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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 23, 2018
WINDHOEK

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;
Honorable Professor Peter Katjavivi, Speaker of the National Assembly and Madame Katjavivi;
Honorable Margret Mensah-Williams, Chairperson of the National Council and Mr. Williams;
Your Lordship Peter Shivute, Chief Justice and Ms. Shivute;
Madame Monica Geingos, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia;
Honorable Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers;
Your Excellency, Anastas Kaboba Kasongo Wakimba, Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps;
Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Honorable Sophia Shaningwa, Secretary General of the SWAPO Party;
Honorable McHenry Venaani, Leader of the Official Opposition;
Members of Parliament;
Honorable Laura Mcleod-Katjirua, Governor of the Khomas Region;
Your Worship Muesee Kazapua, Mayor of the City of Windhoek;
Service Chiefs;
Special Invited Guests;
Senior Government Officials;
Members of the Media

Madam Monica and I are honored to welcome you all this evening to State House. The New Year is a time for fresh beginnings. It is a time to reset and reapply our minds individually and collectively in order to face the challenges that the year will bring. We reunite with old friends and welcome new

ones. In that vein, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Heads of International Organizations recently accredited to Namibia. We are delighted to have you here, and we are keen to ensure that your stay in Namibia will go down as one of the significant and memorable milestones in your respective careers.

We have declared 2018 as the *Year of Reckoning*. We endeavour to achieve higher levels of service delivery for the Namibian people. There will be consequences for those who fail to deliver acceptable standards of public service and professionalism. It is why we would like to work better with you this year, to tackle issues of corruption, price manipulation and other forms of greed. Corruption, or the perception thereof, carries negative consequences that thwart socio-economic development of our people. We have to counteract these negative perceptions by striving for excellence in everything we do.

We have identified poverty and corruption as the primary impediments to the noble ideal of an inclusive society. In less than a month, I will be marking my third year in office as President. I remain more committed than ever before to the establishment of a more egalitarian society within Namibia. There is no US Dollar billionaire in Namibia, white or black; except for a few companies. The promise of shared prosperity can become a reality if our society is participatory and inclusive.

It is in this context that we would like to join our international friends and partners to tackle problems of inequality in a determined, sincere and forthright manner. We cannot turn a blind eye towards the blatant but sad reality of inequality within our society. Inequality is to a country what hypertension is to the human body. It is a ticking time bomb which one can either decide to tackle upfront or ignore at one's own peril.

Namibia has been praised for its robust Governance Architecture. We have put in place processes, systems, and institutions that help to buttress our democracy. Furthermore, we have always espoused the principles of effective governance and the rule of law. However, we must draw from the analogy of untreated hypertension undermining the functioning of the body's internal organs. Unchecked inequality weakens the functioning of our processes, systems and institutions. Let us therefore hold hands and show utmost sincerity and urgency in dealing with the thorny issue of inequality.

Director of ceremonies,

As we are all aware, tough economic conditions prevail in many countries, including Namibia. For 2018, the World Bank forecasts that the “global economic outlook is still subject to substantial downside risks, including the possibility of financial stress, increased protectionism, and rising geopolitical tensions.” These independent intervening variables or countervailing forces have had an adverse effect on our ability to execute developmental projects at the desired rate. Government has implemented various cost-cutting measures to curb public expenditure and reduce waste. In these challenging times, fiscal discipline is tantamount to ensuring that we remain on track to achieve sustainable development and shared prosperity in the long run.

I would like to state that our commitment to democratic values, respect for human dignity, inclusivity and sustainable development will continue to shape Namibia's external actions. Namibia strongly believes that bilateral and multilateral dialogue remain key to easing rising geo-political tensions. Sustained efforts aimed at finding lasting solutions to global challenges will bring peace and stability among nations. On the premise of the New Africa that we champion, we will continue to play an active role in the maintenance of peace and security through the Southern African Development

Community, the African Union and the United Nations. We will share the concept of the Namibian House, first with our brothers and sisters in Africa – where all Africans should hold hands within the structure of the AU House, and second within the community of nations, where citizens of the world, united in their diversity must hold hands through UN Charter as the eminent structure of the UN House. It is only through unity that we will be able to create and maintain lasting peace and harmony. This thought is captured by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which highlights, among other things, that we should foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence because there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

Director of ceremonies,

DaShanne Stokes once said, “Urging an organization to be inclusive is not an attack. It is progress.” Let us therefore make the year 2018 a memorable one – by calling for greater inclusivity across the board, here at home in Namibia, in Africa, and at the United Nations. Our call for inclusivity in the AU does not constitute attack, but a demand for progress. By demanding for inclusivity in the UN, we are not attacking it, but merely seeking progress. Humanity will progress only if we all hold hands and pull in one direction. Let us therefore make the fight against inequality, the promotion of unity and inclusive societies’ top priorities in 2018.

In conclusion I wish you and your families, good health and success for the year ahead. May you all excel in your assignments as accredited representatives of your respective countries and international organizations. We are ready to continue engaging with you at different levels of our Government.

Please convey Namibia’s best wishes for the New Year to your respective Majesties and Excellencies.

I thank you.