

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF AN AWARENESS
CREATION CAMPAIGN OF THE 8TH STOP CERVICAL,
BREAST AND PROSTATE CANCER IN AFRICA**

27 NOVEMBER 2013

STATE HOUSE

**Checked Against Delivery*

Director of Ceremonies,
Right Honourable Hage Geingob, Prime Minister,
Honourable Theo-Ben Gurirab, Speaker of the National Assembly,
Honourable Dr Richard Kamwi, Minister of Health and Social Services,
Madame Penehupifo Pohamba, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia,
Madam Maria da Luz Dai Guebuza, First Lady of the Republic of Mozambique
and Chairperson of the Forum of First Ladies Against Cervical Cancer in
Africa,
Distinguished Princess Nikky Onyeri, Founder and Executive Director of the
Princess Nikky Breast Cancer Foundation,
Honourable Ministers,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Honourable Governor of Khomas Region and Other Governors,
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished Representatives of UN Agencies and Development Co-operation
Partners,
Distinguished Members of the Business Community,
Esteemed Members of the Task Force for the 8th Stop Cervical, Breast and
Prostate Cancer in Africa,
Distinguished Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by welcoming you all to State House to witness the launching of the Awareness Creation Campaign of the 8th Stop Cervical, Breast and Prostate Cancer in Africa drive. This is another important milestone in the on-going efforts by the Forum of African First Ladies Against Breast and Cervical Cancer through the creation of awareness and other services.

As partners in this important initiative, African Governments, the private sector, and individuals should work hand-in-hand to combat cervical, breast and prostate Cancer in Africa.

It is encouraging that, since the hosting of the first Conference, the drive to Stop Cervical and Breast Cancer in Africa has grown from strength to strength. I am informed that during the 7th Conference in Maputo, the Forum expanded its focus to also include prostate cancer. I thank and commend our First Ladies for deciding to raise awareness about prostate cancer among men.

Director of Ceremonies,

In July 2014, our First Lady will host the 8th Conference of the Stop Cervical Breast and Prostate Cancer in Africa drive. The aim of the Conference is to continue the good work of the Forum of African First Ladies Against Breast, Cervical and Prostate Cancer and its partner institutions to create awareness about the various aspects of the treatment, management and prevention of the risks of cancer.

Preparations are already underway to enable our First Lady and indeed our country to host a successful Conference in July next year. I, therefore, call upon all Namibians to support our First Lady in this important effort.

Yes, cancer is real and it affects many women, men and children in our communities. Cancer knows no boundaries. It affects the young and the old. It is not limited by social or economic boundaries. Therefore, all of us must join hands to support those who are affected by cancer. African First Ladies have decided to lead by example. Let us support them in this endeavour.

The disease can have a tremendous impact on the sufferers, families and societies. In this context, there is a need to strengthen multi-sectoral collaboration amongst Government Offices, Ministries and Agencies, development partners, the private sector, Non-Governmental Organisations(NGOs) and the civil society as a whole. I commend all those who have supported and contributed to this noble initiative in various ways over the years. Our thoughts and our empathy are with the thousands of men and women who are afflicted by cervical, breast or prostate cancer in different parts of our continent and beyond.

At the same time, we also rejoice with many others who have undergone successful treatment to beat cancer and are today leading productive and healthy lives again. These survivors, individuals, such as Princess Nikky Onyeri, Founder and Executive Director of the Princess Nikky Breast Cancer Foundation, who is among us here this morning, represent proof that, with appropriate treatment and positive lifestyle, cancer can be overcome.

Director of Ceremonies,

Our Government is committed to the provision of accessible, affordable and quality health care services to all Namibians. As part of our health care infrastructure, we have established facilities for the treatment of cancer. Treatment for cancer is provided at the Central Hospital here in Windhoek, where we also have the Children's Cancer Ward. Next month, I will inaugurate a Nuclear Medicine Unit at Oshakati Intermediate Hospital, where cases of cancer will also be treated.

We are also committed to the creation of awareness amongst our population, so that citizens undergo regular testing to detect the development of cancer as early as possible. The incidents of cancer and cancer related deaths in Namibia are a source of great concern.

We should do more to spread the message and create awareness about the prevention and treatment of cancer and the hope that exists for those suffering from cancer to be healed and lead healthy and productive lives. This message of hope should reach all our people, here in Namibia and indeed in all other parts of this continent. In this context, special attention should be given to the low-income groups, especially in rural areas so that they can receive accurate and timely information in order to create awareness about the prevention, detection and treatment of cancer. Cancer is preventable. If it is detected early, it can be treated and cured.

As a start, our people should be encouraged to avoid exposure to the risk factors such as the abuse of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Our people should also be encouraged to take time to exercise and to visit health facilities, at least once a year, for physical check-ups.

I urge our health care workers to continue with the noble work of caring for those who are ill. Your work is a vital component in the provision of quality health care services to our people.

It is now my honour to declare the Awareness Creation Campaign for the 8th Stop Cervical, Breast and Prostate Cancer in Africa Conference officially launched.

I thank you.