



MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND  
COOPERATION

EDITORS' BREAKFAST MEETING SPEECH

BY

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WINDHOEK

**Honourable Deputy Ministers,**

**The Advisor,**

**Senior Officials from the Ministry of International Relations and  
Cooperation,**

**Distinguished Editors from Media Houses,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Good Morning

Let me start by expressing my thanks and appreciation to you all for having responded positively to our invitation to continue this working breakfast tradition that we started last year. Equally, let me take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy and productive 2017, as you continue to keep the public informed. His Excellency the President has declared the 2017 as the Year of Rededication, thus calling on all of us to rededicate ourselves to national building, in the spirit of Harambee.

## **FOREIGN POLICY REVIEW**

Last year the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation hosted the Foreign Policy Review Conference. I take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all the Media Houses for the coverage of that Conference. You will recall that among the topics discussed at the Conference was public diplomacy as well as Namibia Foreign Policy and the Media. In fact some of you were resourced people at the Conference and we thank you for your contribution. The discussions at the conference were enriching and enlightening. Some of the issues raised and recommendations made will find place in our Strategic Plan. It is in this context that we have convened this working breakfast to share information on some of the Foreign Policy Issues.

Let me inform that we have concluded the draft Policy on International Relations and Cooperation and are in the process of submitting it to Cabinet and thereafter to Parliament, and then will be made available to the public.

## REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

In the course of the year 2016, I had the privilege and honor, as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, to accompany His Excellency the President on various Official and State Visits, in enhancing Namibia's national interests. These visits are aimed at strengthening Bilateral Relations with our development and trading partners. Namibia cannot isolate herself from the International community. Just as the President and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation host our counterparts in Namibia so to do our counterparts invite us for the same reason. States are interdependent. Namibia need to vigorously market her investment and trade opportunities and this is what mainly informs our regional and international visit. The year 2016 was indeed an eventful one, for example:

1. H.E. Dr Hage G. Geingob, paid visits to **Botswana and Zambia** in July 2016. During the visit to Botswana, discussions centered on bilateral cooperation especially in the areas of water and transport infrastructure, while in Zambia, H.E. Dr. Geingob officiated at the 90<sup>th</sup> Zambia Agricultural and Commercial Show. This was an ample opportunity to expose our business people to opportunities in this sector as well as to market opportunities in Namibia's agricultural sector.
2. As part of the trip to the **United States** to attend the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly, H.E. the President made a stop-over in Washington D.C. from 13 to 16 September 2016, where he participated in a round table discussion and the U.S.-Africa Policy Forum organized by the Constituency for Africa (CFA). In New York, the President hosted the Namibia Business Forum. He also gave public lectures at Columbia University in New York and Harvard University in Boston. These meetings have made it possible for investors from the United States to attend the Invest in Namibia Conference in big numbers.
3. Furthermore, Comrade President co-chaired the Bi-National Commission between the Republic of Namibia and the Republic of **South Africa** which took place from the 4-7 October 2016, in Pretoria, South Africa.

During the Bi-National Commission the Agreed Minutes as well as The Terms of Reference of the Technical Committee on the Orange River were signed. In addition, the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Environment and Wildlife between the Government of the

Republic of Namibia and the Government of the Republic of South Africa was signed on the 5<sup>th</sup> October in South Africa.

Prior to the Bi-National Commission, the President officiated the precursor to the Invest in Namibia Conference, organized by the Namibian High Commission in Pretoria on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016 in Sandton, Johannesburg.

4. Also at the invitation of H.E. François Hollande, President of the French Republic, HE. Dr Hage Geingob paid an Official Visit to France from 27-29 November 2016.

During the official talks several issues were such as the importance of enhancing bilateral trade, investments and economic ties between the two countries, such as trade, investment, water, energy, etc President Geingob solicited France's support for Namibia's candidature to host the Africa Bureau for the Global Green Fund. President also had the opportunity to address a business meeting organised by the French Business Federation (MEDEF) on 29 November 2016. More than 50 French companies were present. Three letters of Intent were signed between the two countries.

5. H.E. Dr Hage Geingob had a working visit to the UK from the 30<sup>th</sup> November – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2016.

During the visit His Excellency met Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace whereby bilateral issues were discussed. The President also met the Secretary General of the Commonwealth where environmental issues were part of the discussions.

H.E The President and his delegation had a luncheon with Prince Andrew at Buckingham Palace who showed his readiness to visit Namibia and to assist in promoting youth entrepreneurship.

## **INBOUND STATE VISIT**

H.E. Pranab Mukherjee, President of the Republic of India on the invitation of H.E. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia paid a State Visit to Namibia from 15-17 June 2016.

During the State Visit two Memoranda of Understanding (MoU's) were signed, namely an MoU for the Establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Technology and

an MoU on cooperation between NIPAM and the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. Also during this visit, the Indian President announced aid in the form of drought relief of 1000 tonnes of rice as well as a donation of US\$20 000 to the Indira Ghandi Clinic at Okahao.

## **THE SADC**

His Excellency the President participated at the 36<sup>th</sup> Summit of SADC held in Swaziland from 22 – 31 August 2016. At the regional level, we adopted the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), which is a comprehensive development and implementation framework guiding the Regional Integration agenda of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) over a period of fifteen years (2005-2020). It is designed to provide clear strategic direction with respect to the SADC programs, projects and activities in line with the SADC Common Agenda and strategic priorities, as enshrined in the SADC Treaty of 1992. The ultimate objective of the plan is to deepen regional integration, with a view to accelerate poverty eradication and the attainment of socio-economic development.

## **AFRICAN UNION (AU)**

In January 2017, H.E. Dr. Hage G. Geingob participated in the 28th AU Assembly, which, inter alia, elected a new Chairperson of the AU Commission, following the suspension of the elections at the 27th Assembly. During the 28th Assembly, H.E. the President was nominated as a Board Member of the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), representing the Southern African Region; He was also nominated as one of the ten Champions for education, science and technology in Africa, representing the Southern African Region.

In our quest to promote regional integration and infrastructure development, President Hage Geingob, has accepted an invitation to become one of the Champions on the continent to promote infrastructure development in Africa. At the same time, Namibia submitted a consolidated proposal to the NEPAD-PICI Technical Committee consisting of the following projects, which were accepted: Katima Mulilo Railway-Line Development Project, the Baynes Hydro-Power Project, the Trans-Kalahari Railway-Line Development Plan and the Trans-Orange River Highway and Rail. It is therefore expected that Namibia will be formally admitted to the PICI during the AU Summit in July 2017. The participation of our President

in these institutions create an opportunity for Namibia to benefit from these regional projects.

On 28 January 2017, H.E. the President signed the Memorandum of Understanding of the African Peer-Review Mechanism, making Namibia the 36th Member State of the APRM. Namibia has always supported the APRM, however, at the time of its establishment, Namibia was amongst the countries considered worldwide as good examples of democracy in Africa. For this reason, we decided to abstain from joining the APRM, as we did not want to be used as a point of reference against other African countries. Through the APRM, Namibia will be able to share experiences, as well as draw lessons from others to achieve high economic growth, eradicate poverty, attain sustainable economic growth, and raise the standard of living of all our people.

## **Western Sahara**

As a Member of the African Union, Namibia supports the unity of Africa and remain committed to live up to the pledge made by our Founding Fathers to ensure the total liberation of our Continent. Our position on the right to self-determination and independence of the people of Western Sahara has been clear and consistent. We believe this right to be indivisible. Therefore, the admission of the Kingdom of Morocco into the African Union (AU), does not change in anyway Namibia's position on the right to self-determination as enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the AU. Namibia expects the Kingdom of Morocco, as a member of the AU to fully comply with the principles, values and obligations enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the AU and relevant United Nations resolutions, calling for the unconditional holding of a free and fair referendum, to allow the Saharawi people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination.

In line with the Namibian Constitution, we call on Morocco and Western Sahara as members of one family, to commit themselves to reaching a peaceful settlement. Namibia stands ready to work with both parties in order to find a lasting solution.

## **THE UN REFORM**

The negotiations on the UNSC continues. For Namibia, it is important to ensure that the issue of the reform of the UN Security Council is not reduced to an issue of the aspirant candidate countries, presenting their candidatures for election to any UN body. The Security Council is too important an organ to be left to the regular political

interests of particular countries. It is against this background, that Namibia reaffirmed its commitment to the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, on the modalities for the identification of Africa's representation in the Council, to be solely left in the purview of the African Union.

In addition to the UNSC Reform, Namibia co-chaired the Committee on the Revitalization of the work of the United Nations General Assembly. Namibia has been co-chairing this committee for two years and its work has indeed optimised and streamlined the activities of the UNGA.

## **ICC**

On the issue of the ICC, Namibia is still a member and as such has not withdrawn ratification of the Rome Statute.

At the recent AU Summit, the AU member states adopted an ICC Withdrawal Strategy, as Africa's position on the ICC.

Namibia's position has always been that countries have the right to withdraw from the ICC, provided that there are strong judicial institutions and systems at the national level in all AU Member States.

While aware that Namibia can effect meaningful change through the Rome statute, Namibia supports the collective withdrawal as a principle, fully cognizant of the fact that it is duty bound to follow the procedures as dictated by its own domestic laws.

## **In Conclusion**

Ladies and gentlemen, let me end by stating that Press freedom is essential for good Governance. However, it comes with responsibility. We look forward to continuing to engage in serving the public and promoting and protecting the national interest of our country.

**I THANK YOU**