

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY DR HAGE G. GEINGOB,

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**AT THE NEW YEAR GREETINGS TO THE DIPLOMATIC
CORPS**

STATE HOUSE

FEBRUARY 22, 2019

WINDHOEK

Check against delivery

Director of proceedings;

Comrade Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President of the Republic of Namibia and Madame Mbumba;

Right Honorable Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia and Mr. Amadhila;

The Father of the Namibian Revolution and Father of the Namibian Nation, Comrade Dr. Sam Shaafishuna Nujoma;

The Second President of the Republic of Namibia, Comrade Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba and Madam Pohamba;

Honorable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and Lieutenant General (Rtd) Epaphras Denga Ndaitwah;

Your Lordship Peter Shivute, Chief Justice and Judge Shivute;

Madame Monica Geingos, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia;

Honorable Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers;

Your Excellency, Anastas Kaboba K. Wa-Kimba , Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Honorable Sophia Shaningwa, Secretary General of the SWAPO Party;

Members of Parliament;

Honorable Laura Mcleod-Katjirua, Governor of the Khomas Region;

Your Worship Muesee Kazapua, Mayor of the City of Windhoek;

Distinguished Service Chiefs;

Special Invited Guests;

Senior Government Officials;

Members of the Media

The First Lady and I, wish to extend a warm welcome to all of you present here at State House this evening. We wish you all, as well as your families, a healthy, happy and productive New Year. We look forward to working with you in further enhancing the excellent relations between Namibia and your respective countries and organizations.

Let me extend a special welcome to those Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Heads of Regional and international organizations who were recently accredited to Namibia. I am sure each one of you is eager to make your diplomatic tour a resounding success by enhancing relations and cooperation with Namibia. Rest assured, we share the same eagerness to work with you.

I also wish, through you, to convey the best wishes to your Heads of State and Government. In the words of Athenian Philosopher Plato, "The beginning is the most important part of the work." On that account, I am confident that tonight's gathering will provide a perfect setting for us to begin this year's work in earnest and on the right note.

Excellencies

Distinguished Representatives,

Namibia's democracy is defined by a legacy of solid and visionary leadership, beginning with the Founding Father of the Nation, Comrade Sam Nujoma, the harbinger of independence and subsequent peace. He was followed by Comrade Hifikepunye

Pohamba, an icon of our struggle for independence, who brought stability and consolidated our hard earned gains. 4 years ago, I was tasked to continue this legacy and usher in an era of prosperity. The attainment of prosperity is the collective ambition of the Namibian people to improve their living conditions and aspire towards economic emancipation. This is not a unique situation, instead, it is an innate characteristic of the human spirit, aptly articulated by Marcus Garvey who said, "Ambition is the desire to go forward and improve one's condition. It is a burning flame that lights up the life of the individual and makes him see himself in another state."

Namibians fought bravely for their independence and navigated the first phase of the struggle, with the help of the international community. We were driven by ambition; determined to go forward and improve our condition as people. We envisioned a better state of existence, removed from the inhumane conditions of Apartheid brutality and living as free and independent people. For that we were prepared to pay the ultimate price.

Today, we are in the midst of the second phase of the struggle, keen to go forward and improve our lives economically. From the onset, we were cognizant that this phase of the struggle would be completely different in characteristic to the first phase. It is for this reason that one of the gallant

sons of Namibia, the late Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo, pronounced, "The struggle to develop Namibia and to share its wealth among all the people will take longer than the political struggle..."

With this in mind and with cognizance of the challenge that lies ahead, I developed the concept of yearly themes, to act as motivators that will initiate, guide and maintain momentum in our quest to attain the goal of prosperity. In 2015, we had the Year of Planning, during which I undertook the task of visiting all 14 regions to listen to the needs of the people. In 2016, we had the Year of Implementation where we launched the Harambee Prosperity Plan, a targeted intervention to address the problems that were highlighted during our

regional consultations. In 2017 we had the Year of Re-dedication, where we endeavoured to galvanise all Namibians into intensifying efforts towards the attainment of our developmental objectives. In 2018 we had the Year of Reckoning, where I called on Namibians to improve efforts to deliver on the promise of prosperity, without any exceptions. This year, 2019, is the Year of Accountability.

This is the year in which all three organs of state will account to the people for the work carried out over the past several years. Accountability is an integral part of governance, whether at the national or global level. Thus, in the arena of international diplomacy, we should similarly account to our respective people, on how

our relations and cooperation has improved their lives and well-being.

We should ensure that the conclusion of our bilateral and multilateral instruments should lead to tangible results and play a direct role in the improvement of the living conditions of our people. As diplomats, you have an important role to play in bringing about conducive conditions that will facilitate the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. We are ready to work with you in this regard.

Your Excellencies

Distinguished Representatives,

Enhancement of bilateral, political and economic relations will create opportunities

to further advance infrastructure development, promote joint ventures and expand cooperation in the areas of trade, culture, science and technology, as well as people to people contact. To this end, it is vital that we keep promoting new bilateral cooperation between our nations.

Our cooperation should always be people centered, with specific focus on the youth. It is the resourcefulness of this demographic group that informed the choice of theme for the 38th SADC Summit. Our objective is to tap into the potential of youth to contribute to sustainable development in our region and beyond. Like other SADC member states, we are convinced that, where there is inclusive prosperity and development, there is peace and harmony. Where there is

poverty, hunger and deprivation, there will be conflict, displacement and subsequently migration. The SADC theme is therefore, among others a remedy to the challenge that was recently discussed at the AU Summit as well as the challenge of migration.

It is important that at both national and international levels, we honor the commitments we have made in order to remain accountable to the people, as enshrined in the UN Charter, which we all have subscribed to. In this context, we take note with concern the deteriorating peace and security situation around the world. Let me reiterate my sentiment that wherever you have a group of people that feel excluded, you will have the potential for

unrest. Through the promotion and practice of inclusivity, transparency and accountability, we can bring about a peaceful, less ignorant and more tolerant coexistence in our world.

At this juncture, I wish to stress that our commitment to the value of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law will continue to shape our policy on international relations and cooperation. Namibia therefore strongly believes that dialogue is the key to promoting peace and stability within and among nations. It is in this context that we continue to play an active role in maintaining international peace and security. The Women Peace and Security meeting to be held in Windhoek in April is a reflection of this commitment.

Your Excellencies

Distinguished Representatives,

Since this year, we will be commemorating the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first African slaves in the Americas, let me conclude by quoting one of the foremost civil rights activists and proponent of Pan Africanism, W.E.B Du Bois, who said, “Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season. It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year”.

Now is the accepted time for peace – Now is the accepted time for unity – Now is the accepted time for prosperity. Let us seize the day and do our best work now and not some future day or future year.

With these words I once again wish you all a prosperous New Year.

I thank you.