

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



STATEMENT BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR HAGE G. GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 100 DAYS IN OFFICE**

JUNE 29, 2015

STATE HOUSE

WINDHOEK

Good morning to you all and welcome to this press conference.

Today marks exactly 100 days since the day I was sworn in as the third President of the Republic of Namibia. It has become a common practice in some countries for new Presidents to give a self-assessment of their performance and reflect on the progress made during the first 100 days in office. While 100 days may be too short a period to meaningfully assess the effectiveness of any newly elected President or for that matter newly appointed CEO of a company, it does provide a first opportunity for reflection on the direction the Government will

take. The very fact that there is a talk of 100 days has ignited the people across all sectors. The media has arranged special talks and dedicated significant newspaper coverage to this matter.

My first and foremost conjecture as newly elected President or what I refer to as the new Head of the Namibian House, was to inspire and rally the entire Nation behind the concepts of “one Namibia, one Nation” and my election mantra that “no Namibian should feel left out”. I believe that the patriotic fervor that was roused and evident to the whole world during our

Independence Jubilee celebrations and has continued to be exuded by our citizenry is a clear indication that I have succeeded in these objectives of creating a feeling of rejuvenation. Across the length and breadth of Namibia, people from all walks of life have rallied behind these concepts. Therefore the Nation has reacted to my clarion call and a psychological impact of regarding themselves first and foremost as Namibians has already taken place. It is a call that has reverberated around the globe with many African and World leaders talking about the new Namibian President.

Today Namibians are feeling anew. We are moving away from the tendency to identify as close knit “families” and have embraced our diversity in a positive manner in order to buttress the foundation of the Namibian House. Namibian citizens are now referring to the Namibian House. However, this is not a once off achievement, and over the course of my Presidency, I will continue to advocate for a Namibian House that is united, a Namibian House where all have a sense of belonging and a Namibian House where no one should feel left out.

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Furthermore, a leader of a nation must have an overarching theme that will define his or her Presidency. In my particular case, I have chosen to tackle the issue of distribution of income head-on by declaring all-out war on poverty. Namibia is not a poor nation by any means and as I have said on several occasions our problem is one of redistributing our wealth and ensuring equal access to business opportunities for all our citizens. This affirms my commitment that no Namibian should feel left out.

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You will recall, that I initially declared all-out war on poverty in front of a worldwide audience on March 21, 2015 while delivering my inauguration speech. This was commended by many in attendance that day, as well as, in various messages of congratulations which I received following that event. On this occasion I had tried to highlight the poverty conundrum which we are faced with by saying that Africa is rich, but Africans are poor. Namibia is rich, but Namibians are poor. Despite an enviable endowment of natural resources, a large majority of our people are poor. Therefore they feel left out. Yes, we know that poverty cannot be eradicated overnight; therefore we will put

in place strategies to rapidly reduce poverty, especially food insecurity, while ultimately we should eradicate poverty.

In creating the ministry of poverty eradication, I was faced with the task of identifying a competent person to place at its helm and lead the process of eradicating poverty. There was no better person to take up this assignment than Bishop Zephania Kameeta, a man who epitomizes the spirit of compassion, knowhow, understanding and resolve needed to help our most impoverished citizens to improve their livelihoods. Bishop Kameeta will be supported by two equally competent female Deputy

Ministers, one of whom is also a pastor. They are mothers and experienced leaders, who in their own right possess the acumen to solve issues related to poverty. I am confident that together they will form a formidable team, with their officials and will therefore steer Namibia in the right direction in terms of eradicating poverty.

I would now like to turn to some notable accomplishments of Government during the past one hundred days. However, before doing so, let me emphasize two important things. I would like to in particular thank the efforts of the top four in Government, viz. the President,

the Vice President, the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the entire Cabinet. As you are aware, Cabinet Ministers were selected and allocated to various ministries based on their qualifications and level of expertise, after thorough analysis of their Curriculum Vitae, which I had requested. These appointments have rejuvenated the people as well as the ministries themselves. I would also like to thank our uniformed staff, who are serving the nation professionally and selflessly. Their efforts will go a long way in consolidating peace and stability in the nation.

I have committed myself to consultative leadership and must say that I have benefited immensely from the views and advise of my colleagues. The account of achievements that I will come to in a moment, should be seen in the context of promises that I have made as Presidential Candidate of the SWAPO Party, outlined in my campaign statement and most notably the SWAPO Party Manifesto. Upon my election as President, I assured the Nation on my commitment towards delivering on these promises. I would like to in particular refer to my inaugural address, my address to the first meeting of Cabinet and my maiden State of Nation Address. It is my intent to demonstrate

that I regard my promises to the people of Namibia as sacrosanct, and I stand ready to be held accountable to them at any point in time.

The mark of a leader is the ability to cast a vision for his people and get them to believe in that vision. It is important for people to believe in a vision because a leader cannot achieve a vision singlehandedly but only through a collective effort in which everyone pulls in the same direction, Harambee. Therefore, a great amount of time during my first 100 days as President was dedicated towards outlining my vision to all Cabinet members as well as other important stakeholders who play an integral

role in the rolling out of Government programs. In essence, this involves the entire nation.

I believe that we have made significant headway and covered a considerable amount of ground over the past 100 days with regard to developing a shared vision. Some of the specific vision building activities included an induction seminar for Cabinet members, including Deputy Ministers and Permanent Secretaries. One of the key purposes of the induction seminar was to take Cabinet through key important concepts, thinking and approaches that will mark the tenure of my Presidency. These include: good governance

and ethics, poverty eradication, reduction of income disparities, accelerated economic growth, job creation and rapid industrialization. Top experts from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa engaged Cabinet members through the use of interactive sessions aimed at introducing some of the latest developments and thinking globally on these important challenges. For example, we learned how Brazil managed to rapidly reduce poverty and income disparities in a short period of time, something that we would also like to achieve in Namibia.

In addition to the Cabinet induction seminar, I have requested all Ministers to prepare Declarations of Intent, which outline their promises to the public. These Declarations of Intent had to be in line with Government goals and objectives such as NDP 4 and Vision 2030. All Ministers have submitted their Statements of Intent and based on these, coupled with other cross cutting governance key performance areas, we are now in the process of developing performance contracts for all Ministers. These will be ready before the end of the second quarter of this financial year. I must, however, mention that at a civil servant level, through the Prime Minister, performance

management agreements have already been effected. I have called on Cabinet Ministers to first familiarize themselves with local conditions as well as introducing themselves to Namibians before travelling abroad. In this context I undertook an introductory and familiarization visit to Tsumkwe, the second most impoverished constituency in Namibia. I used this opportunity to explain to the residence of Tsumkwe the philosophy and priorities of Government, in particular the Ministry of Poverty Eradication, and called on them to meet Government halfway in achievement these objectives, no matter how meager their resources might be. Several

Cabinet Ministers accompanied me and the purpose was to introduce these Ministers to people of Tsumkwe so that they know who their national leaders are. But it will not end there. These visits will continue on a frequent basis, because as Government, we must have our ears and eyes on the ground, and be attuned to the needs and aspirations of the people that we represent.

Furthermore, I have said at many occasions, that good governance is a necessary condition for meaningful and sustainable development. One of the key elements of good governance is the importance of managing potential conflict

of interest in a transparent manner. Commitment to transparency, zero tolerance of corruption and promotion of good governance start at the top. For this reason, I promised to publicly declare my assets as President of the Republic of Namibia even though I am not required to do so by law. On May 20, 2015, together with my wife, I kept the promise to declare my assets, a decision that reverberated on the African continent and elsewhere in the world. Namibia had scored a first for Africa by having a sitting President openly declaring his assets. Afterwards, there were questions about proxies to which I have replied by saying that any proxies in my name must be regarded

by the proxy holder as their own. The same applies to Ministers. If you hold proxies for ministers, regard that as lawfully belonging to you. I also promised to release my health records, and this was done together with the asset declaration.

I have also directed the Prime Minister to ensure that all public servants, especially permanent secretaries declare their assets. As you have seen, the Prime Minister has not wasted any time in taking action and has made good progress in developing a framework for the declaration of interest by Public Servants. As well as this, we have also set into motion

the amendment of Regulation 11 under the Public Service Act of 1995 to compel public servants to declare private interest and engagement in remunerative work outside the public service. I did not lift the ban on Civil Servants doing business. This declaration just clarifies the point that there should not be any conflict of interest. Equally, the Honorable Speaker of the National Assembly has put in motion modalities to enhance the regular declaration of assets by all members of Parliament. This has been a standing practice and what the Speaker is now doing is merely to refine this mandatory practice.

So far Cabinet has held six deliberative meetings chaired by the Prime Minister and by tomorrow, six substantive meetings chaired by the President would have taken place. Due to this we were able to move fast on a number of issues, including approval of short, medium and long-term interventions for drought relief in the country; approving the establishment of the Namibia Industrial Development Agency; and approval of amendments to the State Owned Enterprises Governance Act to allow for the assignment of functions of the SOE Governance Council to the Minister responsible for Public Enterprises.

In addition to the establishment of the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, the following meaningful actions were carried out during the first 100 days of office. The old age pension was increased by 66.7 percent to N\$1000 per month. Following adoption of the appropriation bill earlier this month, pensioners should soon receive the increased amounts. We are very proud about this measure, as research conducted by the National Statistics Agency shows that the old age pension is one of the most effective measures to arrest poverty, in particular childhood poverty. In the same vein, we are proud to announce that during the past 100

days an additional 12,277 children were added to the child grant system, while the number of early childhood centre caregivers receiving a monthly subsidy from Government increased 806 to 1005. In addition the Child Care and Protection Bill of 2015, was signed into law on the 3rd of June. These measures will go a long way in arresting childhood poverty. We have also made budgetary provision for the introduction of a Food Bank. The Minister of Poverty Eradication has made good progress in developing the operational modalities of the Food Bank. As well as this the Minister of Poverty eradication was tasked to organize a national dialogue on poverty eradication and

wealth redistribution as soon as possible with the aim to develop an implementable blue print for poverty eradication in Namibia.

With regard to land reform, as a first measure we have doubled the resource allocation towards the purchasing on land in the current Medium Term Expenditure Framework.

Land reform remains a crucial, delicate and emotive issue in Namibia. Land reform must be addressed with care, and as noted in my State of Nation address, Government will explore all measures within the confines of the law to

address this matter. To this, I have directed the Minister of Land Reform, to explore all options at the disposal of Government to fast track land distribution, including the confiscation of foreign owned land on a legal basis, as well as the subsidizing municipalities to acquire urban land for house construction. We must also aim at irrigating more land for crop production. The two Kavango regions, in particular have enormous potential for crop production. Government owns 300,000 hectares in these two regions, out of which it should be possible utilize at least 30,000 hectares for agricultural purposes. Through this action, it should be possible to train and

employ at least between 1000 and 2000 young people on a regular basis. This is a measure that Government will explore.

With regard to transformation of the Namibian economy, especially transformation of ownership of the assets of production, as well as the promotion of local businesses, I have directed that the Public Procurement Bill be tabled in Parliament as soon as possible and signed into law. I am pleased to note that our Finance Minister quickly acted on this directive and that the Bill will be table in the current session of Cabinet. The revised Public Procurement act will not only stimulate the

domestic business sector, especially SMEs, but will also promote transparency in Government procurement where the problem has been. Equally the Prime Minister had been driving the revised Equitable Economic Framework also known as Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment. Broad based means that wealth should not go to individuals but to go to communities. The EEF will soon be submitted to Cabinet for approval and tabled in the National Assembly before September 2015.

Cabinet has finalized two Bills namely the Income Tax Amendment Bill and the VAT Amendment Bill. The Income Tax Amendment

Bill is aimed at lowering the corporate tax rate to 32 percent and the withholding tax rate to 10 percent. The Vat Amendment Bill on the other hand is aimed at increasing the VAT threshold from N\$200,000 to N\$500,000. Through these amendments, we are reducing the costs of doing business in Namibia, making our enterprises more competitive, which is good for economic growth and job creation. All the above measures, together with our Growth at Home Industrial Implementation Strategy, these measures will go a long way in the transformation of our economy into a more diverse, resilient and representative economy.

With regard to housing delivery, we have stopped the mass housing initiative due to the numerous irregularities reported. Furthermore houses, I have directed the Minister of Urban and Rural Development to provide me with proposals on this matter before the end of July. Some of the emerging measures that will be pursued as a matter of priority include amendment of the Regional Councils Act and the Local Authorities Act, to prohibit the sale of land to and ownership by foreign nationals, as well as putting in place mechanism to prevent land speculation and other practices

that prevent the majority of Namibians from accessing urban land.

We will continue to implement measures to support good governance at a local level, and have institute forensic investigations into alleged irregularities and poor governance at the Omaruru Municipality. The same will apply for other municipalities where there are allegations of poor governance, and findings of reports will be released.

Similarly, following concerns in the energy sector, I have directed that the Xaris project be

halted until it has been reviewed by experts. Furthermore, Government is looking at all areas where we can cut costs. This will involve looking at the output or value that should be related to any costs incurred. The same applies to Government travel, especially foreign trips that must have a value. Travel must have tangible results. Travel for peace, will be considered, but sizes of delegations must be limit.

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When I refer to Namibia as a Child of International Solidarity, I am not making an understatement. Namibia has a record and a

glowing repertoire in terms our international relations.

Nothing signifies Namibia's stature in the international arena more than the flood of well wishes and congratulatory messages I received upon my election as President of the Republic of Namibia as well as following my inauguration. Namibia is seen by many world leaders and powers as an exemplar of democratic rule and good governance and therefore despite our often referred to small population, we are still seen as carrying allot of weight on the diplomatic stage.

Immediately upon assuming office, I was overwhelmed by a large number of invitations from Presidents and Prime Ministers from all over the world. I had to pick out the most important ones that are dealing with multilateral issues, especially issues that concern poverty and wealth. In this regard we have to look at our neighbors. First and foremost, I had to pay a visit to our strategic neighbours in the SADC region. Namibia finds itself sandwiched between two key economic powerhouses, both with whom we share a long standing history of struggle against colonial rule. It is therefore logical to assume that we

will once again have to join forces with these two allies as we fight the second phase of the struggle and pursue the goal of bringing economic emancipation to our people. South Africa is a well-established economic power on the African continent while Angola is a country on the march, rising from a legacy of war and moving towards rapid economic development.

It is for this reason that my first outward trip as President of the Republic of Namibia was to Angola, accompanied by several Cabinet Ministers, where I met my counterpart, President Dos Santos to discuss issues of mutual concern and of interest to the

development of the SADC region as a whole. I am pleased to note that we have agreed on a number of cross border projects, including revival of Baines, which is crucial for our energy sector, as well construction of bridges. Shortly after this trip, I travelled to South Africa for a similar meeting with President Zuma.

With regard to the AU summit, I have circulated my statement to the media and received overwhelmingly positive feedback and commentary.

In conclusion the mood of nation is upbeat, the cabinet is upbeat. Now I want to introduce my A team to help me carry out these duties. They are as follows:

Besides my personal assistants, The Executive Director in the Office of the President, Mr. Ettiene Maritz. The Economic Advisor, John Steytler. Albertus Aochamub, the Press Secretary. Ms. Inge Zaamwani - Kamwi, Constitutional Advisor and Private Sector Interface. Lastly to supervise these, Ms. Penny Akwenye who will be the Policy Advisor on implementation and monitoring. I have also appointed Ms. Yvonne Dausab as Law Reform Commissioner, and Comrade Philemon Malima

**as Director General of the Namibia Central
Intelligence Service.**