

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
PRESIDENT HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA
AT HIS INAUGURATION AS PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

21 MARCH 2010

**INDEPENDENCE STADIUM,
WINDHOEK**

**Check Against Delivery*

Director of Ceremonies,
Your Excellency, Founding President and Father of the Namibian Nation, Comrade
Dr Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma,
Your Excellency, Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo
and Chairman of the Southern African Development Community (SADC),
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Your Excellencies, former Heads of State and Government,
Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly,
Honourable Chairperson of the National Council,
Honourable Chief Justice of the Republic of Namibia,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Leaders of Political Parties,
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Esteemed Chiefs of the National Defence Force, Police, and other Services,
Honourable Governor of the Khomas Region and Governors of other Regions
present,
Your Worship Mayor of Windhoek and other Mayors of other towns in Namibia,
Esteemed Traditional and Religious Leaders,
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Members of the Media,
Fellow Namibians,

A short while ago, I was sworn in for my second and last term of office as President
of our Republic. I, therefore, stand here before you today filled with pride,
gratitude and humility to deliver my second and last inaugural statement. I took a
solemn oath that I will dedicate myself to the service and well-being of the Namibian
nation with no exception. I promised to uphold, protect and defend the Namibian
Constitution and to do justice to all.

Once again, a new day has dawned on our beautiful country, and Namibia continues
to be a beacon of hope, opportunity, stability, peace, unity and democracy. This
event signifies the consolidation of the gains of freedom, for which thousands of
Namibians sacrificed their lives and shed their precious blood during our struggle
for freedom and national independence.

On behalf of the nation, I pay special tribute to the great sons and daughters of our
nation, the heroes and heroines of Namibia who lost their lives during the cause of
the struggle for liberty, democracy and freedom.
They held the beacon of freedom and liberty high, in the face of a long and bitter
struggle for national liberation. Their sacrifices have not been in vain. We will
always remember them because their blood waters our freedom.

Director of Ceremonies

Allow me, also to first and foremost express special thanks and gratitude to all our
citizens, the eligible voters who freely and overwhelmingly renewed the mandate of

the SWAPO Party. The Namibian voters also reposed their confidence in me, by electing me for the second time and last time as President of the Republic of Namibia to lead our great country for the next five years.

I accept your mandate with sincere gratitude and humility. Your unequivocal support gives me the courage to face the challenges that lie before us. It is a fitting tribute that I took the oath of Office here at the Independence Stadium, the same site at which the First President and Founding Father of our Nation, Dr. Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma took the oath of Office twenty years ago, on 21st March 1990. On that historic day, a sovereign, secular, democratic and unitary Namibian State was born.

Fellow Namibians,

Allow me to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to Comrade Dr Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma, a legendary freedom fighter, Leader of our Revolution and Founding President of the Republic of Namibia for leading the way. I would also like to thank him for championing our cherished policy of National Reconciliation. His achievements throughout the years of his illustrious leadership should inspire all Namibians to emulate his selfless-sacrifice and dedication to service. May his wisdom remain at the service of the nation, and may he enjoy continued good health for many years to come.

Director of Ceremonies

I welcome the Excellencies, the Royal Highnesses, and Honourable dignitaries and distinguished guests to this historic inaugural ceremony. Those of you who came from other countries, I say welcome to Namibia and please feel at home. I feel greatly honoured that so many of you could travel from all corners of the globe to lend importance and dignity to this special occasion.

The presence of thousands of our citizens in this stadium today as everyone can see constitutes a profound statement of hope that all of us will continue to expand the frontiers of human development, dignity, peace, security and stability in our country. I thank you very much for coming in such big numbers.

Fellow Namibians,

Today, we have a dual celebration, namely, my inauguration for the second term of office as President of our Republic and the historic 20th Anniversary of our nation's freedom and independence.

On that historic day of 21st day of March 1990, following a protracted and bitter struggle for national liberation, we achieved our objective of political emancipation

when we hoisted the Namibian flag of freedom, independence and sovereignty, and lowered, for the very last time, the flag of apartheid colonialism. The vote for freedom and democracy was, and remains, an irreversible choice by all our people.

Fellow Namibians,

Last year, for the first time in our history as a free and independent nation, those citizens who were born after independence, commonly referred to us the “Born Frees”, were able to exercise their democratic right to vote as guaranteed under Article 17 sub-article (2) of the Namibian Constitution. Next year, these young people will be in a position to occupy public elected offices at the age of 21. This is a reminder that our nation is slowly but surely reaching adulthood.

I am, therefore, pleased to note that our Policy of National Reconciliation has contributed to creating a society that is in harmony and at peace with itself. In order to continue on the path of peace, security and stability, we must embrace our diverse cultures. We must rally together as one people with a common destiny. We must consolidate the foundation for peace for our children and their children’s children.

Now, more than ever before, we must stand united. Just as unity was vital during the liberation struggle, it is still a very important element for the implementation of our common objectives.

A divided community waste valuable time in internal wrangles that can only sap its strength and cause its failure. This must be avoided at all costs in our country.

Fellow Namibians,

Today is Independence Day. It is an occasion for all Namibians to renew our collective resolve to contribute positively to the development of our great country. On this occasion of our 20th Independence Anniversary, our Government renews its commitment to the development of our country and the creation of opportunities for every citizen to access all socio-economic opportunities.

Our Republic was founded by dedicated patriots whose vision has inspired our nation to move forward in unity. We will forever remember our heroes and heroines who inspired us to fight for freedom and independence. We fought many battles. We crossed many rivers of blood and we won a decisive victory on the 21st of March 1990. The spirit of dedication and courage must continue to guide and inspire us to confidently face the present and future challenges.

I am aware that the attainment of independence was not the end of the struggle waged by the Namibian people for many decades. We must continue to work with greater commitment and diligence to ensure that more Namibians enjoy the fruits of independence.

We will continue to implement development strategies adopted by our SWAPO Party Government to combat poverty and create social safety nets for our citizens. We will continue to address the socio-economic welfare of all our people, especially senior citizens, workers, the youth, the peasants, the orphans, the vulnerable children, women, war veterans, and people with disabilities.

Director of Ceremonies,

Unemployment and poverty, particularly among women, youth, residents of informal settlements and peasants remain a source of great concern for our Government. This calls for decisive policy interventions that can bring about tangible results. Against this background, there is urgent need to implement specific programmes and projects with a view to addressing this unacceptable state of affairs.

In order to secure results during the next five years, our Government will be guided by our chosen policy instruments including the 2009 SWAPO PARTY Election Manifesto. This is a social contract between the Party and the Namibian people. It outlines programmes and projects which will require implementation by our Government, once they are adopted and incorporated within Government programmes.

In addition, the Government will ensure that NDP3 is implemented to the letter. Our long term road map to achieve a developed status for our country, namely, Vision 2030 will also continue to receive special attention.

Projects with the potential to create employment must be pursued in earnest. These include the Green Scheme, aquaculture, rice production, grape cultivation and other agricultural projects along our perennial rivers. More land must be put under cultivation in order to increase harvest volumes and the diversity of crops.

I must, however, point out that food security cannot be achieved through government interventions alone. Therefore, Namibian citizens, the private sector and research institutions must become fully involved in the quest for food security in our country.

The entire spectrum of Namibia's agricultural potential must be explored and harnessed to its fullest extent in order to achieve this national objective. Therefore, wherever there is arable land, a river, a dam, a borehole or a well that can yield enough water for cultivation efforts, such resources must be utilised to boost food production.

I have no doubt that a successful agricultural sector will go a long way in addressing unemployment among our citizens. It will also address the socio-economic plight of our peasants. Our Government will continue to provide assistance to the peasants by expanding programmes, such as ploughing services, subsidised seeds, provision of fertilizer at subsidised prices, and provision of improved livestock. We will continue to expand the tourism sector and put more emphasis on assistance to community based conservancies.

Aquaculture projects will also be expanded so that rural communities can benefit from this fast growing sector. With these and other measures in place, I have no doubt that we can roll back the frontiers of poverty and unemployment.

Our Government is revisiting the regulations pertaining to recruitment of unskilled labour. We will also expand labour-based projects, especially in rural areas. We will work out mechanisms to ensure that successful tenderers are required to adopt, where necessary, labour-based methods during the construction of infrastructure projects.

Moreover, from now on, companies that are awarded public tenders must source their unskilled labour requirements within Namibia. In addition, a strategy will be put in place to co-ordinate the placement of graduates from the National Youth Service in different sectors of our economy. Against this background, Government departments and the private sector are encouraged to enlist the services of these graduates in areas such as brick laying, maintenance and plumbing works.

Our Government is also encouraging private sector companies to enter into joint ventures with small and medium size enterprises, to create more effective synergies for growth. In the same vein, Government encourages financial institutions to support the local economy by providing capital to local entrepreneurs.

Fellow Namibians,

It is said that education is the best equaliser. I, therefore, believe that a strong education sector, which is capable of creating an educated nation, is the backbone of every nation. Our education sector will continue to enjoy top priority of our Government. Through the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme, work has already started to address problems in this strategic sector.

Specific attention will be given to the physical condition of school buildings, teacher's houses, libraries, laboratories, hostels and the availability of text books. The procurement of text books for our primary and secondary schools has commenced.

I urge all the parties involved in this endeavour to ensure that this programme proceeds smoothly in order to ensure that our school children are equipped with the necessary tools to be able to undertake meaningful education.

Fellow Namibians,

The greater majority of our people live in rural areas, where thousands eke out a living on marginal lands without the necessary tools, to engage meaningfully, in the modern agricultural economy. Hence, their activities have been reduced to subsistence agriculture. This difficult existence is compounded by the absence of public services and social amenities such as water, electricity, housing, healthcare and education facilities in some areas.

The state of affairs in rural areas is duplicated in informal settlements on the periphery of many of our towns and cities. I have visited many of these areas and believe that drastic steps must be taken by our Government to find a durable solution to this situation.

With regard to informal settlements, urgent action is needed to address the questions of habitation, sanitation and access to public services. The present state of affairs is a source of great concern and it must be addressed and addressed now and not later.

Fellow Namibians,

Together with education, the provision of high quality health care services to safeguard the health of our nation is critical to the success of our socio-economic development strategies.

Our Government will, therefore, give urgent attention to this vital sector to ensure that it functions properly and professionally to provide care to those who need it. In addition to curative medicine, preventive programmes will also be intensified as a strategy to maximize the deployment and utilisation of resources.

Immunization coverage must also be expanded to protect Namibians from preventable diseases, especially the childhood illnesses. Ongoing efforts to expand access to anti-retroviral treatment will continue to enjoy top priority.

Increased coverage of this treatment has made visible changes in the lives of many Namibians who are today living healthier lives and contributing to the development of our country.

I am pleased to say that the provision of services in this sector will be boosted by the recently established School of Medicine at the University of Namibia. Through this School, Namibia will for the first time be able to train health professionals locally.

The priority areas I have highlighted will not be implemented in isolation. They are part and parcel of the broader programme of our Government to improve the living conditions of our people, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to create more prosperity through employment creation.

Therefore, ongoing Government programmes and projects in the areas of land reform and resettlement, crime prevention, decentralisation, as well as the development of our mining sector will continue.

Fellow Namibians,

Our programmes and projects will only succeed if their implementation is assured. Against this background, we will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to improve efficiency in the Public Service. We will also ensure that public resources are only used for their intended purposes. When I took oath as Second President five years ago, I informed our nation that our Government will address corruption. I am pleased to report that the Anti-Corruption Commission is now in place. I request all citizens to report corruption when you see it to the Anti-Corruption Commission.

I want to assure our nation that our Government and its public officials will continue to lead by example in the promotion of transparency, accountability and honesty.

We will lead by example by ensuring dignity through committed public service at all times. Our actions and deeds will be motivated and directed towards the promotion of the best interests of our nation. We will continue to subscribe to the principles of the Rule of Law and good governance.

Let us continue to work hard to attain socio-economic development within the framework of NDP3, the 2009 SWAPO PARTY Election Manifesto and Vision 2030, which are our roadmap for peace, stability, security and socio-economic development.

Fellow Citizens,

You will recall that our modern struggle for national liberation was started by the workers. I, therefore, pay tribute to the workers of our nation. It is their labour, dedication and sweat that have transformed the economy of our country from colonial to a free and participatory economy.

It is their toil that continues to sustain and nourish our economy.

It is their toil that continues to give us the means to pursue the nation's developmental goals. I believe that we can only become a winning nation if we

improve productivity in order to create wealth for our nation. Workers are at the forefront and therefore they should take a lead in this regard.

Namibian women have been a strong pillar in our struggle for national liberation. We can, therefore, not succeed if they are excluded from socio-economic upliftment. They must continue to play a central role in the process of nation building.

Against this background, our SWAPO Party Government will continue to build on the gains scored by our Government in the past twenty years. We will ensure that the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of Namibian women are realised. I must also record that over the years, we have made progress in the emancipation of Namibian women, especially in education. We can proudly say that, we have reached parity and in some cases even exceeded parity in school enrolment between boys and girls.

Today at tertiary level, more graduates are women. For instance, there are more women than men at the recently launched School of Medicine at the University of Namibia. As caring mothers, I have no doubt that our patients will be in good hands. We will always be indebted to our women for their contribution to the development of our country.

Namibia is also indebted to our senior citizens. They will continue to enjoy centre stage in our policies aimed at uplifting their socio-economic status. Recently, our SWAPO Party Government took a decision to exempt our senior citizens from paying user medical fees in our State hospitals. This will be effective from next month. We recognise the fact that our senior citizens also played a crucial role during the struggle for national liberation. Our Government will continue to look for ways and means of showing the nation's appreciation for their contribution to the development of our country. We salute them for their positive contribution.

Traditional leaders are custodians of our cultural heritage and are promoters of our cultural values. It is said that a nation without culture is a lost nation, therefore, we will always hold our traditional leaders in high esteem.

Today, we are a free. We are a free and proud nation partly because of the contribution made by our traditional leaders in the struggle for national liberation. Indeed, the earlier liberation struggle waged by our fore-bearers was spearheaded by our traditional leaders.

This is why we always recognise heroes such as Hendrik Witbooi, Samuel Maharero, Nehale IyaMpingana, Mandume ya Ndemufayo, Iipumbu ya Shilongo and many others. Our Government will, therefore, always hold them in high esteem. We will also continue to work closely with the Council of Traditional Leaders on matters of national interest.

We will always cherish the positive role played by our young people in the development of our country. We have always recognised the fact that the youth are a transmitting belt of any nation's vision and programmes. We salute our youth for their role in the national liberation struggle and the development of our country.

The backbone of our freedom fighters consisted mainly of the youth. Today, our young people are playing a positive role in institutions such as the Namibian Defence Force, the Namibian Police Force, Namibian Prison Services and the civil service. In this regard, they play a crucial role in the defence and security of our nation. Namibia can only leap forward into the frontiers of the 21st century if our youth play a positive role in the development of our country.

We, therefore, salute our youth for mobilising their fellow youth, especially the "born frees", to participate in last year's Presidential and National Assembly elections in big numbers. Education and training should continue to take centre stage in order to prepare our youth as leaders of tomorrow.

It is also an established fact that peasants constitute the largest population of Namibia. We are aware that in most cases, our peasants live under very harsh conditions and depend on meagre resources to eke out a living. I, therefore, wish to reaffirm the policy of our SWAPO Party Government to uplift the living standards of our rural population in order to enable them to contribute to our ongoing efforts to attain socio-economic development.

Our Government will continue to support measures aimed at improving rural life such as agricultural output, providing safe drinking water, electricity, adequate and affordable medical facilities and services, and infrastructures like feeder roads and schools.

The advancement of any country is supported by economic growth. I believe that the more the economy grows, the more the benefits are spread among the citizens. Against this background, the business community plays an important role in the vision of our nation. We believe that the more Namibians become economically prosperous, the more stable, peaceful and secure our country will become. We will, therefore, continue to promote a conducive environment for both domestic and foreign investment. We will also continue to maintain good relations between our Government and the business community.

Last but not least, allow me to pay tribute to our religious and spiritual leaders of our country and their religious organisations. We pay tribute to our religious and spiritual leaders because they look after the spiritual needs of our people.

Their unshakable and persistent stand against apartheid colonialism is well-known. Their role in advocating our cherished policy of National Reconciliation is highly

commended. I urge them to continue preaching awareness, especially among our young people, about the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse and other social evils in our society.

On our part, we will always call on them for advice and support in our effort to maintain peace, stability and security in our country.

Director of Ceremonies

I am humbled to see so many of our friends, brothers and sisters who represent the international community on this very special occasion. Our nation will forever be grateful to the fact that Namibia gained her independence under the banner of international solidarity, freedom and justice. We value the diplomatic and material support we received at our time of need. I am aware that some nationals of the then Front Line States lost their lives as a result of the war for national liberation.

This notwithstanding, our brothers and sisters stood firm and never wavered. We will always be grateful for the invaluable support we received from them.

I pledge our Government's support to international organisations such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the African Union, SADC and many others, whose objective is to maintain world peace and security.

Fellow Namibians,

Peace, security, stability and national unity are essential for the continued development of our country. I am convinced that the power of our common values and goals exceeds our differences. Our strength lies in the colourful diversity of the Namibian people. Many of our fallen heroes and heroines have sacrificed their lives for us to live in peace and in a secure environment.

I, therefore, call upon all of us, the citizens of Republic of Namibia to continue to maintain peace, security and stability in our country.

We must cherish and continue to promote reconciliation and national unity. We must shun the vices of tribalism, regionalism, nepotism, ethnicity, racial discrimination, sexism and corruption. We must honour the sacrifices made by our brothers and sisters and make Namibia a winning nation.

Director of Ceremonies

During my tenure as your President, I will do my best to serve all Namibians. I, therefore, need your support and assistance.

In conclusion, I would like to once again thank Their Excellencies, Heads of State and Government, Representatives of International Organisations and indeed all our honourable guests for having come to join us in the 20th Anniversary of our Independence and to witness my inauguration for the second term as President of our Republic.

I wish all our citizens a happy 20th Anniversary of our Independence.

Long Live the Republic of Namibia!

I thank you.