

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY DR HAGE G. GEINGOB

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

AT

**THE 25TH INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION AND SWEARING IN OF THE
3RD PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

MARCH 21, 2015

INDEPENDENCE STADIUM

WINDHOEK

Director of Ceremonies;

Your Excellency, and my predecessor, Comrade Hifikepunye Lucas Pohamba;

Your Excellency, Founding Father, Comrade Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma;

**Your Excellency, President Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe
and Chairman of both the AU and SADC;**

Madam Nkosozana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the AU Commission

Your Majesty King of Swaziland, Mswati the Third and Her Royal Highness;

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;

Former Heads of State and Government;

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly;

Honourable Chairperson of the National Council;

Honourable Chief Justice of the Republic of Namibia;

Honourable Members of Parliament;

Leaders of Political Parties;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Traditional and Spiritual leaders,

Distinguished Invited Guest;

Members of the local and international press corps

Fellow Namibians.

It gives me great pleasure to see so many of you from so many different nations as well as our citizens from all corners of the Land of the Brave. I bid you all a hearty welcome.

“This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.”

This day would not have come about without the committed leadership legacy left by those before me. Permit me to start with my mentor, Founding Father of the Nation, Comrade Sam Shafiishuuna Nujoma.

He is an icon of Namibia’s struggle for Independence and a man who brought peace to a nation that was tired of war.

This foundation was solidified by former President Hifikepunye Pohamba who from our first meeting in 1962 until today when his term ends, has walked a path destined for leadership. It came as no surprise to Namibians that he is this year’s winner of the Mo Ibrahim Prize for African Leadership, as the prize was confirmation of what we in Namibia already knew that our President was deserving of local and international accolade.

I cannot leave out the two former First Ladies, Madam Penehupifo Pohamba and Madam Kovambo Nujoma. Thank you for mothering Namibia. You hold a special place in our hearts and stir our emotions when your names are mentioned.

I would like to thank the rank and file of the SWAPO Party for working tirelessly and selflessly to ensure electoral victory for the SWAPO Party and its Presidential candidate in last year's elections. I thank the people of Namibia for having given me a clear mandate so that today, I can stand in front of the world to take this oath. I take this oath on behalf of all Namibians and promise to serve all Namibians without exception. No Namibian must feel left out.

You exhibited your patience and patriotism by enduring extreme conditions in order to cast your first electronic ballot. It is that same commitment that brings you to this stadium and for that, I thank you.

I have often said that Namibia is a *Child of International Solidarity*, friend to all and enemy to none. Twenty-five years ago, our struggle for the independence of our country was concluded. The illustrious sons and daughters of Namibia fought the battle for Namibia's emancipation on many fronts. I would also like to thank all of our visiting Heads of State and international visitors, who have come out in large numbers, for your solidarity. It would take me all day to describe the role either you or the country you represent has played in the past and present.

Due to the constraints of time, I am not permitted the luxury of detailing what each of your country's has done for Namibia. This is a fine balance to draw as I would be remiss in my neighbourly responsibilities not to mention the frontline States and Nigeria. Those bordering us took the brunt of attacks from the Apartheid Regime and provided us with shelter and logistical support to wage our struggle. In this instance, I crave your Excellencies indulgence when I

single out Angola and Cuba for co-ercing South Africa to the negotiation table. The battle of Cuito Cunavale triggered the implementation of Resolution 435. I would like to recognise former President Marti Athisaari, for supervising the implementation 435.

After Namibia's independence was secured, we needed to develop a new narrative for an independent country that had been fractured by apartheid. We had to overcome the hatred of the past – hatred between blacks and whites, and between different linguistic and ethnic groups. We focused on reconciling Namibia to ensure peace. We succeeded in building a reconciled society.

Namibia's new narrative, of course, goes beyond reconciliation. This narrative developed over fifteen years ago which is now well known as Vision 2030. The first decade after Namibia gained her independence were incipient days in which we developed institutional frameworks to serve the citizens of this young nation. For the last ten years, President Pohamba has sustained those institutions.

With independence came expectations, expectations about education, about health services, about land, about safety, about justice, about freedom of movement, and about life and liberty. Many of these expectations were met right away, while others must, by their nature, remain work in progress.

The nature of expectations is that the more they are met, the higher the level that is demanded. And rightly so. The overwhelming mandate given to the

SWAPO Party and its Presidential Candidate is a clear indication of the confidence my fellow citizens have in SWAPO and in me. But it is also an indication of their high expectations. After 25 years they want food, clothing and shelter. They want jobs, better housing and good nutrition. They want a leader who will bring prosperity to the nation and they want that leader to act quickly.

It will be a daunting task to meet these expectations and our challenges will therefore be great, but I have full confidence that working together as one people, we will rise up to those expectations.

Fellow Namibians,

The main priority for the next administration will be addressing the socio economic gaps that exist in our society. We have been successful in establishing a robust Governance framework and implementing sound Macroeconomic policies. The prerequisites for a prosperous nation include good constitutions, peace and democracy. We are however aware that people don't eat constitutions, peace or democracy. People eat decent food, live under decent shelter and enjoy decent employment.

Therefore, our first priority will be to declare all-out war on poverty and concomitant inequality. Our focal point will be to address inequality, poverty

and hunger and that will involve looking at a range of policies and interventionist strategies to tackle this issue.

There won't be just one approach. We need a myriad of options and not a one size fits all strategy.

It is for these reasons that we have put in place a revised Government structure that will exist for the next five years. The goal is to improve alignment of existing Ministries to Government goals and objectives such as: poverty eradication and reduction of inequalities and disparities; sustainable economic growth and economic diversification; job creation; and improved service delivery.

We will work towards improving the rate of implementation and in turn catapult the economy into a new period of faster growth, improved job creation and improved service delivery. Our aim is to have a Government structure that is responsive to national goals and objectives and that will promote effectiveness and efficiency across all Government structures.

Our vision is clear. We plan to expand and spread the opportunities for growth and prosperity to be enjoyed by all Namibians in all parts of the country, with a specific focus on the disadvantaged sections of our population.

We will do so by pursuing policies and strategies to safeguard macroeconomic stability, promote economic diversification and

transformation of the Namibian economy to be more inclusive and resilient to internal and external shocks.

It is due to these goals that we have created two new ministries, namely the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and the Ministry of State owned Enterprises. We have also restructured other ministries in order to improve their suitability and effectiveness at introducing programs that will enable us to grow the economy and create wealth and job opportunities for all Namibians.

Fellow Namibians,

We in independent Namibia have been very fortunate to have had steady hands at the helm for 25 years. With your support, I hope to continue this tradition. As we go forward, we will seek to be transactional in maintaining and strengthening the governance architecture, but we will also be transformational as we prepare the citizens for the new economy that requires the development of new parameters in education, innovation, and enterprise.

All of us must play our part in the success of this beautiful house we call Namibia. We need to renew it from time to time by undergoing renovations and extensions. I therefore invite the youth of this country to bring their ingenuity, innovation and idealism to contribute to building a solid Namibian house. The journey ahead will be full of excitement. I am confident that Namibia will continue to pursue its developmental agenda and remain a haven of peace, stability and prosperity in a world full of turmoil.

Vision 2030 gives us fifteen years to become an enterprising country, a developed country, and a country of equal opportunity regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or religion. Allow me to quote from the AU anthem which states:

“Let us all unite and celebrate together, the victories won for our liberation, let us dedicate ourselves to rise together, to defend our liberty and unity.”

Let us stand together in building this new Namibian house in which no Namibian will feel left out. Forward ever, backward never.

LONG LIVE NAMIBIA OUR COUNTRY, LONG LIVE NAMIBIA, OUR MOTHERLAND

Thank you, and God bless you all.