

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBA, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, ON THE OCCASION OF
THE AFRICAN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
AWARD HOSTED BY THE AFRICAN
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**Check Against Delivery*

Director of Ceremonies,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Editor of Africa Leadership Magazine,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to start by expressing my appreciation to the Editorial Board of Africa Leadership Magazine for the honour accorded to me and my country, Namibia as recipient of the 2014 African Leadership Development Award.

I accept this honour with great joy on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Namibia, whom I have been privileged to lead for the past nine years. I am indeed honoured that through this Award I have joined distinguished African Leaders who have been inducted into the African Leadership “Hall of Fame”.

I have been requested to share my views on the topic: “*Partnerships for Increased Technical and Financial Investments into Africa*”. This is also the theme for our luncheon this afternoon.

Director of Ceremonies,

This subject underscores a number of fundamental considerations that are at the heart of the ongoing efforts by African countries, our Regional Economic Communities and the African Union to bring about the socio-economic development of our continent. First, the 2063 African Vision highlights and calls into question the role of the traditional development aid from our development co-operation partners into Africa over the past five decades.

Secondly, it underlines the need for a paradigm shift from dependence on development aid towards a more sustainable scenario based on mutually beneficial partnerships that would facilitate increased technical and financial investments into Africa.

The pitfalls of Africa's dependence on development aid over the past five decades, and the damage that this has done to the continent are well-known and extensively documented. Researchers, academics, economists and social scientists have written many volumes about the futility of development, based on international aid.

Although, it may be well intended, development aid does not only retard and undermine efforts aimed at boosting social progress, it also creates unsustainable dependencies and vicious circles of poverty.

It is for this reason that towards the end of the 20th Century and the first decade of the 21st Century, the myths about the usefulness of development aid have largely been refuted.

A new line of thinking has emerged whereby it was argued that instead of development aid, Africa and the rest of the developing world needed partnerships with industrialised nations that would boost trade and commerce, facilitate transfer of appropriate technologies, skills development, and value addition to raw materials from developing regions.

It is, therefore, appropriate that this recognition has gained momentum and acceptance in the international community to the extent that most of Africa's development co-operation partners now emphasise the importance of trade, investments and technical co-operation, no longer the need for development aid.

In fact, all industrialised countries have scaled down on aid in recent decades. The focus is now more on trade and investments both at bilateral and multilateral levels. Among the stated objectives of the Summit which brought us to Washington, is the importance of trade and commerce as well as investments as part of the relations between the United States and African countries. Therefore, the Summit provides a platform for African Government and business leaders and those of the United States to exchange views on strategic issues that are critical to sustaining the transformation of Africa.

In this context, it is vital to seize the momentum generated by this Summit to work together to achieve the following priorities: increased mutually beneficial trade and commerce between Africa and the United States; infrastructure development, with specific focus on energy, rail and roads; and ICT connectivity.

Namibia looks forward to working with the US Administration and American investors to facilitate investments in different sectors of our economy. In recent years, our country has attracted the attention of investors who are interested in the mining sector, as well as the exploration of hydro-carbons and natural gas. Although still in the early stages, a number of wells have been drilled in search of oil. More drilling endeavours are planned for the coming years.

Our national power utility, together with other investors, are in the process of developing the Kudu-Gas-To-Power Project, with the aim of building a modern gas-powered electricity station that will satisfy our nation's power demand. Excess power from the plant will be exported to countries in the Region.

Given the abundance of solar radiation in our country, Namibia is eager to engage with American investors to explore the possibilities of new technologies for the wider roll out of solar electricity as part of the national energy mix. We need to create the necessary partnerships, acquire relevant technologies and secure the investment capital to develop this sector of our economy.

With regard to infrastructure development, we are currently deepening and expanding the Walvis Bay harbour to improve its cargo handling capacity as a major trade gateway to southern Africa. Together with Botswana, we are jointly developing the Trans-Kalahari Railway to serve as conduit for imports and exports.

Other infrastructure development projects implemented in recent years include the expansion of our national railway network northward to our border with Angola. Modern roads and railways are not only critical for competitiveness and improved trade and commerce, they are also vital for the tourism sector, which is one of the priority areas in our *Fourth National Development Plan* (NDP 4).

Namibia has joined other African countries and invested significant resources in the realisation of the *West Africa Cable System* (WACS). Furthermore, in order to boost competitiveness, we have put measures in place to make it easier, faster and more efficient for investors to conduct business in our country. One of the initiatives is the establishment of the *Business and Intellectual Property Authority* (BIPA) by our Ministry of Trade and Industry.

The agency will serve as the One-Stop Center for the registration of companies, as well as the protection of business, commercial and industrial property rights. It will also provide general advisory services on business registration and intellectual property rights to investors and the general public. We are also in the process of reviewing and modernising our Foreign Investment Act in order to increase and strengthen Namibia's competitiveness.

In the area of food security our Government is working hard to modernise our agricultural sector. We welcome international investors to invest in this crucial sector, to introduce new technologies and know-how that will enable us to produce more food locally in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way. We have identified Vocational Training as one of the main drivers to prepare our young people for modern knowledge based economy.

Our primary and high school curricula have also been realigned to respond effectively to modern challenges and equip our youth with appropriate skills. From 2013, our Government abolished the requirement for parents to pay school development fees as part of the provision of free universal primary education. This arrangement will also be extended to the secondary school phase during the 2016 school calendar year. We have also put strategies in place to promote vocational training in order to equip our young people with modern skills and competencies.

Director of Ceremonies,

Technical co-operation between Africa and our development co-operation partners in the health sector remains crucial. We welcome the progress made in combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic in many African countries.

In Namibia, more than 90 percent of those who are HIV positive now have access to the life-saving anti-retroviral therapy. Similarly, in partnership with our development partners, we have reached high rates of success in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of the Human Immuno Deficiency Virus.

Namibia has embarked upon the *National Mass Housing Programme*, which is aimed at addressing the housing backlog in the country by delivering at least 187, 000 houses over the next 17 years. Phase One of the project has already started. The entire project is estimated to cost about US\$3.5 billion. As we proceed with this long-term initiative, we would consider Public Private Partnerships based on proven technological solutions that would enable our Government to deliver more houses to our people in an affordable and cost effective manner.

Achieving success in these priority areas should form the basis of establishing partnerships for increased technical co-operation and financial investments into Africa. We must, therefore, take bold actions at national, regional and continental levels to address the challenges that have slowed down Africa's advancement.

It is paramount for Namibia, as for all African countries, to embrace new technologies, and to implement the policies and best practices that have enabled many developing countries, especially in Asia to industrialise and diversify their economies, create jobs, and drastically reduce the levels of poverty. Through prudent and targeted investments in education, health, information communication technology and the empowerment of women and the youth, a new era of sustainable and inclusive prosperity will dawn over Africa. I am convinced that, together, we shall achieve our shared vision.

Once again, it is my honour to accept the 2014 Africa Leadership Development Award from the Africa Leadership Magazine.

I thank you.