

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**BRIEFING TO MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, BY
HONOURABLE NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH, DEPUTY PRIME
MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND
COOPERATION, 21 NOVEMBER 2017**

Director of Ceremonies,

Honorable Dr. Peya Mushelenga Deputy Minister Ambassador Tuliameni Kalomoh,
Special Advisor,

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

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners

Senior Officials from the Ministry,

Distinguished invited Guests,

Members of the Media Fraternity,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is always a great pleasure to engage with you, my constituency, in this forum. I have been very busy with my other constituencies, however, I am happy that we found a convenient time to all of us, thus enabling us to meet today.

I wish to warmly welcome those Heads of Mission who joined our diplomatic family since our last coming together. Here in Namibia, you will find a government and

people with open arms. You will also come to know that we have challenges, but those challenges can be turned into opportunities.

GENERAL COOPERATION

1. During 2017 the Ministry, once again, enjoyed excellent bilateral engagements with all Missions accredited to Namibia. Some of these engagements took place on the margins of multilateral fora, and were indeed very fruitful. Our bilateral mechanisms such as State visits, Official Visits, Joint Permanent Commissions of Cooperation and Intergovernmental Working Groups and other bilateral activities between Namibia and the respective countries and organizations you represent, remain important tools in achieving greater success in the implementation of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

I wish to thank you for your outstanding cooperation during the year 2017, and look forward to working with you to further strengthen these relations.

2. The world economic situation negatively impacted on our international engagements. Notwithstanding, our international cooperation has continued. Namibia continues to emphasize the importance of international trade as an important instrument for economic growth and sustainable development. Therefore, the Government will continue with its on-going fiscal consolidation of policy measures, in order to promote trade and investments. The “Growth at Home” strategy for industrialization and the policy for promoting micro, small and medium enterprises provide a strong foundation for diversification.
3. As you are aware the harsh unpredictable weather conditions of the past few years have affected the hard-won gains in addressing poverty in our country. However, Namibia continue to be humbled by the spirit of friendship and cooperation shown by the countries and organizations you represent. In this regard, I wish once again to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all of you who have contributed in one way or another to our national relief efforts.

DR. THEO - BEN GURIRAB LECTURE SERIES

4. In July this year, the Ministry launched its lecture series and Last week, we had our first lecture in Windhoek under the theme “**The Role of the Youth in the implementation of Agenda 2063: Challenges and opportunities**”. I

wish to express our thanks and appreciation to those who have attended both events. We look forward to your continuing attendance.

SWAPO CONGRESS

5. As I informed at our last meeting, the SWAPO Congress is scheduled for 23-26 November 2017 here in Windhoek. Guided by the maturity of the inner-party democracy, we have been cross cutting the country to seek support of the delegates to the Congress and the people they will represent. Some sister parties in the region and beyond have been invited to the Congress and Your Excellencies are also invited to the opening session.

ENGAGING THE GOVERNMENT OF NAMIBIA

6. I wish to reiterate that the Government of Namibia has an open door policy. We do so with the objective of facilitating our bilateral and multilateral engagement and cooperation. Secondly, we do so because we know we are dealing with diplomats who are familiar with the universal diplomatic code of conduct. We are however concerned that the incidents of communicating directly to line Ministries and offices including the Office of the President are still prevalent. The intention is not to stifle your engagements, but it is in our collective interests to follow the rules by going through the Ministry of International Relations rather than turning to the MIRCOC when things do not go as plan with line Ministries and offices.

OVERALL SECURITY

7. In accordance with the Vienna Convention, your safety and Security is our responsibility. At this juncture, I regret and apologize to all those who were affected by crime one way or the other. We are in constant touch with the relevant police section of our police and are considering appropriate measures. However, we also request you to play your part by taking the necessary measure to secure your offices and Residences.

SADC

8. Let me now turn to regional issues.
SADC remains committed to ensuring a common future for the Southern African region and is working tirelessly to accelerate regional economic integration. Namibia participated at the 37th SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government that took place from 19-20 August 2017 in South Africa under the theme: “Partnering with the Private Sector in Developing Industry and Regional Value-Chains.”

9. At that Summit, H.E. Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia was elected as Deputy Chair. The Summit also urged Member States to work towards achieving the 50:50 gender parity in political and decision-making positions in the public service and private sector. The Union of Comoros was admitted as a new Member of SADC. Other important decision taken at the Summit were:
The re-affirmation of SADC's support and recognition of the importance of the reforms at the African Union, Emphasized the importance of complying with the African Union Constitutive Act; and approved the convening of a solidarity conference in support of Western Sahara.
10. In its efforts to ensure peace, consolidate democracy and good governance in the region, SADC appointed former President Hifikepunye Pohamba as SADC Special Envoy to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). We are hopeful that, with the announcement of the date of elections in the DRC, 23 December 2018, should that happen, peace and stability would come to that country.
11. With regards to the Kingdom of Lesotho, SADC is fully engaged in ensuring that peace and security prevails in the Kingdom. Since October this year, the SADC Expanded Oversight Committee on Lesotho has been deployed to assist with the implementation of SADC decisions, which include constitutional, judiciary, legislative and security sector reforms. To that effect, Namibia has contributed 5 experts to the Oversight Committee. Moreover, on the 20th November 2017, SADC has deployed a Contingent Mission in the Kingdom of Lesotho in order to stabilize the country and assist with the implementation of SADC Decisions. A total of 258 personnel have been deployed, composed of military, intelligence, police and civilian components. Namibia has contributed personnel in all components, which is testimony to our commitment to ensuring peace and security in the region in general, and Lesotho, in particular.

Namibia is following with interest the situation in our sister Republic of Zimbabwe. We hope the leaders of Zimbabwe will garner and the necessary wisdom to find an amicable solution. SADC is doing its part within the provisions of the SADC Treaty.

SACU

12. The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) continues to play an important role in complimenting SADC's efforts that are aimed at achieving regional integration. SACU remains an important institution to Namibia in terms of

revenue collection, collective regional developmental efforts and trade. Namibia should therefore continue to position herself in a manner to derive optimal benefits from SACU.

13. I wish to recognise the progress made in the bilateral tariff negotiations under the Tripartite Free Trade Agreement (TFTA), between SACU and East African Community (EAC). Equally, I recognise the ongoing discussions on trade relationship between the United Kingdom and SACU countries, post Brexit. These negotiations are indeed in line with the vision of SACU, which is aimed at ensuring equitable and sustainable development of the economic community and dedicated to the welfare of the people for a common future.

AFRICAN UNION

14. Our objectives of regional integration within SADC are also intertwined with our objectives of the African Union (AU) and enhancing the African socio-economic development Agenda. Namibia therefore continues to be actively engaged on the implementation of the Continental agenda. We have been participating in the negotiations of the Continental Free Trade Area which is aimed at enhancing regional integration and bolstering intra Africa.
15. In addition, Namibia continues to chair the AU Ministerial Follow-up Committee on the implementation of Agenda 2063. In fact, we are working closely together within the framework of this Committee to ensure that the continental agenda is fully implemented. This is why Namibia hosted the meeting of the AU Ministerial Follow-up Committee in October this year, which was a great success.

WESTERN SAHARA

16. Namibia continues to support the people of Western Sahara in their quest to realize their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in accordance with relevant UN resolutions, including the UN Security Council which calls for the holding of a referendum in Western Sahara.
17. We are indeed disturbed and deeply disappointed on the stance of the Kingdom of Morocco vis-à-vis the independence of the Western Sahara as contained in statement made by the highest authority of that country on 8 November 2017, which inter alia “ruled out any peace deal for the independence of the Western Sahara in the face the United Nations renewed

efforts to resolve this decades old dispute”. Namibia certainly would expect the Kingdom of Morocco to fully abide by the provisions of the AU Constitutive Act, and the relevant UN resolutions on Western Sahara.

AU-EU SUMMIT

18. Namibia will participate at the upcoming AU-EU Summit but in accordance with the decisions of the Assembly of inclusivity. For Namibia, our expectation is that the Summit will, once again, cement and take the Africa-EU strategic partnership to a greater height, which should include a renewed AU-EU collaboration that tackles the changing geopolitical, development, social and economic challenges facing both continents.

THE UN:

Your Excellencies,

19. We live in increasing uncertain times that are further exacerbated by the current challenging global governance architecture, which is in a desperate need of transformation and change to reflect a more equitable global order.
20. Namibia’s call for the reform of the United Nations Security Council, resonates our continent’s collective resolve to canvas support for the Common African Position, as espoused in the Ezulwini Conesus and the Sirte Declaration. Namibia maintains that the historic injustice that Africa continues to endure, further entrenching its endless polarization, must be corrected and, this can only be realized through the comprehensive reform of the UNSC.
21. In this connection, I wish to underscore that colonialism represents one of the most serious violations of national sovereignty of States and, is 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.
22. Namibia will therefore, continue to contribute to the work of the UN Committee on the “Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples” which we are happy to serve on. It is against this background that Namibia continues to support the people of Western Sahara and the people of Palestine and calls for the full implementation of all relevant UN Resolutions on Western Sahara and Palestine.

23. On the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and in connection with the recent negative reports about Namibia's non-compliance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions on North Korea, I wish to inform that, in line with the statement issued last year by the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation, the Government of Namibia has indeed complied with the Security Council resolutions. We have availed all the requested information. We have nothing to hide and we shall continue to cooperate if and when necessary. It is however important to point out that, to our knowledge, there is no UN Security Council result on that sanctions bilateral relations and cooperation with the DPRK.

NAM

24. We remain inspired by the principled stance of the Non-Aligned Movement relative to the "promulgation and implementation of unilateral coercive measures in violation of international law and human rights of the people subjected to them". Hence, we call for the respect of the parameters of international law and human rights, and rejection of unilateralism and interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States by some powerful countries with hegemonic aspirations. We need to take cognizance that the world dynamics have moved from that of being unipolar to international cooperation and multilateralism, which indeed is essential to overcome complex global challenges, such as climate change, underdevelopment, aggressive unilateral behaviors and interference in the sovereignty of other States.
25. Namibia, during this solemn occasion, reiterated its rejection of the unilateral imposition of sanctions against Cuba, Venezuela and other NAM Member States and is doing so now, in expressing its disappointment on the recently announced amendments to the Cuban Assets Control Regulations and Export Administration Regulations, respectively.

FOCAC

26. Namibia continues to attach great importance to the China-Africa Forum (FOCAC). It is important that we continue to strengthen the current platform for collective dialogue, consolidate Africa-China traditional friendship, deepen strategic collaboration and enhance the mechanism of practical cooperation between China and Africa. Namibia looks forward to participating at the 7th Ministerial Conference of FOCAC which will be held in the People's Republic of China in 2018.

CHOGM 2018:

27. Similarly, Namibia remains committed to the Commonwealth and looks forward to attend the 25th Meeting of Commonwealth Heads of State and Government next year.
28. In conclusion let me take this opportunity to reiterate my invitation to our reception this evening.

I Thank You