

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR HAGE G. GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
AT THE OPENING OF THE ONGWEDIVA ANNUAL TRADE FAIR**

AUGUST 24, 2019

ONGWEDIVA

OSHANA REGION

Check against delivery

Director of Proceedings;

**Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers
present;**

**Honourable Elia Kaulifengwa Irimari - Governor
of the Oshana Region and other Governors
present;**

All Traditional Authority leaders present;

**Your Worship Angelina Angula, Mayor of
Ongwediva;**

**Chairpersons and Mayors of various Local
Authorities present;**

Regional and Local Authority Councillors present;

Captains of Industry;

Distinguished invited guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure to visit Ongwediva once more, to partake in an event that has become synonymous with excellence and prestige. Just over a fortnight ago, I was at this splendid venue, to conduct my Town Hall meeting for the Oshana Region, where I interacted with the citizens of this great region. I am delighted to return and officiate at this annual showcase, which continues to contribute immensely to the economy of this region.

This year is the 20th Edition of this exhibition, whose theme, "Fostering Economic Growth through Innovation", could not be more apt, given the fact that economic growth and innovation is the focus at continental, regional and local level.

Government understands that the Private Sector is the primary driver of the creative and innovative capacity needed to support and drive

sustainable, inclusive, job-led growth and development. Government's role, on the other hand, is to create an enabling environment which allows the Private Sector to function efficiently and effectively as possible.

One of our desired outcomes under the Harambee Prosperity Plan, pillar of Economic Advancement, is to significantly increase the volume of locally produced goods supplied to the public and retail sectors. The recently concluded Economic Growth Summit, an initiative of Government, through the High-Level Panel on the Economy, has not only succeeded in mobilizing investments in key sectors of the Namibian Economy, but has equally developed a road map for inclusive growth, in order to strengthen the Namibian House.

I am confident that many of the exhibitors present at this year's Trade Fair are not only here

to market their products, but also keen to build business ties and gain insights into trends, technologies and innovations on the market, that will enable them to develop the requisite capabilities, to drive the economic advancement of our country. Trade Fairs and Expo's throughout the country should thus play a leading role in promoting diverse products and also focus on bringing onboard exhibitions in key and strategic sectors of our economy.

Furthermore, the Ongwediva Trade Fair has become a primary platform for our established and fledgling companies to broaden their appeal, locally, regionally and internationally, thereby increasing the brand appeal of our Small and Medium Sized Enterprises. This is crucial, given our "Growth At Home" strategy, as well as extending our national capability and scope to increase investments in more diverse economic sectors. SME development programs, agricultural

production, investment in renewable energy, value addition to our resources, services, manufacturing and applied ICT, should be our primary focal areas.

As a matter of fact, following the adoption of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) during the AU Extraordinary Summit in Niger during July 2019, our companies stand to benefit from the expected high returns that will come as a result of increased intra-African trade. According to trade experts, the AfCFTA will enable producers to access a market of close to 1.27 billion people which will also stimulate long-term and large –scale investments.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In order to foster economic growth through innovation, it is paramount that Namibia prepares itself for, and embraces the advent of

the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR). As a country, we should lay the groundwork, both at Public and Private Sector level, to harness the vast potential offered by technologies such as 3D printing, the Internet of Things, Big Data Analysis, robotics and cloud computing. We should also take cognisance of the fact that new technologies will lead to an increase in the competition between human beings and machines. Thus, this is the reality of the future and we must adapt or find ourselves permanently left behind.

In light of these facts, I wish to urge the organizers of our exhibitions, to increase the prevalence of various technologies at our national trade fairs, to act as a precursor to our national efforts to modernize our economy through the adoption of 21st Century technologies.

Consistent improvements in exhibitions is a strong marketing narrative that presents opportunities for growth and advancement. Improvement in exhibitions is not limited to the quality of exhibition-stands but in the contents on display, that includes marketing material and after sales services. I would therefore like to urge all participants and exhibitors to capitalize on these platforms and strive for improvement in exhibitions and service excellence.

To this extent, I wish to reaffirm Government's continued support for the Ongwediva Trade Fair, to continue the rapid level of growth it has undergone over the past two decades, as well as increase its appeal as one of the most significant trade and business platforms in Namibia and the region at large. It is my hope, that in the near future, the Ongwediva Trade Fair, will become a regional and international business showpiece.

In order to achieve this, we must hold hands and pull in one direction; one direction for Ongwediva; one direction for Oshana and one direction for Namibia. As Former President Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba said, “Namibia is my country. Namibia is your country. Let each and every one of us make a positive contribution to the development of our beautiful country”. I agree with him fully. Namibia is the only place we can call “Home”.

I therefore thank all stakeholders, who have worked together, in true Harambee spirit, to ensure that the Ongwediva Trade Fair, continues to make a positive contribution to the development of our beautiful country.

With these words, it is now my distinct pleasure to declare the 2019 Ongwediva Trade Fair, officially open. I wish you all good business.

I thank you.