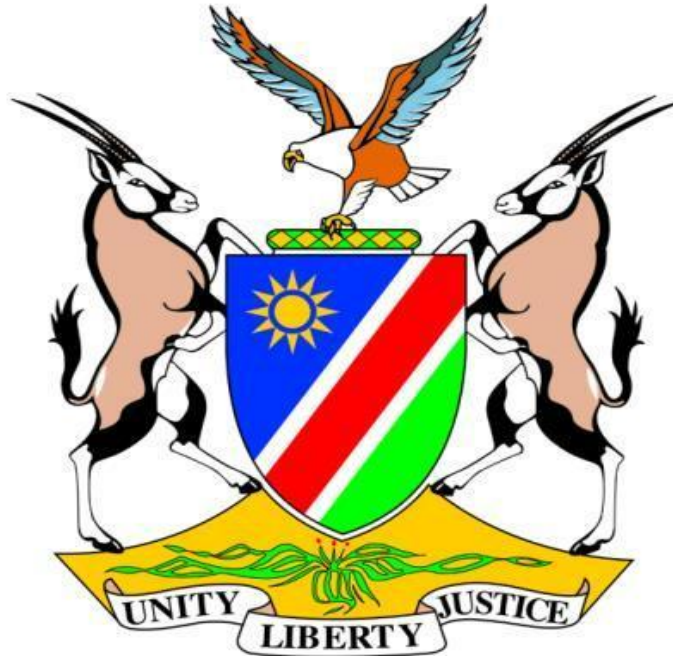


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



KEYNOTE STATEMENT BY

**HON. CHRISTINE //HOEBES, DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

ON BEHALF OF

HON. NETUMBO NANDI NDAITWAH,

**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

DURING THE

**AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM SENSITIZATION PROJECT IN
NAMIBIA CIVIL SOCIETY TRAINING WORKSHOP**

17 APRIL 2018

HEJAL LODGE, WINDHOEK

Programme Director,

Mr. Graham Hopwood, Director of the Institute for Public Policy Research,

Mr. Steven Gruzd, Head of the African Governance and Diplomacy Programme at the South African Institute of International Affairs,

Mr. Heiner Naumann, Resident Representative of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel greatly honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of Namibia. She deeply regrets that she could not be with you this morning because of other equally important national commitments. However, she extends her warm greetings and wish you successful deliberations.

Let me therefore begin by warmly welcoming our guests to Namibia. I would also like to commend the Institute for Public Policy Research, as well as the South African Institute of International Affairs, and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, for organizing this very important Workshop.

As we are aware, the African Peer Review Mechanism, is one of the most important innovative initiatives which places a high premium on the promotion of democracy, good political and economic governance, as well as good corporate governance, and socio-economic development. Therefore, as a self-monitoring mechanism, it seeks to entrench good governance practices by deepening the principles of democracy, transparency, accountability, integrity, respect for human rights, and promotion of the rule of law. The unique feature of the African Peer Review Mechanism is that, it was developed and is being implemented by Africans themselves.

Indeed, we are the only region in the world which has voluntarily agreed to go into an extensive governance assessment of our States. This is important because it encourages African countries not only to commit to make undertakings about good governance, but also to work hard to make this pledge a reality. This means that national ownership and leadership of the countries participating in the peer review process is crucial, as this entails undertaking periodic peer reviews; facilitate such reviews, guided by agreed parameters to enhance democratic governance, as well as good political, economic and corporate governance. This will also inculcate a culture of governance and deepen our strength on targets.

Since its inception in 2003, implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism has progressed significantly. Today the Mechanism has steadily covered the continent with the voluntary adherence of 37 countries of which Namibia is part. This has opened up space for policy debate, and fosters a culture of national dialogue between citizens and their governments, and also encourages peer reviews among African leaders where they assess governance deficiencies, identify best practices and suggest pertinent remedial actions.

As you are aware, Namibia acceded to the African Peer Review Mechanism in January 2017. I am therefore pleased to address this Workshop at a time when we are in the process of putting in place the required national institutions which will act as the operational arms of the continental structures of the African Peer Review Mechanism.

In terms of the Statute of the African Peer Review Mechanism, Namibia has to establish an **African Peer Review Focal Point** at ministerial level or higher, which is to play a pivotal communication and co-ordination role, serving as the liaison mechanism between African Peer Review Mechanism national structures and the continental ones. The Focal Point will also develop and co-ordinate the country's mechanisms of preparing for peer review and hosting the country review team during the review visits.

We also have to establish the **National Governance Council**, an autonomous consultative body, whose composition should be broad-based, diverse and inclusive of all stakeholder representatives of both the State and non-state actors such, as the private sector, civil society, the media, youth and women organizations, community activists, technical research institutions, faith-based organizations, professional bodies and trade unions. In addition, we have to establish the African Peer Review Mechanism **National Secretariat** as an independent body that should be accountable to the African Peer Review Mechanism national Governance Council.

Further to that, **national technical Research Institutions** will have to be appointed, from time to time, by the National Governance Council to collate and analyze the data necessary for a credible review process in the four thematic areas of the African Peer Review Mechanism; namely democracy and good political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance, and socio-economic development.

I should hasten to say that we are indeed making good progress in that regard. The African Peer Review national Focal Point is in place. In addition, Ambassador Ombeni Sefue of Tanzania, a member of the Panel of Eminent Persons of the African Peer Review Mechanism, has been appointed by the Panel as the Lead Panelist for Namibia.

Furthermore, advanced and country support missions to Namibia are planned for the African Peer Review Mechanism team headed by Ambassador Ombeni Sefue during the course of this year. These visits are aimed at ensuring a common understanding of the philosophy, rules and processes of the African Peer Review Mechanism, but also to provide support for Namibia to come up with her Programme of Action.

As a Government, we want to work with all stakeholders in the country in order to ensure the integrity of Namibia's participation in the review process.

Hence, consultations will be made with the civil society and other stakeholders, so that they can fully participate in the country's review process. That is why we welcome this Workshop, because it will go a long way in ensuring that participating Namibian civil society understand the African Peer Review Mechanism, as well as its goals and process. It will also assist our civil society to meaningfully participate in the national review process and use the Mechanism to highlight governance issues and ultimately influence governmental policies.

Distinguished Participants,

Although the African Peer Review Mechanism has made great success since its inception, it is not without challenges. A major challenge is finding ways to ensure that countries that have acceded to the Mechanism undergo their peer review timely. Therefore, as the African Peer Review Mechanism marks 15 years of its existence and declares this year as the year of Universal Accession to the African peer review, it is the collective responsibility of our leaders on the continent to improve the Mechanism's effectiveness, scaling up the accession and peer reviews, and monitoring of implementation of national plans of Action.

Another challenge is about the limited capacity and funding constraints. The responsibility to adequately sustain our mechanism financially rests squarely on our collective shoulders as Africans, given the fact that charity begins at home. Even as we look outwards for support, we must play our part in meeting our obligations. Member states should therefore remit their annual contributions in order to capacitate the Mechanism. I am proud to say that, since acceding to the African Peer Review Mechanism, Namibia has always paid her assessed contribution on time and in full.

For the African Peer Review Mechanism to achieve its full potential and take its pride as a wide African self-monitoring Mechanism, it is imperative that, the continent strengthens its linkage and synergies with the African Union organs and the implementation of the continental development agenda. This is critically important in light of the expanded mandate of the African Peer Review Mechanism which has positioned it to play a monitoring and evaluation role for the African Union Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030.

It is also imperative that the Mechanism engages with regional economic communities on the continent. We should, therefore, hasten the Mechanism's full integration into the African Union system. This will make it more visible to the citizens across the continent and give impetus to its revitalization efforts. The African Peer Review Mechanism itself has developed a Strategic Plan for 2016-2020, in which it has prioritized the revitalization and renewal of the Mechanism.

Similarly, we should actively strengthen the linkages within the African Peer Review Mechanism organs, namely; the Forum of Heads of State and Government, the Committee of Focal Persons, the Panel of Eminent Persons, and the African Peer Review Mechanism Secretariat.

As we also know, the mechanism also provides a platform for partnerships with cooperating partners, as such partnerships bring added technical capacity and credibility to the Mechanism. It is thus imperative that we continue to harness synergies and strengthen the partnerships with our Strategic Partners.

Distinguished Participants,

I would conclude my statement by saying that Africa is at a critical juncture. The success of Africa's development rests on good and effective governance. Therefore, as a continent, we bear a moral responsibility to ensure that the African peer review process is revitalized to keep its promise of good governance for Africa. Namibia will work tirelessly to ensure that the process of institutionalizing the African Peer Review Mechanism is completed and that the country conducts an inclusive, credible and meaningful review process.

I thank you.