

**STATEMENT BY THE HON. NETUMBO NANDI - NDAITWAH,
MP, PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS AND COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
NAMIBIA, AT THE OPENING OF THE NAMIBIA - EUROPEAN
UNION POLITICAL DIALOGUE, 13 JULY 2017**

Your Excellency,

Hon. Peya Mushelenga, M.P., Deputy Minister of International Relations
and Cooperation,

Hon. Maureen Hinda, M.P., Deputy Minister of International Relations
and Cooperation,

Amb. Selma Ashipala-Musavyi, Permanent Secretary,

Your Excellency Dr. Kaire Mbuende, Ambassador of Namibia to
Belgium,

Your Excellency, Jana Hybaskova, Head of the EU Delegation

Your Excellencies, EU Ambassadors,

Senior Government Officials,

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this important political
dialogue Namibia the EU. I am delighted to have this opportunity to
exchange views with you in the spirit of the Cotonou Partnership
Agreement that continues to be an excellent umbrella framework for
promoting mutually beneficial relations between the African, Caribbean
and Pacific countries and the European Union. The agenda items before
us are a clear reflection of the importance we all attach to the EU –
Namibia relations and cooperation.

Your Excellencies,

Our meeting here today is in compliance with Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement that provides for regular comprehensive dialogue leading to commitments on both sides. Through this dialogue we will exchange information; foster mutual understanding; facilitate the establishment of agreed priorities; and strengthen cooperation. We have a long agenda before us that will facilitate in depth exchange of views on EU-Namibia relations as well as issues of common concern on the global agenda.

Allow me therefore, to express Namibia's profound gratitude to the EU for the consistent assistance, especially in the Early Childhood Development and Pre Primary Education sub-sectors. This demonstrates the EU's unwavering support in contributing materially to our overall long-term developmental agenda (Vision 2030) that of being an industrialized nation developed by its human resources by the year 2030.

Your Excellencies,

Namibia has signed the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) on 10 June 2016 in Kasane, Botswana. Subsequently, Parliament ratified the Agreement in August 2016. The implementation process of the EPA has commenced. Namibia is in the process of perfecting the implementation of the whole agreement.

I am happy to inform you that, a few capacity building initiatives with the financial assistance of the EU are already taking place, in Namibia including capacity building for customs officials on rules of origin. At this juncture let me inform you that Namibia will soon sign the Trade Related Facility Financing Agreement with the SADC Secretariat. The Financing agreement will enable Namibia to develop a National EPA Implementation Plan. It will also assist Namibia to deal with other challenges such as Technical Standards and Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures.

Your Excellencies,

Namibia remains committed to the future of the post 2020 Cotonou Agreement. Namibia will join the Africa group in the spirit of promoting the African Unity and push the overall African development Agenda 2063. This can only be achieved if negotiations are focused on issues related to trade and investment; development cooperation, including exchange of technology and innovation; and political dialogue and advocacy.

Namibia attaches great importance to its relations with the EU. As such we are looking forward to participate in the African Union – European Union Summit scheduled to take place in Abidjan, Ivory Coast in November 2017.

Your Excellencies,

In conclusion, Namibia – EU relations and Cooperation are excellent. However, we should continue to strengthen these historic relations to deepen people to people and create mutual understanding.

I thank you.