

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,  
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 74<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**SEPTEMBER 25, 2019**

**NEW YORK**

**Your Excellency, Professor Tjijani Muhammad Bande, President of the 74th 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;**

**We are gathered as leaders of the global community, as we have been doing for the passed 74 years, since inception at San Francisco. The United Nations has been the beacon of hope for those who yearn for freedom, independence, peace, decent livelihood and dignified life. It has been a daunting task to deliver on the hopes of all the worlds people and although there have been shortcomings; we have averted returning to the**

**darkness that necessitated the birth of this organisation. Through multilateralism, we have consistently steered the world away from the precipice of calamity, by placing a premium on peace.**

**Peace is a deep-rooted commitment to the principles of liberty, justice, equality and solidarity among all human beings.**

**Peace is also a harmonious partnership of humankind with the environment.**

**These statements emanate from '*The International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men*', held on the initiative of UNESCO, over thirty years ago, when the people of the world anticipated a 21<sup>st</sup> Century, in which the ethos of international solidarity and harmony would reach a crowning moment.**

**Today, as we debate our theme, “Galvanizing multilateral efforts for poverty eradication, quality education, climate action and inclusion”, there is need for introspection. Considering the realities of the world today, we must ask ourselves – Can we eradicate poverty without peace? Can we act consequentially on climate change and achieve socio-economic inclusion, without peace? We must ponder these burning questions as we look ahead to celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our organization, next year.**

**Mr. President,**

**You hail from a sisterly country whose principled and generous contribution to Africa’s decolonization process is unquestionable. I extend congratulations to you and your country, the**

**Federal Republic of Nigeria, on your unanimous election as President of the 74<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly. I assure you of Namibia's support and cooperation during your tenure.**

**I also express Namibia's appreciation to your predecessor, Her Excellency Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, for her sterling stewardship of our organization's work during her tenure.**

**Mr. Secretary General,**

**I wish to commend you for your sterling stewardship of our organization, which under your able leadership, continues to be at the forefront of safeguarding the welfare and security of the people and nations of the world.**

**Your detailed report on the progress towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development**

**Goals indicates that worldwide, poverty is still on the rise, compounded by multiple factors including, natural disasters. This places under threat the, economies of our nations and jeopardizes the aspirations of developing nations, exacerbating inequalities and plunging our people further into poverty and despair.**

**Despite these realities, Namibia is making inroads in eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities in income and wealth. Our Government allocates a high percentage of resources to the social sectors, including universal access to education and a highly subsidized healthcare system, with the aim to reverse the effects of the skewed economy.**

**These investments have attained a measure of success. Within a period of 22 years, poverty in Namibia has declined from a 70 percent baseline,**

**down to 18 percent by 2016, lifting more than 400,000 members of our population out of poverty since independence.**

**According to the June 2017 World Bank Report, Namibia's gradual decline in poverty is attributable to a targeted policy framework that includes "a well-developed programme of cash transfers to vulnerable segments of the population". The administration of social safety nets has been a cornerstone in our multi-pronged fight against poverty.**

**Namibia remains among the most unequal societies in the world, attesting to the deeply embedded structural nature of our problem. The status quo is not sustainable and Namibia is taking steps to build a more inclusive society.**

**At this juncture, let me draw attention to the difficult situation that so-called “upper middle-income countries” like Namibia find themselves in. We have maintained that while the concept of upper middle-income countries is valid, it’s application, which takes our GDP and divides it by our small population, thus deriving a high per capita income, is a flawed formula and requires urgent reconsideration.**

**Mr. President,**

**The year 2019 has brought the reality of climate change to the shores of every continent. We have witnessed numerous weather phenomena globally, which have caused immense destruction and human suffering. We extend our solidarity to all people whose lives have been upended by these adverse weather phenomena.**

**Currently, Namibia is under a state of emergency due to a severe, widespread and prolonged period of drought, with adverse effect on the livelihoods of our people. This vulnerability poses a major obstacle in achieving Agenda 2030.**

**With this in mind, Namibia reiterates her commitment to the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR), should guide our commitment to tackling the global environmental challenges.**

**Mr. President,**

**In the quest for global peace, the African Union and the United Nations are solid partners in conflict**

**resolution. This cooperation has helped to silence the guns in many parts of Africa. These efforts are informed by our understanding that without peace, our ability to realize Agenda 2063 and the recently launched African Continental Free Trade Area will be undermined.**

**Mr. Secretary General,**

**We cannot talk of leaving no one behind when we live in a world in which the people of Western Sahara and Palestine have been left behind. Informed by the anticolonial struggle in our region and the international solidarity extended to us, SADC convened a Solidarity Conference for Polisario and the people of Western Sahara, in March 2019 in South Africa, where we reiterated our unwavering commitment to the right to self-**

**determination and freedom of the people of Western Sahara.**

**Similarly, the people of Palestine have the fundamental right to self-determination and independence. We must achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians, with the establishment of two States, co-existing in an atmosphere of peace and security.**

**With regard to Cuba, we express our disappointment that we have regressed from the thawing of relations that we witnessed a few years ago. We renew our call for the lifting of the outdated economic and financial embargo on Cuba. We further call on the lifting of the sanctions on Zimbabwe, in support of their pursuit for economic development, unity and prosperity.**

**We also extend our solidarity with the government and people of Venezuela and commend the mediation efforts by the Kingdom of Norway.**

**Mr. President,**

**Next year, the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will present an opportunity to conclude the reform of the United Nations Security Council. In order to reposition the Security Council to effectively address the new and emerging challenges of international peace and security, we need to conclude the Inter-Governmental Negotiation process. In this respect, Namibia reiterates the *African Common Position on Security Council Reform* as articulated in Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration and extends appreciation to those member states that have embraced the African Common Position.**

**Mr. President,**

**I have a deeply held conviction that inclusivity spells harmony, while exclusivity spells conflict. We therefore cannot afford to leave out the majority of the world's population, in our pursuit of prosperity. Without the full involvement of women and youth, we miss an opportunity to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. It is this understanding that guides Namibia's commitment to reaching gender parity at the highest levels of governance and leadership.**

**We are approaching the 20th anniversary of Resolution 1325, on Women, Peace and Security, which was adopted under Namibia's Presidency of the UN Security Council in 2000. As we prepare to assess the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, we welcome the increased**

**participation of women in UN and AU peacekeeping operations.**

**A few days ago, young people converged here to demand consequential climate action that will safeguard the planet. They presented innovative ideas and expressed their desire and commitment to spearhead the process of finding lasting solutions to this existential threat. The actions of the youth reflect their concern for the future of this planet. The process of solution finding must be inclusive, so as to leverage the participation of young people. We will heed this Call.**

**Your Excellencies,**

**Next year we will gather here to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of this global parliament “of the people”. It is my hope that the**

**outcomes of these deliberations will galvanize concrete efforts to arrest and reverse the existential threat of climate change.**

**Let us draw inspiration from the poignant words of Martin Luther King Junior, who said "If we are to have peace on earth... our loyalties must transcend our race, tribe, class and our nation. This means we must develop a world perspective."**

**We have a responsibility to establish a world that should transcend racism, tribalism and nationalism. We must bequeath to our children a world that is more peaceful, inclusive and prosperous; a world in which they can access opportunities to employ their gifts and talents; each according to his or her need and each according to his or her ability; a world where women and the youth should no longer suffer exclusion. The future hinges on their**

**participation. And we must ensure that they are no longer on the fringes of decision making but at the forefront of galvanizing multilateral efforts for poverty eradication, quality education, climate action and inclusion.**

**I thank you.**