges they face.

For example, there are thousands of our people who reside in informal settlements on the periphery of our towns and cities. They face various challenges such as lack of water and sanitation services, adequate housing, electricity, health care and other social amenities. They also bear the brunt of unemployment and poverty.

Our Parliamentarians should go out and interact with these communities in order to better understand their plight. This will enable Parliamentarians to bring such challenges to the attention of Parliament and other organs of the State, with a view to designing appropriate solutions and policy interventions.

Similarly, many communities in our rural areas around the country are living in difficult conditions. The situation is the same in many of these rural communities: inadequate water supply, lack of electricity, inadequate housing and sanitation, health care and other services.

Therefore, our lawmakers, as the representatives of the people, must serve as the voice of these communities. It is your duty to articulate the needs of these Namibians who endured poverty and suffering for far too long.

We must all work together to build a better society where all Namibians can enjoy a higher quality of life. We must build a society where our children have access to quality education, where our people enjoy better health care and sanitation, housing and access to electricity.

Our Parliament should also strengthen our laws, or even enact new legislation that will make the Namibian economy more competitive in terms of attracting investments and boosting economic and commercial activities. A vibrant and growing economy will enable us to combat unemployment and poverty. I am pleased to inform Honourable Members that I signed the Appropriation Bill this week.

I hope that programmes aimed at alleviating poverty and unemployment will be implemented without delay. I thank you for passing the Appropriation Bill. I look forward to the passing of the Bill much earlier next financial year.

In conclusion I take this opportunity to commend you, our Parliamentarians for your service to our nation. I urge you to continue serving the people of Namibia with energy, dedication and commitment. With a dedicated Parliament, our democratic institutions can only grow stronger.

I thank you.