

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE
NATION BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

21 MARCH 2015

WINDHOEK

**Check Against Deliver*

Directors of Ceremonies**Your Majesties,****Your Excellencies,****Comrade Dr. Hage Geingob, President Elect,****Comrade Dr. Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma, Founding
President and Father of the Nation,****Fellow Namibians,**

I Welcome Your Majesties; Your Excellences; Your Royal Highnesses; all Honourable dignitaries and Distinguished Guests to this historic event, the 25th Independence Anniversary and the Inauguration of the 3rd President of the Republic of Namibia. I feel greatly honoured that so many of you could travel from various places to lend importance and dignity to this auspicious occasion. I thank you most sincerely for your presence.

Ten years ago, on 21 March 2005, I stood at this very spot filled with pride, gratitude and humility as I took an oath of Office to become the Second President of the Republic of Namibia. Today, this is my last opportunity to address you, as President of the Republic of Namibia.

This is the same spot where our Founding President and Father of the Nation, Comrade Dr. Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma stood on 21 March 1990 and declared the freedom and independence of our country. We are grateful that Comrade Nujoma is here with us, still looking very healthy and very fit.

Today, at this very spot, we will witness, yet again, history being made, as the Third President of the Republic of Namibia takes the mantle of leadership. We will witness one of the greatest sons of Namibia; Dr. Hage Geingob ascend to the Presidency, witnessed by the Founding President and the second President of our country. This is an historic, momentous and glorious day for our country.

Twenty-five 25 years ago, a new and hopeful nation was born. As a free and sovereign people, we began the journey of shaping our own political, economic, and social destiny. That journey will continue under the leadership of Dr. Geingob.

**Your Excellencies,
Fellow Namibians,**

As we celebrate our Independence, we should never forget that it did not come on a silver platter. It was won by the brave, selfless, and visionary men and women, our heroes and heroines who were prepared to sacrifice their precious blood for the love of their country. Indeed many paid the ultimate price in the course of the struggle for freedom and independence. This, they did, to guarantee that future generations would be free, living with dignity.

In recognition of the important role that they played in our nation's history, we must remember that the greatest honour that we can give them is to live by and pursue the noble ideals that they envisioned for Namibia. Their lofty dreams for an equitable, just, peaceful, stable and united Namibia must be our driving force today and in the years to come.

It is, therefore, fitting to pay tribute to our forebearers such as Samuel Maharero, Hendrick Witbooi, Nehale Iya Mpingana, Mandume ya Ndemufayo and Ipumbu ya Shilongo who inspired us to fight for our freedom and independence. Their Blood Waters our Freedom. In the same vein, we pay tribute to our heroes and heroines who waged the struggle under the banner of SWAPO.

To those who sacrificed we also say their blood waters our freedom. We pay tribute to the patriot, who led us during the difficult years of the national armed liberation struggle. I am referring to Comrade Sam Nujoma. I must also recognise the contribution made by one of the icons of our revolution, Comrade Andimba Toyivo ya Toivo who is here celebrating with us, and many other compatriots, pioneers of our glorious struggle for freedom and independence.

In the same vein, Namibia will remain indebted, and we say thank you to the friendly countries, organisations and individuals who stood by us and supported us during the national liberation struggle. I would like to single the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Zambia and the Republic of Cuba for their steadfast and selfless support to the Namibian people under the leadership of SWAPO.

**Your Excellencies,
Fellow Namibians,**

Emerging from decades of a protracted and bitter struggle led by our liberation movement, SWAPO, the Namibian people moulded a new nation, guided by practical consideration of the importance of stability, peace, unity and National Reconciliation. Today, Namibia is known as one of the oases of peace and democracy on the African Continent and the world at large.

As a nation, we are proud that we have a Constitution that entrenches the Bill of Rights and a Multi-party system of governance based on the ideals of political tolerance and the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms. This has made it possible for our people, regardless of their political affiliation, to freely partake in political activities, thereby further entrenching democracy and contributing to the socio-economic development of our country as loyal citizens.

**Your Excellencies,
Fellow Namibians,**

I look back with satisfaction because we have managed to achieve many of our national development goals.

Twenty-five years ago, thousands of our people were illiterate because of limited schools and neglect of the education sector. Today, over 90 per cent of Namibians have accessed education and are able to read and write. We have built schools even in the most remote areas of our country.

Today, we allocate the largest portion of our national budget to education. Today, we have institutions of higher learning, both public and private. Twenty-five years ago, health care was inaccessible to most of our people because health facilities were few and far apart. Today, the situation is remarkably different. Health services are much closer to our people as health facilities are now spread across the length and breadth of our country.

Twenty-five years ago, electricity was only available in major urban centres and commercial farming areas. Today, through a comprehensive rural electrification programme, we have taken electricity to most parts of our country. We have built communication infrastructure such as roads, railways, harbours, fixed and mobile telecommunication networks.

We have also developed our agriculture by initiating projects such as the Green Scheme and providing extension services to farmers to improve their livestock herds and crop yields.

**Your Majesties,
Your Excellencies,
Fellow Namibians,**

There are still many socio-economic challenges facing our people, especially the youth, women and vulnerable sections of our population. Two of the most pressing are: poverty and unemployment. Since independence, the SWAPO Party Government, guided by the principles of *Solidarity, Freedom and Justice*, has initiated and implemented policy interventions to address these challenges.

Various policies have been implemented aimed at addressing the concerns of our people through Local, Regional and Central Government structures, with a view to improving the living conditions in rural areas. Specific focus is placed on grass-roots communities in rural areas, informal settlements and peri-urban areas.

**Your Majesties,
Your Excellencies,
Fellow Namibians,**

It is a source of pride that our country is highly respected regionally and internationally because of the principles we stand for as a nation. For many decades, we have stood firmly on the side of justice in support of the struggle by the peoples of Western Sahara and Palestine for self-determination and nationhood.

At the African Union, our unshakeable commitment to the principles of justice and fair-play has earned Namibia the honour to serve on the AU Committee of Ten on the Reform of the United Nations, System, in order to secure equitable representation for Africa in the permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

For ten years, I have had the unique privilege and, indeed, great honour to be President of Namibia. I pay tribute to the people of Namibia, who had reposed their trust and confidence in me by electing and re-electing me as President of our country for two consecutive terms of Office.

I am heartened by the messages of goodwill extended to me by our people and friends from around the world during the past few weeks. On behalf of my family, I thank you all for these wonderful gestures.

The achievements we have made as a nation and as a Government over the past decade, were not my work alone. They were realized through the hard work, unity and commitment of our citizens from different walks of life. They became possible because of the combined efforts of my colleagues in the three Organs of the State; namely, the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary.

In addition, I commend the support and cooperation that I received from various stakeholders such as civil servants; traditional and community leaders, workers, peasants, youth, women, business community, the religious community, civil society, the ruling SWAPO Party and other political parties – some would prefer the terminology opposition political parties - in the development of our nation. Our achievements are the fruits of our people's deep-rooted commitment to preserve peace, stability and national unity.

You, the patriotic people of Namibia, acting individually and collectively, have helped build Namibia into what it is today: a proud, solidly united and self-confident country.

I, therefore, leave Office with many fond memories and reflections. On many occasions, we have triumphed and rejoiced together. This will always remain a source of great joy for me. It is also true that, together, we have experienced sadness and grieved in solidarity due to the death of a Namibian hero or heroine, a family member, a neighbor, a colleague, a friend, a comrade or a fellow citizen. These shared experiences have reinforced and strengthened our unity.

I am proud that we have worked hard together to sustain the legacy of peace, stability and unity firmly established by the Founding President and Father of the Namibian Nation, Dr. Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma. Our country has, and I have no doubt that it will continue to build further on this proud legacy and shining example.

I take this opportunity to express my profound and abiding gratitude to the entire nation and to my fellow national leaders; the Prime Minister and his Deputy, Cabinet Ministers and their Deputies; the Speaker of the National Assembly and his Deputy, the Chairperson of the National Council and his Deputy, the Chief Justice and his Deputy, Members of the Judiciary, and Members of Parliament; individually and collectively for the support they have rendered to me during the past ten years.

I also thank all those who have implemented our Government's decisions and directives over the years. I am aware that some Members of Cabinet and officials at other levels of Government have drawn criticism, sometimes harsh, other times constructive, because of some decisions, which I, as President, had to make. I nevertheless commend them all, for their cooperation as members of the team.

Namibia is a product of the international solidarity; as such I have enjoyed the support of our Brothers and Sisters in SADC, AU, the UN, the Commonwealth and other friendly multilateral organizations.

I had a privilege to work together with their Majesties and Excellencies, Heads of State and Government at various platforms. To you all, dear Brothers and Sisters, I say thank you very much.

**Your Excellencies,
Fellow Namibians,**

As I leave Office, there is no title I will carry more proudly than being an ordinary citizen and a former President of our beloved country. I thank you all for the support you have extended to me during those ten memorable years.

Now, let us all give our full and unreserved support to Dr. Hage Geingob as he assumes his national duty as the Third President of our Republic. One thing is certain; Dr. Geingob is more than well prepared; more than equal to the task. Our country is in good hands.

**Long Live the Republic of Namibia!
Long Live Africa!**

I thank you.