

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBA, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL INAUGURATION
OF THE NAMIBIA INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (NIPAM)**

25 FEBRUARY 2011

WINDHOEK

Check Against Delivery

Director of Ceremonies,
Right Honourable Prime Minister,
Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Honourable Governor of Khomas Region,
Esteemed Chairperson and Members of the NIPAM Governing Council,
Esteemed Chief Executive Officer of NIPAM,
Esteemed Management and Staff Members of NIPAM,
Esteemed Senior Government Officials,
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen;

We are gathered here today to witness an important milestone in our quest to improve public service delivery in post-independence Namibia. The establishment of the Namibia Institute for Public Administration and Management has a long history. Largely, it is an off-shoot of the policy of SWAPO of Namibia, as a liberation movement, to train Namibians to manage the affairs of the nation after the achievement of independence.

During the liberation struggle, many Namibians were trained at the United Nations Institute for Namibia (UNIN), which was established with the assistance of the United Nations as a training and applied research institute. It provided training in public administration, civil service management, and other areas.

Director of Ceremonies,

During the years of apartheid colonialism, “civil services” were established for the various ethnic administrations. This fragmented civil service is what the new Government inherited at independence. Obviously, the *status quo* had to change in line with the post-independence dispensation. Consequently, ethnic-based civil services were abolished and new institutions were put in place to take charge of all matters related to the civil service. New laws were also enacted to provide a legal framework for the new dispensation.

At the First Cabinet Retreat in 2000, a resolution was adopted to establish a training institution, specifically targeting the civil service. In order to implement the resolution, a Technical Committee under the Chairmanship of the Secretary to Cabinet was established to spearhead the initiative. As part of its mandate, some members of the Committee undertook Study Tours to various countries to gain better understanding on their operational modalities, funding options, management and organizational structures of similar institutions. This was followed by the process of drafting the NIPAM Bill, which was tabled, debated and passed by our Parliament last year. I signed the NIPAM Act, (Act No. 10 of 2010) into law on 23 June 2010.

Director of Ceremonies,

I am concerned by the perception among some members of the public that the civil service is not addressing their concerns effectively and efficiently. There have also been genuine complaints by members of the public stemming from unbecoming and unhelpful behavior on the part of some civil servants. Such conduct is contrary to the norms and standards of behavior that are expected from civil servants. It must, therefore, never be tolerated.

As Namibians, we must build and maintain a civil service that is ethical, efficient, prudent in the utilization of resources and responsive to the needs of the public. In this regard, our commitment to effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency must be total and unwavering; accompanied by the shared belief that the public service has a duty to act with dedication at all times and without fail. There should be no lip service to public service or half-hearted approach delivery.

For the civil service to be effective, efficient and accountable, it is important that it is unified in terms of knowledge, orientation, work ethic, and core values. Regrettably, due to our historical background, these attributes were lacking from our civil service at independence and in the years that followed. It is for this reason that there was an urgent need to re-orient the civil service to become more focused on service delivery. NIPAM was established to address these concerns.

Director of Ceremonies,

The NIPAM Act outlines clear objectives that this institution must achieve. It provides a clear purpose for NIPAM's existence. According to Section 2, Sub-section 1 of the Act, that purpose is to conduct training, operational research, capacity evaluation and consultancy. We expect NIPAM to carry out its mandate within the letter and spirit of the Act. We also expect the Governing Council to fulfil its duties of providing policy guidance to the management units of NIPAM, so that the objectives of strengthening, modernizing and capacitating our civil service can be achieved.

I urge NIPAM not to compromise on quality and the relevance of courses that it will offer to Namibian civil servants. In Section 5, the NIPAM Act calls for the systemization of capacity building interventions within the unified Public Service in Namibia. In this regard, NIPAM should ensure high quality and consistent standards of all training materials, as well as the manner in which the courses are presented and evaluated.

It is important to ensure that the civil service, which is the engine behind the implementation of Government policies and the delivery of public services, is well-oiled and that it operates optimally at all times.

Director of Ceremonies,

We can only carry out and achieve our national development goals and Vision 2030 successfully and effectively, provided that our civil service operates efficiently and optimally.

I, therefore, call upon all Offices, Ministries and Agencies to ensure that staff members who need urgent in-service training are identified and that arrangements are made for them to receive requisite in-service training. Those who are identified for training must attend the courses diligently to obtain the needed skills and competencies to carry out their duties effectively. After completing the courses, they must apply the skills they acquire in their work environments in order to bring about the needed improvements. I urge civil servants to embrace NIPAM and utilise its services fully.

I wish to emphasise the point that, the main aim of the training courses is to inculcate a strong work ethic, the sense and commitment to team work and dedication to service delivery. Furthermore, it should be clearly understood that the reason for the existence of the civil service is to serve the public, not the other way round. In this regard, civil servants should understand their roles fully and act accordingly at all times.

Director of Ceremonies,

After extensive planning and deployment of substantial amounts of resources, NIPAM has now been established. The onus is now on the Governing Council and the Management of NIPAM to ensure that the Namibian people get the full value of investment that they have made. In other words, NIPAM should not become a white elephant.

Rather, it should become a vibrant institution, capable of successfully imparting valuable skills to our civil servants. For that to happen, its management should remain focused and ensure that the remaining phases in the development of this institute are completed fully and on time.

Our Government will continue to closely monitor the progress towards the realization of the remaining phases in the development and expansion of NIPAM. There should be a clear understanding and recognition that the training and capacity building of our civil servants is a huge task that demands total dedication and commitment. It requires full attention and focused interventions. This is the reason why NIPAM was established.

I urge NIPAM to leave no stone unturned to transform our civil service into a professional entity that fully understands its mandate, deeply steeped in the values of honesty, integrity, transparency and accountability and driven by the desire to excel. In this context, NIPAM should collaborate with other training institutions in the country to create synergies for success and cross-fertilisation of ideas.

Your training courses should be designed to motivate our civil servants to manage time effectively, to be punctual in coming to work, to respect their colleagues, to deal professionally with clients, to utilise resources prudently and to take good care of public assets.

Director of Ceremonies,

Efficient and effective service delivery starts with the simpler things such as service with a smile, courtesy towards clients and friendliness when civil servants interact with both their colleagues and with clients.

Members of the public who come to public institutions do so because they need help. It is the duty of civil servants to help them, not to compound or worsen their problems. This requires all Accounting Officers to encourage their staff members, especially those who interact with members of the public, to handle them with the required levels of courtesy, politeness and friendliness. It takes only one impolite staff member to damage the reputation of the entire civil service. This must be avoided at all cost.

Director of Ceremonies,

I am happy to say that it is not all doom and gloom in the Namibian civil service. There are many bright stars in the form of thousands of hard-working and dedicated civil service cadres who are service oriented and serious about their work. They make us proud and I salute them. I encourage them to work even harder and make our civil service the best that it can be.

Director of Ceremonies,

I wish to commend all institutions and individuals who contributed, in one way or another, to the establishment of the Namibia Institute for Public Administration and Management. Your hard work towards the realization of this long-cherished dream has borne fruit. We are confident that NIPAM will carry out its mandate successfully and contribute towards making our civil service more effective. I am pleased that training programmes at NIPAM have already started in earnest. Let me therefore, congratulate the Governing Council, the Management and the staff of NIPAM on their achievements to date. I wish you all the best in your future work.

Having said that, I now have the pleasure to declare the Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM) officially open.

I thank you.