

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G.
GEINGOB, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
NAMIBIA AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 73rd
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

SEPTEMBER 26, 2018

NEW YORK

Your Excellency, Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly;

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;

Your Excellency, Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Madam President,

I wish to congratulate you and your country, the Republic of Ecuador, on your election as President of the 73rd Session of this August Assembly. You have already demonstrated that you possess the requisite wisdom and experience to steer our proceedings successfully. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I wish to also take this opportunity, to express Namibia's profound gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, for his sterling stewardship of our Organization's work during his tenure as the President of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly. Let me also commend the Secretary General for a lucid Report on the Work of the Organization.

Madam President,

On July 21, 2018, the people of Namibia and our friends around the world laid to rest our first Foreign Minister, the Honourable Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab. He represented our liberation

movement, SWAPO, here at the United Nations for over 15 years. It was under his able stewardship that the United Nations adopted the Millennium Development Goals, the precursors to the Sustainable Development Goals, during his Presidency of the 54th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The family of Dr. Gurirab, the Government and people of the Republic of Namibia, have been deeply touched by the outpouring of condolences and sympathies following his death. For this, we are deeply grateful and appreciative of the memorial service held in his honor in this hall.

Similarly, a few days ago, in this very hall, we gathered to pay tribute to a revered personality and architect of peace, Dr. Koffi Anan, the 7th Secretary General of this Organization. An individual of great stature, who dedicated his entire adult life "to prevent conflict amongst Member States, while at the same time maintaining and preserving peace and security".

May the souls of these distinguished Sons of Africa and the UN, rest in eternal peace. As Member States, may our unity of action and purpose for a common resolve "to serving our people", for which they stood for, continue to prevail.

Madam President,

MULTILATERALISM

The theme of the 73rd Session entitled: *"Making the United Nations relevant to all people: Global leadership and shared responsibilities for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies"*; is apt given the current milieu in which we find ourselves. Multilateralism as we know it, is being put to the test. In today's world, with increasing and complex security and development challenges, multilateralism is the only viable option to safeguard the future of humanity. I therefore agree with the Secretary General's sentiments as contained in his "Report on the Work of the Organization" that, and I quote, "As today's problems grow ever more global, multilateralism is more important than ever".

STRIVING TO ACHIEVE THE SDGS

The Republic of Namibia is founded upon the principles of democracy, the rule of law and justice for all. The fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in our Constitution include virtually all the rights and fundamental freedoms recognized in the main international human rights instruments. However, these instruments in themselves are not sufficient to bring about sustainable development. More so, because of the socio-economic challenges we continue to grapple with, and which in turn affect implementation of the SDGs.

Namibia recognizes that there are existing and emerging threats and challenges that continue to frustrate our individual and collective efforts to achieve greater economic development and social progress. To this end, Namibia has embraced sustainable development as its development approach and is fully committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its principles, goals, targets and indicators. As a matter of fact, Namibia has integrated all 17 Goals and their targets in its National Development Plans, including its Harambee Prosperity

Plan and the Growth at Home blueprints, conceived a few years ago. As the Secretary General rightly pointed out in his Report on the Work of the Organization, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – an integrated and universal framework – is our contribution for international peaceful co-existence that leaves no one behind.

Hence, as a dry and arid country, often affected by seasonal droughts and floods for extended periods, as a consequence of climate induced factors, we have stepped up our efforts to implement the SDGs in critical areas, such as energy, water and terrestrial ecosystems. Namibia would certainly wish to benefit from the assistance rendered through the "Technology Bank established in Istanbul, on 4 June 2018, in order to enable it to timeously identify the spatial locations of drought and floods areas.

In July this year, Namibia presented its Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the SDGs. This was Namibia's first opportunity to present, on a world-stage, the progress our country has made in implementing the 2030 Agenda as complemented by the AU Agenda 2063, in pursuance of the objective of the "Africa We Want".

While Namibia has seen sustained economic growth over much of the last ten years, our level of unemployment regrettably remains high. Nevertheless, Namibia has observed one of the fastest reductions of poverty levels in our region over the last 10 years – from 28.8% to 17.4%. I am also happy to inform that life expectancy in Namibia has risen from 58 to 65 years. Child mortality, however, still remains a challenge.

In our pursuit to create favorable conditions to fight poverty, as well as to maintain peace and stability in general, Namibia will hold her 2nd Land Conference from 1 to 5 October 2018. In preparation of the Conference, the Government contacted consultations in all our 14 Regions, so as to have an inclusive and consultative process. We call on our development partners to support the outcome of this Conference, so as to continue to assist Namibia and complete our transformation process.

Madame President,

UPPER-MIDDLE INCOME STATUS

Madame President, I have stated before that Namibia's classification, as an Upper-Middle Income nation is negatively impacting its taxonomy, since this prevents us from accessing, not only the globally reduced Official Development Assistance (ODA), but also affordable and concessional finance. The situation has the potential to jeopardize efforts in Namibia and other developing countries to fully achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Therefore, it is pertinent that we avoid pursuing solutions that might create additional layers of inequality, be it in the areas of ICT or financing, thus regressing socio-economic gains made by countries in a similar situation.

I call upon our development partners to ensure that their commitments on ODA are fulfilled and that foreign direct investment inflows and, technology transfers on mutually agreed terms are

increased. Let us enhance cooperation to curb illicit financial flows, tax evasion and avoidance and, corruption through the strict implementation of the available international instruments.

Madam President,

ENDORISING THE CALL TO END TUBERCULOSIS (TB) ENDEMIC IN THE WORLD

Namibia endorses the call to end tuberculosis endemic in the world and reaffirms her commitment to unite with the world in achieving this world. With a population of approximately 2.5 million, Namibia ranks the 9th highest affected, and TB is one of the top three causes of hospitalization. My Government has demonstrated its commitment to address TB by including a component of the 5th National development Plan, and also by ensuring that 70% of available financing for TB, comes from domestic resources. Notwithstanding, Namibia faces challenges such as in adequate human and financial resources, high levels of poverty, and lack of services in rural areas. As current chair of SADC, our region reaffirms its commitment to the Declaration through the Harmonized Surveillance Framework for HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and malaria, and resolve to join the global community in the fight TB.

Madam President,

SADC AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Africa has the fastest growing youth population. In my capacity as Chairperson of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), I wish to inform you that SADC has an Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap 2015 to 2063, which seeks to achieve economic and technological transformation in the region, in line with the AU Agenda 2063. In this context, the 38th SADC Summit, which took place in August 2018, in Windhoek, Namibia, adopted the theme, "Promoting Infrastructure Development and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development". This was with a view that the Region will continue on the path of industrialization through infrastructure development and youth empowerment.

In SADC, we are convinced that the youth is indeed the future driver of our economies, and as such, the youth need to be empowered through harnessing of skills, and entrepreneurship development in order to drive economic development, thus contributing to industrialization, through innovation.

The youth of the SADC region, like their counterparts elsewhere in the world, are yearning for a better future; a future in which job creation and employment opportunities are assured; a future in which they will be given opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic development of their respective countries. It is time for us to ensure that we open the doors to a brighter future for our world's youth.

GENDER EQUALITY

Let me emphasize that excluding women from certain spheres of life is to put to waste skills and expertise that can contribute to sustainable development. In this context, we applaud the Secretary General for exercising leadership and thus reaching gender parity amongst senior management and Resident Coordinators. Gender equality continues to be a priority for Namibia. To quote the late Secretary General Kofi Annan, "Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance".

Let us ensure that this vital precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance becomes a mainstay of modern-day and future global governance.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM

While we commend the Secretary General for his successful reform initiatives, the same cannot be said about our intergovernmental negotiation process on the reform of the UN Security Council.

I need not remind this August Assembly of the historic pledge we all made during the World Summit held in 2005; a pledge "to strengthen the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency" and, to "address effectively ... the full range of challenges of our

time." These commitments, I want to emphasize again can only be ensured through genuine global leadership and shared responsibility.

In this regard, it is pertinent to demonstrate the political will of the entire UN Membership to redress the historical injustice imposed upon the African continent through a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. Africa's right to have an equal say in decision-making on issues that affects the African region and the world at large should be respected. It is equally time that Africa's contribution to peace and security on its own soil and the world by extension, including through the blood of its own peacekeepers, is recognized as fundamental contribution to peace.

In this regard, Namibia is certainly supportive of the Secretary General's Action for Peace-keeping Initiative, including the overall objectives thereof, predicated on enhancing the peace-keeping and peace-building gains made over the last 70 years.

Madame President,

DISARMAMENT

Before I conclude, let me state that Namibia believes in the non-selective implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as key to disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Therefore, Namibia's continued support for the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion of 1996, which inter alia states, "that the threat, or threat of use of

nuclear weapons is contrary to the rules of international law on armed conflicts, and violates the principles and rules of international humanitarian law”.

We remain very concerned over the difficult and complex situation in the field of disarmament and international security. Small arms and light weapons have moved from battlefields into the streets, into the homes and schools, culminating in increased gender-based violence of proportions never seen before. We therefore commend the Secretary General’s all-inclusive Disarmament Agenda, launched in May this year, and applaud him for having established a clear link between small arms and light weapons, and gender based violence. Furthermore, just as we emphasized nuclear disarmament, so to we must call for conventional disarmament.

PEACE AND SECURITY

For Africa and, the rest of the developing world, peace is the main foundation and guarantor for sustainable economic growth and development. As global leaders, together with the citizenry of the great African continent, we need to understand that it is our collective responsibility to maintain peace in order to enable Africa to unlock its full potential.

In this context, we commend His Excellency Abiy Ahmed, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and his Eritrean counterpart, His Excellency President Isaias Afwerki for signing an agreement to end the war between their two countries and the subsequent resumption of diplomatic and trade ties. I am confident that this spirit of unity, peace and security, as embodied in the AU Agenda 2063, would be transplanted throughout the Horn of Africa.

On Monday, we celebrated one of icons of the struggle for African Independence; Nelson Mandela. The man we know as Madiba once said, "As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest".

As a people who have known the pain of poverty, injustice and gross inequality, we cannot truly rest until we witness the implementation of all relevant UN resolutions and decisions, which will lead to a positive, peaceful and permanent solution that meets the aspirations and will of the people of Western Sahara. We cannot truly rest until the people of the Occupied Territory of Palestine are allowed to pursue their inalienable right to self-determination, justice, freedom and independence, through political, diplomatic, peaceful and non-violent means. We cannot truly rest until the US administration lifts the decade's old, outdated, ineffective and counterproductive economic and financial embargo of Cuba.

The time is now, for all of us, to demonstrate the leadership required to bring prosperity and peace to all the world's people. It is time to lead in the spirit of peace, in the spirit of equality and in the spirit of sustainability. It is time to make the United Nations relevant to all the world's people. Let us take up the challenge.

I thank you.