

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**OPENING REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE
NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH, DEPUTY PRIME
MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA AND HIS**

**EXCELLENCY DR. MOAHMMAD JAVAD ZARIF,
FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF
IRAN**

12 April 2017

**Your Excellency Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister of
Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran,**

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers,

**Senior Officials of the Government of the Islamic Republic of
Iran,**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted and honoured to warmly welcome Your Excellency, and your esteemed delegation to the Republic of Namibia. I am also grateful that you were able to find time from your busy schedule to visit Namibia, for us to consult on issues of mutual interests. I am confident that our deliberations will be fruitful.

Your presence, here today, is a manifestation of the cordial relationship that exists between our two countries and peoples. It presents an ideal opportunity to explore new areas of cooperation in our bilateral relationship, facilitate the exchange of goods and services and increase people to people interaction between our two countries.

Namibia- Iran bilateral relations date back from when SWAPO had a Representation Office in Tehran in the 1980s, the support we will continue to cherish. The establishment of the diplomatic

relations that now span over 27 year is a testimony of the good cooperation between the two countries. While appreciating the strong political relations over the decades, we are now strengthening our economic cooperation.

Your Excellency,

There is scope for effective cooperation and abundant untapped opportunities in our two countries. In Namibia, we strive to develop and strengthen our manufacturing industries. Namibia is interested to work with Iran in the fields of agribusiness and agricultural production particularly for the rural areas. The sector has been comparatively productive and we are exporting our products such as grapes and beef to the international markets.

Therefore, this visit provides our two countries prospects to review progress made in our bilateral cooperation as well as to discuss opportunities in various sectors for mutual benefit. I am further happy to note that Iran has increased the number of visits to Africa in the last three to four years. This, to us, is an indication that Iran attaches importance to her relations with African countries, and Namibia in this case in particular.

I am delighted that the first High-Level Iran Economic Forum, organized by the Iranian Embassy in Namibia in conjunction with the Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was inaugurated today at Safari Hotel, and its ongoing now as we sit here. This Economic Forum, is aimed at encouraging business

dialogue, as well as discuss and explore potential business opportunities in Namibia and Iran. I hope that this event will be a resounding success.

In the same vein, we welcome the decision by Iran Tractor Manufacturing Company to set up a Tractor Assembly plant near Windhoek. This is timely as it will create much needed technology transfer, employment and boost trade between the two countries.

Your Excellency,

The SADC region remains stable and peaceful. In August this year, Namibia will assume the SADC Chairmanship and we look forward to further strengthen our cooperation at regional level with Iran.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the political formations are working towards the full implementation of the agreement on holding elections in that country. We hope the elections will be held at the end of this year, 2018.

With respect to Western Sahara, Namibia continues to support the People of Western Sahara to self-determination in their pursuit to exercise their inalienable rights to determine their own future and establish an independent State. We also welcome the recent meeting between the UN Secretary General's Envoy on Western Sahara and the President of Western Sahara. We hope that the necessary momentum will be created leading to the holding of the UN Referendum in Western Sahara.

Namibia also continues to support the Palestinian people in their legitimate struggle for their inalienable right to self-determination and independence with East Jerusalem as their capital. We condemn the recent brutal killings of innocent Palestinians by Israeli troops.

On Syria we urge all the parties to the conflict to engage in good faith negotiations, under the auspices of the United Nations to end the blood-letting conflict in the country and to cease all hostilities to end the suffering of civilians and aggressions against the territorial integrity of Syria. We are further concerned about the reported chemical weapons used against civilians. We urge foreign powers to exercise maximum restraint and not rush to judgement on apportion blame.

In relation to international peace and security, we support efforts aimed at combating terrorism and the spread of terrorist groups, which pose threats to peace and security.

Your Excellency,

It is important for our two countries as Members of the G77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to continue maintaining regular consultations on vital issues such as the prevention and combating of terrorism and organized crime, the promotion of sustainable development and to take concerted efforts towards climate change.

The need for the reform of the United Nations, Security Council and other multilateral institutions also remains a high priority for us. I, therefore, commend our common conviction of a fairer, equitable, representative and democratic UN Security Council that is reflective of the current geopolitical realities.

Your Excellency,

Finally, Namibia deeply values the longstanding solidarity, friendship and cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran and this visit today has certainly added significant momentum to our bilateral relations.

I thank you.