

**BRIEFING TO MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, BY
HONOURABLE NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH, DEPUTY PRIME
MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND
COOPERATION, 31 JULY 2017**

Director of Ceremonies,

**Your Excellency, Mr. Manuel Alexandre Duarte Rodrigues, Ambassador of the
Republic of Angola and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps,**

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Senior Officials of the Ministry International Relations and Cooperation

Distinguished invited Guests,

Members of the Media Fraternity,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I take this opportunity to once again welcome you all, to this briefing Session for the Diplomatic Corps. I particularly give a special welcome to the new members of our diplomatic family. We are already at the end of the seventh month and it has indeed been an eventful first half of the year.

POLICY ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

1. I trust that you have all received invitations to attend the launch of the Lecture Series of the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation. This lecture Series were informed by the Foreign Policy Review Conference that was held last year. These series are an effort to engage the Namibian public to take a deeper interest in global issues and how they affect Namibia in particular. While on this issue, let me

also inform that the Policy on International Relations and Cooperation was adopted by cabinet and is now before Parliament for deliberation.

DROUGHT

2. Namibia is prone to drought and other climatic disasters. The passed three years our country has experience severe drought. However, though we are still waiting for the assessment on the production for this year, following good rain in most area of the country except for Kunene Region, we are hoping to have a better harvest in comparison to the previous years. We thank your countries and organizations for the relentless support rendered to us particularly in the area of food and rehabilitation of water infrastructures. We will continue to count on the support of your countries and organizations whenever such situation occurs.

LAND REFORM

3. Being Representatives of your respective countries and organizations in Namibia of which you are familiar with our history, you would have realized that the issue of land in Namibia is very sensitive one given that it deals not only with ownership but livelihood of our nationals and citizens. In this context, the Government has always been sensitive to the overall social and economic needs of our people, including ownership and access to land.

4. I must underscore that, the land issue remains a very sensitive and emotional issue in our national body politic. I have the pleasure to inform that regional consultations for the holding of the Second National Land Conference are ongoing. This is a demonstration of the Government's commitment to seriously address all issues affecting the people of Namibia. The Second National Land Conference is expected to critically review the implementation of the resolutions of the first Land

Conference and make recommendations on the way forward for peace, equity, efficiency and the promotion of productive and sustainable livelihoods through the implementation of programs targeted at poverty eradication as highlighted in the Harambee Prosperity Plan.

THE RULING SWAPO PARTY CONGRESS

5. Namibia remains a stable multiparty democracy. To this end, I wish to inform that the ruling SWAPO Party will hold its ordinary Congress in November this year, 2017, where the Party is expected to review both the Party and government achievements and challenges since the last Congress. The Congress will also come up with possible directives on the economic and social issues in order to guard the national development agenda. In line with the Party's Constitution, the Congress will also elect its new leadership that will guide the party activities in the next five years.

SADC

6. Namibia remains committed to the promotion of regional integration in the SADC Region, with a view to accelerate the eradication of poverty and attain socio-economic development. We are determined to achieve the objectives set out in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) by implementing SADC decisions and programs that are aimed at moving the Region towards industrialization.

7. On the political and security situation in the region remains relatively stable and peaceful. However, there have been some political and security challenges in the Kingdom of Lesotho and this case has been accorded adequate attention by SADC organs with a view to attaining lasting peace and political stability.

8. I am pleased to inform you that Namibia participated in the SADC Election Observation Mission (SEOM) to observe the National Assembly elections in the Kingdom of Lesotho which took place on 3 June 2017. It is our hope that the new government in Lesotho will strive to implement the SADC Summit decisions regarding constitutional and security sector reforms that would eventually bring peace and political stability to the Kingdom of Lesotho. Namibia shall therefore continue to support these efforts to ensure these objectives are met.

9. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the situation is receiving our undivided attention. SADC Member States in general and Namibia in particular, will continue to support the implementation of the December 2017 Agreement, which was signed between the DRC Government and opposition parties. In tandem with SADC efforts, we are indeed committed to assist so that sustainable peace and stability is achieved in that country. It is a common knowledge that elections in DRC will not take place this year. However, we hope the Electoral Commission in DRC will do everything possible for elections to take place in April 2018 as indicated by DRC.

THE AU:

10. In January 2017, Heads of State and Government of the African Union convened once again in Addis Ababa to deliberate on matters of importance to the Continent. The decisions of the 28th Assembly ushered in a new era for the Union and its Commission, when it elected the new leadership of the AU Commission; adopted new Institutional Reforms; and welcomed Morocco as a new member of the African Union.

11. The new leadership in the Commission is fully operational, and Namibia looks forward to working closely with the Commission in the coming years. The new reforms introduced by H.E. President Kagame of Rwanda, as mandated by the Assembly, are meant to improve the effectiveness and the efficient functioning of the AU. We commend President Kagame for his tireless efforts in addressing the institutional reform of the AU.

12. In addition, the 27th AU Assembly, held in Kigali, in July 2016, made a decision to establish a 0.2% levy on eligible imports coming from outside Africa, in order to ensure the sustainability of funding to the AU and its bodies. In this regard, Namibia remains committed to paying its assessed contributions, on time and in full.

13. In reference to the admission of Morocco into the AU, Namibia believes that all AU Member States should work together to encourage the two Member States, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, to engage in direct and serious talks and extend the necessary cooperation to the AU policy organs, the Commission and the AU High Representative for Western Sahara. We are encouraged by the work of the AU Peace and Security Council on this issue and we look forward to the continued cooperation between the AU and UN on the question of Western Sahara and other issues of common concern.

14. One other important issue for Africa is our collective resolve to canvas support for the Common African Position on the Reform of the UN Security Council, as expounded in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration. The historical injustice that the African continent continues to endure must be corrected without further delay. As a Member of the AU and AU Committee of Ten, Namibia calls for a

comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council, in line with the demands of the Common African Position.

Your Excellencies,

15. As you all are aware, the theme of the African Union for 2017 is entitled, “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investments in Youth”. How can African youth feel empowered, when the world around them is very unequal? African youth must therefore be given a chance to dream, and opportunities to live free from violence and oppression, in a just world. Giving Africa a voice in the UN Security Council would be a step in the right direction for the future benefit of our youth. It is therefore very critical that Africa remains united in this cause.

16. The unity of African Union Member States is not just a process, but it is being made practical through a number of initiatives our Heads of State and Government have adopted. One such decision is the move towards the free movement of African citizens on the continent. In this regard, the Namibian Government has approved visa exemption for Diplomatic and Official Passport holders from all African countries. We have however also requested all the African countries to avail their diplomatic and official passports samples in order to operationalize our good gesture in the spirit of Pan Africanism.

17. Furthermore, the envisaged Continental Free Trade Area is expected to be launched in 2018. The Continental Free Trade Area is a Flagship Program of Agenda 2063, specifically in its First-Ten Year Implementation Plan, and the African Ministers of Trade have intensified their efforts to realize the dream of an integrated continent through open markets.

18. I call upon all our partners, to continue to assist the continent to strengthen its socio-economic development programs to empower the youth, create jobs, build much-needed infrastructure, support vocational training programs, promote renewable energy initiatives, and create knowledge-based societies in Africa. Empowering Africa is for the benefit of all citizens of the world, in particular those in Europe who have been at the receiving end of migration flows, as a result of youth unemployment, poverty, the effects of climate change, and socio-economic unrest.

THE UN:

Your Excellencies,

19. In this regard, Namibia certainly welcomes the UN Systems support as contained in the recommendation advanced to the General Assembly and The Secretary General for endorsement and implementation at the recently concluded Committee for Program Coordination, in terms of the envisaged support to NEPAD, which is organized around eight re-aligned thematic clusters and topics in pursuance of the NEPAD priorities and, in line with the AU Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

20. As you may be aware, these thematic clusters comprised (i) infrastructure development, especially hard infrastructures, (ii) governance, peace and security, (iii) agriculture, food security and rural development, (iv) industry, trade and market access, (v) the environment, population and urbanization, (vi) social and human development, (vii) science and technology and, last but not least (viii) communication and advocacy outreach.

21. As exemplified in my forgoing pronouncements, Namibia attaches great importance to the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable

Development, which has been informed by Africa's development priorities, as reflected in the Common Africa Position (CAP) on the post 2015 development agenda. The new Goals are unique in that they call for action by all countries, poor, rich, middle-income and, those in transition, to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. The successful implementation of Agenda 2030 requires a robust global partners and regional cooperation that is crucial to the removal of barriers, which include, trans-boundary issues such as trade, shared natural resources and environmental challenges. In this regard, Namibia will continue to call for the support of all our development partners, in ensuring that we successfully and effectively implement UN Agenda 2030. In this regards, I am glad to remind that, the National Planning Commission as our key developmental agency, officially launched the NDP5 which to a large extend has domesticated both the UN Agenda 2030 and AU Agenda 2063.

22. With regard to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, Namibia as a uranium producing country reiterates the inalienable right of developing countries to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, including its uses for the treatment of cancer, agricultural production and energy generation. Some of your countries have received our letters seeking support for our intention to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). We are currently a member of the Board of the International Atomic Energy and are one of the important players in the production of uranium. We hope we can count on your support.

Your Excellencies,

23. The world has scaled down as far as colonialism is concerned. However, there are still remnants of it. Colonialism represents one of the most serious violations of national sovereignty of States, in breach of international law. Foreign occupation creates an environment in which the occupied people are exposed to a wide range of systemic and gross violations of human rights and freedoms, including dispossession, displacement and denial of their right to self-determination. Against this background, Namibia continues to reaffirm its solidarity with the people of Palestine and Western Sahara, and call for the full implementation of all relevant UN Resolutions on Palestine as well as the UN Settlement Plan for Western Sahara. Furthermore, in welcoming the admission of the Kingdom of Morocco into the African Union Family, Namibia expects the Kingdom of Morocco to fully abide by the provisions of the AU Constitutive Act, in particular its principle on the right to self-determination.

24. In this connection Namibia will continue to contribute to the work of the Committee on the “Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples” which we are happy to serve on.

25. In conclusion, allow me to seize this opportunity, to reiterate my invitation to you to join H.E. Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia at the launch of the Dr Theo-Ben Gurirab Lecture Series, which will take place at the Windhoek Country Club Resort and Casino, at 18h00, today.

THANK YOU!