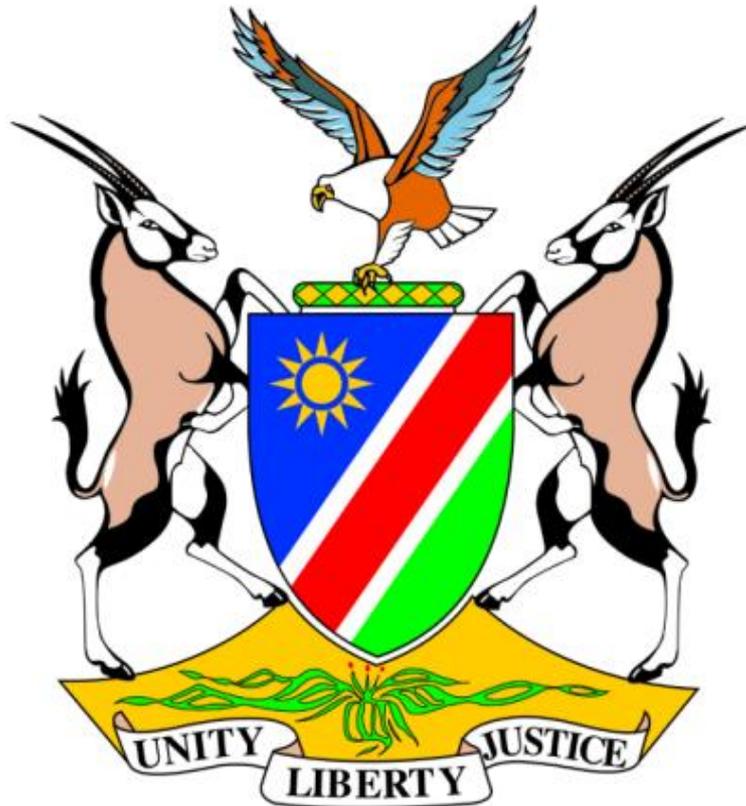


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR HAGE G. GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 11TH EENHANA EXPO**

AUGUST 1, 2018

EENHANA

OHANGWENA REGION

Check against delivery

Director of Ceremonies;
Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers in attendance;
Honourable Usko Nghaamwa – Governor of the Ohangwena;
His Worship Amos Nangolo – Mayor of Eenhana Town
Distinguished guests;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and gentlemen

I am pleased to be with you today at the opening of the 11th installment of the Eenhana Expo. At the outset, I would like to commend all those who have worked hard to organize this event. You have yet again proven the power of the *Harambee* spirit. By holding hands and pulling in one direction, we can achieve great results.

The Town of Eenhana and the Expo have experienced a remarkable upsurge in growth and development over the past several years. It is unbelievable that a mere eight years ago in 2010, we were here to turn the soil in order to mark the commencement of the Eenhana Convention City, a center that would, in future host the Eenhana Expo. The fact that so much progress has taken place over such a very short period of time speaks to the hard-work, dedication and commitment of the people of Eenhana and the Ohangwena Region as a whole.

According to Paul Woodward, the Managing Director for the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, "Exhibitions are an enormously important part of the marketing activities of most types of business". He further postulates that it ranges from the largest multinationals to small family businesses. Research confirms that opportunities to get face-to-face with customers and potential future clients remain an incredibly valuable tool for developing new business".

The Eenhana Expo indeed offers a unique opportunity for businesses in the region and beyond, to showcase their products and services for domestic and global acceptance and competitiveness. The Eenhana expo possess tremendous potential to spur greater trade and investments that are crucial for job creation and sustained economic growth. We must, therefore, continue to work hand in hand to support Expos and Trade Fairs, to become vehicles for investment and business promotion.

We are in full support of initiatives such as the Eenhana Expo, as well as other efforts that are aimed at promoting the development of our local economies. It is because of this reason that in 2010, an amount of N\$ 4 million was allocated towards the construction of Phase One of the Eenhana Convention City, the venue we are gathered in today.

It is a fact that businesses in Namibia, are competing with business within the global economy. Competition is a reality of our times. We cannot shun it or hide from it. In today's world, people and markets have greater options to choose from when it comes to investment. It is, therefore, imperative for countries and companies to achieve a competitive position amongst their peers.

To remain competitive within the modern day global economy, as a country and as a continent, we have to increase our efforts towards the pursuit and promotion of regional value chains. This in turn will spur intra-African Trade, which is currently taking place at low levels. Development without industrialisation it not possible. That is why I always say that, "Africa is rich, but Africans are poor." Our continent is endowed with an abundance of natural and mineral resources. However the proceeds from the exploitation of these resources do not trickle down to our people. A large part of our people still find themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty, unemployment and other adverse conditions.

Director of Ceremonies,

Instead of looking abroad for solutions to our economic problems, Africa should look within, to find effective ways of engaging on pertinent topics that will propel the industrialisation of our continent. We must take advantage of our respective comparative advantages. Many of you are aware that during the 31st Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, which took place one month ago, Namibia signed the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

This envisaged continental free trade arrangement aims to achieve among others the following objectives:

- Create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments, and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Continental Customs Union and the African customs union.
- Expand intra African trade through better harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation regimes and instruments across Regional Economic Blocs and across Africa in general.
- Resolve the challenges of multiple and overlapping memberships and expedite the regional and continental integration processes.
- Enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level through exploiting

opportunities for scale production, continental market access and better reallocation of resources.

Free trade is the reality of our times. We have to compete, and we have to do business with the rest of Africa. Through deeper integration our business people will have access to larger markets and more clientele. Government will continue to pursue all efforts, to maintain a conducive business environment. It is our hope, that this in turn will investment in manufacturing ventures in order to strengthen the industrial base of our economy. By broadening our country's industrial base, we can facilitate the transfer of valuable skills and appropriate technology. This is vital in creating a sustainable economic base needed for the achievement of global competitiveness and our national development.

Government alone cannot achieve the overall goal of national development without the support of the private sector and in fact, all the citizens of our country. Each one of us must do their part in contributing to the growth and development of the country. It is no secret that we are facing economic headwinds due to the global economic slowdown, but positive forecasts indicate that there is a bright light within and at the end of the tunnel.

Let us take encouragement from this positive economic outlook and try by all means not to slip back into trouble. Everything happens for a reason. The recent economic woes have taught us to appreciate what we have. It also taught us to ensure that we need to work hard to maintain it. Let us therefore hold hands and fight corruption on all fronts, ensuring that those eligible to pay taxes are doing so and that those that are responsible for delivering services do so efficiently and effectively. Of equal importance is the fact that we should no longer tolerate waste, and that applies to the Public and Private sector.

There are several efforts being put in place to ensure that we achieve optimum national growth and development. Apart from the National Development Plans, we have adopted the Harambee Prosperity Plan, as a short term acceleration plan. We are hard at work making sure that we achieve our targets within the set period of time.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Eenhana Expo is commendable because it meets us halfway in addressing the issues of economic advancement, employment creation as well as poverty eradication. I have no doubt that this Expo will enable participants to engage in business-to-

business discussions with the right people and explore the best possible ways to tap into the opportunities available for investment and business within this region.

As you engage in discussions, it is important to take cognizance of the fact that one of the primary functions of promoting business and investment in Namibia is to tackle the scourge of high-income inequality. As Nobel Laureate Prof. Joseph Stiglitz famously remarked, "growth that is not shared will not be sustainable". Therefore, for trade and investment to grow and remain sustainable, it must also be shared.

In conclusion, I wish to leave all of our participating entrepreneurs and business promoters with some food for thought from Entrepreneur Strive Masiyiwa who said, "A vision on its own is not enough. Hard work and dedication is required to make that vision a reality." Hard work and dedication have resulted in the realization of the Eenhana Expo. Hard work and dedication will result in the realization of other business ideas. Let us join hands and make a commitment towards hard work and dedication, in order to realize the vision of a Namibia characterized by consistent economic growth and a shared prosperity. Together, we will arrive at our destination, one step at a time.

I now have the pleasure to declare the 11th Eenhana Expo "Officially Open."

I thank you.