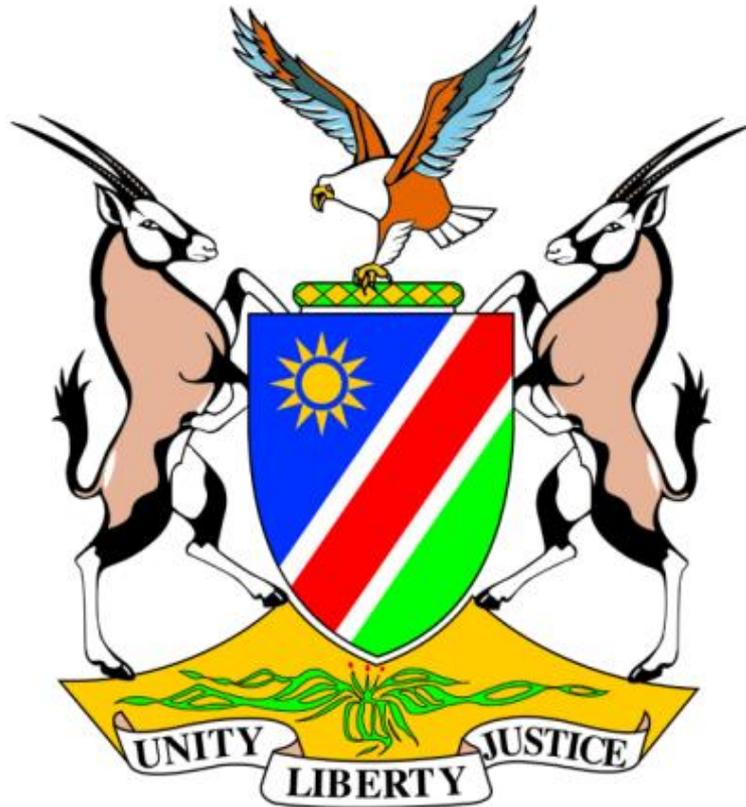


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR HAGE G. GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING TRUNK ROAD 14/2,
BETWEEN GROOTFONTEIN AND OKAMATAPATI**

APRIL 27, 2018

OTJOZONDJUPA REGION

Check against delivery

Director of Ceremonies;

**Hon. John Mutorwa, Minister of
Works and Transport;**

All other ministers present;

**Hon. Otto Ipinge, Governor of the
Otjozondjupa Region;**

**His Worship Cllr Absai Oshondadi
Haimene, Mayor of Grootfontein;**

All Councillors and Mayors Present;

**The Roads Authority Board of
Directors and Management;**

Distinguished Invited Guests;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

I am delighted and very proud to be here today, in Grootfontein, to officially open this trunk road between Grootfontein and Okamatapati. With every addition to our road network we are empowering more people by providing them with possibilities to access other parts of the country in an easier and more comfortable manner. This new infrastructure is therefore symbolic of the fact that the Namibian people and the Namibian House at large, are on the move.

Before continuing with my statement, let me take this opportunity to express gratitude for the rains that we have received across many parts of the country over the past several weeks. We have endured inconsistent rainfall over the past several years and therefore these recent good rains are a blessing for all Namibians.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The African Institute for Economic Development and Planning describes infrastructure as, “central to

economic activities and the facilitation of human development, economic growth, and productivity in industry.”

The fact that modern reliable infrastructure is condition sine qua non for high and sustained economic growth has not been lost on Government. This axiom is the reason that we prioritized infrastructure in the NDP4, and as pillar 4 in the Harambee Prosperity Plan.

We are fully aware that if we are to achieve our full economic potential as a country, we must prioritize, without delay, the upgrading of our various transport infrastructure systems. This includes the improvement of our road transportation system, through the establishment of an effective and well-integrated road network.

We have set ourselves specific targets to achieve these ambitions. For instance, one of our Harambee Period goals for infrastructure, is the extension of our bitumen roads by a distance of 526 kilometers.

The upgrading to bitumen standard of this road, which is part of the Gobabis-Otjinene-Okamatapati road, totaling 231 kilometers, is a testament of this Government's unwavering commitment to deliver on its promise to the Namibian people.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During the NDP 4 period, Government took an informed decision to position Namibia as a gateway and logistics hub into the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

region, a goal which we plan to achieve by the year 2025. Our efforts to accelerate integration across the region, as well as to buttress the facilitation of intra-African trade, depend on our ability to establish well developed and well-integrated transport infrastructure systems within our respective countries.

It is only once these requisite conditions are in place, that we will be able to effectively pursue our developmental objectives: namely, improving our economic competitiveness, facilitating

domestic, regional and international trade, as well as integrating the continent into the global economy.

This stretch of road, is therefore part of our commitment to ensure that Namibia solidifies its gateway status and establishes itself as a regional logistics hub. This route will be able to link Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana and Angola, via Namibia. It forms part of Route 301 of the SADC Regional Trunk Road Network and is therefore of national, regional and international significance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Namibians have now more access to all areas of the country, via a modern and reliable road infrastructure system. Through our ever-growing network of bitumen standard roads, we are allowing Namibians to exercise their constitutional right, which is freedom of movement, freedom of association and freedom to pursue their individual and collective ambitions.

Furthermore, by investing in our road infrastructure network, we are ensuring that the requisite condition for maintaining a conducive environment for doing business is put in place.

We should use the available infrastructure to develop ideas, transform those ideas into successful business ventures, which in turn will improve living standards across all regions. Every kilometer of road that we pave, is a step towards sustained economic growth.

A growing economy gives us more opportunity; opportunity to invest in education, health and social welfare programs, and by so doing, ensure that the needs of all Namibians are catered for.

Our road networks are enablers of people-to-people interaction, as well as accelerators for economic growth. For example, this brand-new stretch of road will provide benefits at a national and regional level. Firstly, it will help enhance trade and industry in the Otjozondjupa and Omaheke Regions.

Secondly, it will improve the safety and comfort of our road users. And thirdly, this road will help create a shorter link between the northern part of our country to Gaborone and Gauteng.

The economic spinoffs we can expect from this N\$ 684 million investment, which was fully funded by Government, are therefore manifold.

At this juncture, let me express my gratitude to all those who have made this project a reality.

Let me thank Comrade Mutorwa and his staff, as well as his predecessors, Comrades Alfeus !Naruseb and Erkki Nghimtina, for the excellent work done in spearheading our Government's infrastructure development objectives. A word of appreciation also goes to the Roads Authority for their continued implementation of our road network projects. Finally, let me thank the contractor China Henan International Cooperation Limited, the consultant WML Element and Bicon Joint Venture, and all the workers, whose

dedication has brought this project to fruition.

As we anticipate the many opportunities that this road will bring, I recall the rallying words of President Kwame Nkrumah who said, "We have the blessing of the wealth of our vast resources, the power of our talents and the potentialities of our people. Let us grasp now the opportunities before us and meet the challenge to our survival."

Namibia is a country endowed with natural resources, with the power of our talents and with the potentialities of our people. Let us grasp the opportunities that our roads provide and meet the challenge of our survival. Together, united in purpose, we can reach our destination of prosperity, one road at a time.

It now gives me great pleasure to proceed with the opening of the Grootfontein - Okamatapati road.

I thank you.