

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**REMARKS BY H. E. DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE RENAMING OF
UNAM THE HEALTH SCIENCES CAMPUS TO
THE HAGE G GEINGOB CAMPUS**

9 MAY 2018

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

WINDHOEK

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Director of Ceremonies;

Professor Lazarus Hangula, Vice Chancellor of the University of Namibia;

Mr. Sam Shivute, Chairperson of the University of Namibia Council;

Dr. Kalumbi Shangula, Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor, Hage Geingob Campus;

Professor Peter Nyarango, Dean of Health Sciences;

Distinguished guests;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen

I am pleased to be here this morning, at this high center of learning to partake in the renaming ceremony of the University of Namibia Health Sciences Campus to the Hage G Geingob Campus. This occasion, in the week of 12 May 2018, which is International Nurses Day, is fitting to congratulate our nurses for

the extraordinary work they carry out in keeping our nation healthy. Nurses put in long hours, and usually under difficult circumstances. Their dedication and devotion to fellow human beings is exemplary. They deserve our praise and encouragement.

In the Principles of its Constitution, the World Health Organization defines health as, “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” For our shared future prosperity, I envisage a Namibian House in which all citizens will enjoy, physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It is why I am honoured to have this Health Sciences Campus named after me, in the knowledge

that this institution will play a major role in spearheading the pursuit of the ambition of health for all.

Last month, while addressing the Malaria Summit on the sidelines of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London, I stressed that the people of Namibia subscribe to the belief that a healthy nation is a productive nation, and an investment in the health sector is an investment in the future of a country.

The point I made is corroborated by the fact that in calculating the Global Competitiveness Index, the Davos-based World Economic Forum places health as one of the main evaluative pillars alongside institutions,

infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, education, labour efficiency and market size. In fact, the World Economic Forum argues that the health of a nation is an indispensable component in terms of economic development and competitiveness. Our economic performance as a nation is tied to our performance in the health sector.

It gives me great pleasure to say that this Campus, an important investment in our health sector, will have an integral role to play in the future of our Namibian House. Our students, who will pursue respective disciplines in the Health Sciences, are preparing to establish themselves as the guardians of our national wellbeing and

vitality. But more important, they are enablers of economic productivity and global competitiveness of our country.

The people of our land tasked me with the mission of creating conditions for a new era of shared prosperity for the residents of the Namibian House. I take that noble, but difficult mission seriously, and place a high premium on the health of our people as a precondition for our shared prosperity.

It is for this reason that specific health related objectives and targets have been included in the 5th National Development Plan (NDP5), as well as the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP).

In the Harambee Prosperity Plan, we have identified the reduction of infant mortality as a priority under the pillar on Social Progression. Identification and training of community health workers and midwives is one of several strategies and actions we aim to deploy in order to mitigate the risks of infant mortality. This campus, which aims to train our future health practitioners and workers, able to provide expertise in health care systems, must play an important role in pursuit of our strategies and objectives. Our students graduating from this campus will help us to meet our objective of ensuring that no mother in the Namibian House should lose her life while giving birth.

Our aim is clear, and that is to improve the health levels of all Namibians through strengthening our health care processes, systems and institutions. In NDP 5, we have expressed our desire to ensure that all Namibians will have access to quality health care and that by 2022, the Health Adjusted Life Expectancy (HALE) in Namibia will increase to 67.5 years, from the current age of 59 years.

At present, it is concerning to note that the health consciousness amongst our people is very low. There is little attention given to physical exercise and wellbeing, while alcohol and drug abuse continue to burden our society. Furthermore, we have noticed a rise

in incidences of communicable diseases as is evident by the recent Hepatitis-E outbreak.

It is pertinent that we improve our health awareness nationwide and also clean up the immediate and surrounding environments in which we live. This is why I am launching the Clean-Up Campaign on 25th May 2018 under the theme, '*A clean environment for a healthier nation*' to improve on the hygienic conditions in which we live and thereby safeguard the health of our communities.

Since attaining independence, we have put in place a well-functioning and robust Governance Architecture, as well as a stable Macro- Economic Architecture. Our task now, is to ensure that we develop our Socio-

Economic Architecture by eliminating all inherited deficiencies. The strengthening of our health sector, which is a cornerstone in the foundation of any successful nation, remains one of our top priorities.

Permit me to say that, this is a University campus with a special vocation to educate and to conduct research. The Campus of a University ought to give concrete expression to what the Dutch Philosopher and great Educator, Erasmus would say: "we are not born human beings, we become human beings". To become human beings, we must cultivate ourselves, and we must educate ourselves.

Here, on this University campus, all of that should happen, so that you can become exemplary citizens of this country and of the world.

Director of Ceremonies,

With these words, it is my honour and privilege to accept the renaming of the Health Sciences Campus to the Hage G. Geingob Campus. I aim to be an inspiration to the students of this institution. They should rise to become exemplary healthcare professionals, model citizens of the Namibian House, the New Africa and the world at large.

I thank you.