



**STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH,  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS AND COOPERATION AT THE ANNUAL DIPLOMATIC  
CORPS BRIEFING  
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA  
29 JULY 2019,  
AT 11:00**

**Director of Ceremonies,**

**Honourable Christine //Hoebes, Deputy Minister of International Relations and  
Cooperation,**

**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,**

**Heads Regional and International Organizations,**

**Senior Official from MICO,**

**Distinguished invited Guests,**

**Members of the Media Fraternity,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is indeed a pleasure to engage with you at our common platform, and let me therefore welcome you all especially those Heads of Mission and International Organizations who joint our diplomatic family since we last met on November 2018.

## **BILATERAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

**Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I have always reiterated that we live in a digital world, which has facilitated the ease of conducting diplomacy. However, the efficiency of ICT does not replace diplomats, hence the need for us to continue to interact as we are doing this morning.

We have just concluded a successful State Visit coupled with a Joint Commission of Cooperation between Namibia and Zimbabwe. This is in addition to equally successful States Visits from United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Guinea; Working Visit of the President of DRC; Joint Commissions of Cooperation with Angola, Guinea and Zimbabwe; and Working Groups with Cuba and Sweden.

I would like to thank the Heads of Mission of these countries for your cooperation which has immensely contributed to the success of these undertakings.

**Your Excellencies,**

As you would be aware, Namibia is grappling with a devastating drought situation. Hence, the President of the Republic of Namibia, Dr. Hage G. Geingob had to declare a state of emergency. Many of our bilateral and multilateral development partners have responded positively. On behalf of the Government and the People of Namibia, I wish to express our deep thanks and appreciation for your solidarity and generosity.

### **1. UN Breakfast Meeting**

Similarly and as you are aware, the UN system in Namibia in conjunction with the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation hosted a Breakfast Meeting. The breakfast meeting had three specific objectives which were to foster discussion on avenues of cooperation for drought emergency support; Update the Diplomatic Community and Heads of International Organizations about the ongoing UN Reform; and Update on the Youth Agenda. As MIRCO we appreciate this joint effort as it strengthened Namibia - UN relations and cooperation. At this point, I want to thank Honourable Christine //Hoebes, Deputy Minister MIRCO who was one of the drivers of this event.

### **2. Land Conference**

With regard to the Land conference, let me inform that implementation of the resolutions and decisions taken at the conference are being implemented. As we are sitting here, the Committee under Chair of the Prime Minister that is task to see the implementation is meeting. I may also inform you that a Technical Committee was set up by His Excellency, President Hage G. Geingob to look into the understanding of ancestral land the Committee has started its work by engaging communities all over the country in order to get their views.

### **3. Economic Summit**

In his drive to bring about prosperity in Namibia, H.E. Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia has established a High Level Panel on the Namibian Economy (HLPNE). The HLPNE is organizing a Economic Summit to take place from 31<sup>st</sup> July – 1<sup>st</sup> August. Invitation if not yet received, will be send to your Mission before the end of the day.

# MULTILATERAL RELATIONS

## 1. Southern Africa Development Community

- 1.1 Since Namibia assumed the Chairmanship of SADC in August 2018, under the theme “*Promoting Infrastructure Development and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development*”, the Chair of SADC, H.E. Dr. Hage G. Geingob, has been advocating for the effective operationalization of the 38th SADC Summit theme, which is so far contributing to infrastructure development and empowerment of the youth in the region, in order to ensure regional connectivity and economic integration. We prepare to hand over the reins to Tanzania in August this year.
- 1.2 You will recall that when Namibia took over the Chairmanship of SADC H.E. President Geingob stated that, “during my tenure as Chairperson, I will strive to ensure that SADC remains focused on the promotion of intra-Africa trade.” Indeed we reached a major milestone when the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement entered into force on the 30th of May 2019, following the ratification by 25 Countries. Subsequently, I am pleased to state that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was launched on 7 July 2019 in Niamey, Niger, during the 12th Extraordinary Session of the African Union Assembly and is expected to become operational as from 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2020.
- 1.3 The AfCFTA is a flagship project of Agenda 2063, where goods and services will move freely among member states of the African Union (AU), with the objective of boosting intra-African trade. With this in place and other regional free trade agreements the SADC region is destined to accrue immense benefits that will contribute to the economic growth and development in the region.
- 1.4 In March 2019, the SADC Council of Minister’s directed the SADC Secretariat to establish a Task Force Team to facilitate the transformation process of the SADC Parliamentary Forum into a SADC Parliament by carrying out a thorough analysis by engaging and visiting current existing

Regional Parliaments, as a benchmarking, to get a better understanding and appreciation on the transformation process and establishment of a SADC regional Parliament.

- 1.5 Namibia as the current Chair of SADC, was assigned to benchmark the Pan-African Parliament in South Africa, ECOWAS Parliament in Abuja, Nigeria and Asia Inter-Parliament Assembly (AIPA) in Jakarta, Indonesia.
- 1.6 The Second Task Force Team, which was part of the benchmarking of the Pan-African Parliament, was assigned to benchmark the East Africa Legislative Assembly (EALA) and the European Parliament. During the process of benchmarking process, the two task force teams were given by the SADC Secretariat the benchmarking tools including the format of the consolidated report. Which was already submitted to the SADC Secretariat and will be part of the SADC Agenda at the Council of Ministers before it is submitted to the 39th SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government.
- 1.7 All these efforts are with the full understanding that the proposed transformation of the SADC Parliamentary Forum into a SADC Parliament requires a robust structure in order to deliver on its mandate and communicate effectively, issues that bring value addition to the regional economic integration.
- 1.8 A week ago, the 21st Meeting of the SADC Ministerial Committee of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security took place in Zambia. It among others noted progress made in the implementation of reforms and national dialogue in the Kingdom of Lesotho. It commended the people of the DRC for holding peaceful elections and for remaining peaceful in the post-election period.
- 1.9 Namibia participated in the deployment of SADC Electoral Observation Missions to Eswatini, Madagascar, Malawi and South Africa and is pleased to have declared the elections in these countries as fair and credible.
- 1.10 We should recall that three of our SADC Member States, namely; the Republics of Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, were severely affected

and devastated by the Tropical Cyclone Idai. The Cyclone caused loss of precious lives and severe damage to infrastructure in the affected countries. In response, on 11 April 2019, H.E. President Geingob, in his capacity as SADC Chair, launched the SADC Regional Appeal for Humanitarian Assistance in order to seek support for the countries affected by Tropical Cyclone Idai. I thank all of you responded to the Regional Humanitarian Appeal.

- 1.11 I have to reiterate that, in view of the increased occurrence of climate-related catastrophes, such as cyclones, floods and droughts, around the world and especially in the SADC region, SADC re-emphasises its call for joint global efforts to reduce global warming and the impacts of climate change and variability, while stepping up efforts to enhance adaptive capacities of developing countries in line with the spirit of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) and Article 8(4) of the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
- 1.12 In this context, I also wish to inform that the MCO decided to activate the SADC Committee on natural disaster preparedness.
- 1.13 SADC hosted a conference to reaffirm its solidarity with the people of Western Sahara in their quest for decolonization and realizing their right to self-determination. The conference saw the participation of SADC Member States and like-minded countries, political parties and civil society organization. The Solidarity conference adopted a Declaration reaffirming the unequivocal commitment to the people of Western Sahara.

## **2. African Union**

- 2.1 Indeed we reached a major milestone when the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement entered into force on the 30th of May 2019, following the ratification by 25 Countries, and was launched on 7 July 2019 in Niamey, Niger, during the 12th Extraordinary Session of the African Union Assembly.

- 2.2 The AfCFTA is a flagship project of Agenda 2063, where goods and services will move freely among member states of the African Union (AU), with the objective of boosting intra-African trade.
- 2.3 Namibia remains a member of the AU Committee of 10 on the reform of the UN Security Council, and continues to advocate for Africa's common position as contained in the Ezulwini consensus and Sirte Declaration.

### **3. UNITED NATIONS**

#### **3.1 Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Focal Points Network Meeting**

Namibia, as chair of the Focal Points Network, hosted the third annual capital level meeting of the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network under the theme "*Women, Peace and Security: Towards Full Participation*" with the sub-theme, "*Mainstreaming the WPS Agenda in Regional Economic Communities (RECs)*", in Windhoek from 10 to 11 April 2019.

During this meeting, Namibia managed to successfully introduce two new discussions; namely, the role of youth in the WPS Agenda, as well as the connection between disarmament and the WPS Agenda.

#### **3.2 The International Women's Peace Centre**

In an effort to advance the implementation of WPS agenda, Namibia announced its decision to establish an International Women's Peace Center (IWPC) during the 3rd Meeting of the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network, intended to be a center of excellence for more inclusive peacebuilding and conflict prevention processes to support and ensure women's contributions within Namibia, Southern Africa, Africa and globally.

The concept note is about to be finalized and will be shared with all interested parties. The plan is to launch the center in October 2020 as we mark the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325.

### **3.3 Launch of the Namibia National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security, Windhoek**

Namibia launched its first National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) 2019 to 2024, in Windhoek on 19 June 2019.

The NAP delineates nine priority areas, with the overall aim of strengthening women's influence and meaningful participation in peace processes, including in peace negotiations and mediation, as well as in broader peace-building and state building.

### **3.4 Trafficking in Persons (TiP)**

The Namibian Government remains fully committed to eradicate Trafficking in Persons (TiP). During 2018, there was an increase in investigations, prosecutions of potential traffickers, and convicting traffickers for the first time since 2016. The Namibian Government provided care to a higher percentage of identified victims, and facilitated the safe repatriation of more foreign victims. The Government also finalized a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) to guide front-line officials in the identification of victims and provision of protective services.

## **4. NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT**

4.1 The Namibian delegation to the Coordinating Bureau Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held in Caracas, Venezuela, held from 18-22 July 2019 was led by Hon. Christine //Hoëbes, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation.

4.2 The Ministerial Meeting was held under the *theme "Promoting and Consolidation of Peace through respect of International Law"*. As a small state, Namibia associated itself fully with this theme, for it speaks to the global political realities of today.

Let me once again, express my thanks and appreciation for having attended this session and I look forward to our interaction.

I thank you.