

# REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS  
BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBWA,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**27 APRIL 2010**

**WINDHOEK**

*\*Check Against Delivery*

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly  
Honourable Chairperson of the National Council  
Your Excellency, Founding President and Father of the Namibian Nation,  
Comrade Dr Sam Nujoma  
Right Honourable Prime Minister  
Honourable Deputy Prime Minister  
Your Honour, the Chief Justice  
Honourable Members of Parliament  
Esteemed Members of the Judiciary  
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps  
Distinguished Uniformed Officers  
Members of the Media  
Fellow Namibians,

I have come to this august House today to address this joint session of our Parliament on this occasion of the State of the Nation Address. In their wisdom, the framers of our Constitution saw it fit to make provision for the executive branch of Government represented by the President to account to the nation through the State of the Nation Address on the implementation of Government policies and programmes. This is a constitutional requirement in terms of Article 32(2) of the supreme law of the land, the Namibian Constitution.

On this same occasion, I will also perform another important function, namely, to officially open the 5<sup>th</sup> Parliament of the Republic of Namibia.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

The year 2010 will go down in our nation's history as one of the most memorable, because of the epoch-making events that happened in the first half of this year. Following the peaceful and democratic Presidential and National Assembly Elections in November last year, Namibia witnessed the inauguration of the new members of the National Assembly and also the President. A new Government was formed to govern our country for the next five years. These events demonstrated clearly the entrenchment of the culture of democracy and good governance.

We should all be proud, as Namibians, that we successfully conducted the Presidential and National Assembly Elections in November last year. This speaks volumes about the political maturity of our voters and the unquestionable consensus in our society about our chosen system of governance.

I, therefore, wish to take this opportunity to commend the Namibian people for the peaceful manner in which they conducted themselves during the elections in November last year.

In the same vein, I wish to congratulate you, our Honourable Members of Parliament who were elected to this august House last year. We are proud that you have hit the ground running and are already carrying out your Parliamentary duties of debating the issues that affect the lives of our people, including the present debate on the 2010/2011 Appropriation Bill. I wish you all the success during your tenure as our law-makers.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

This State of the Nation Address takes place against the backdrop of one of the worst world economic crises in recent memory. The global economic crisis which started in 2009 affected most, if not all countries around the world, including Namibia. Inevitably, this has had a negative impact on the performance of our national economy, the implementation of government policies at different levels, as well as the mobilization of resources to implement public programmes and projects.

One of the negative outcomes of the global economic crisis for our country has been the worsened unemployment and poverty. During the period under review, we witnessed economic downturn with the mining sector being the hardest hit. Decline in commodity prices resulted in a scale-down of copper and diamond mining activities. This had the effect of reduced household income, particularly for families affected by retrenchments.

The issue of unemployment requires focused and multi-sectoral attention of all stakeholders. I will, therefore, outline an array of interventions and measures that our Government has, and will continue to pursue in order to address this challenge.

I will also outline the performance of our Government in the vital sectors of our economy and public life including health, education, housing and agriculture during the period under review.

Other issues I will address are those aimed at improving the living conditions of our people through the provision of safe drinking water, electricity, access to land, sanitation and the expansion of our physical and communication infrastructure.

In order to counter the impact of the economic crisis on the economy and households, Government increased public expenditure by an average of 27.9 percent over the previous Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). During the current MTEF, public expenditure is projected to grow by a further 29.9 percent on average. These increases in expenditure are targeted towards priority sectors, in order to optimize the impacts of fiscal expansion on the economy, poverty reduction, combating unemployment and vulnerability.

The fiscal expansion contemplated in 2010/11 budget comes on top of the generous tax concessions made during 2009/10 budget, which aim at cushioning the impact of the global economic meltdown on the domestic economy and households.

Some of the measures employed by Government to mitigate the impact of the crisis on the economy and households include the improvement in the remuneration of public servants, reduction in personal and corporate tax rates, increase in the tax threshold exemption brackets for individuals and VAT zero rating for some basic food commodities.

In addition, the newly introduced budget reforms will enhance efficiency of expenditure and, thus, optimise the outcomes of public investments. The programme budgeting approach allows the government to better target scarce resources to the most urgent priorities.

Government programmes are funded through the fiscus. Hence, the importance of state revenue. Government will counter the resultant budget deficit by optimising revenue collection, introduction of new innovative sources of revenue and optimising non-tax revenue. Our Government is also committed to maintaining a manageable public debt.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

The performance of our State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) has always been topical, with different points of view being expressed. For us, the starting point is that SOEs were created to support Government's strategic objectives of providing efficient and effective service. The financial performance of SOEs, however, varies. Government has embarked upon reforms to strengthen the performance and accountability of SOEs so as to ensure value for money and service delivery.

SOE performance agreements with line ministries will be phased-in during the course of 2010/11 fiscal year, based on approved SOE business plans. This will enable Government to hold the management of SOEs accountable to their performance.

For a long time, the Namibian people have been asking for a transformation in the financial sector so as to ensure among others, increased local ownership, consumer information and increased access to affordable financial products and services. As a response, the Financial Sector Charter was launched and came into operation in 2009. The objective is to ensure that ultimately, an Act of Parliament will be passed to address these concerns.

The law will strengthen the supervision of banking and non-banking financial institutions and also provide better protection for consumers.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

Our Government is fully aware of public concerns about the difficulties experienced by SMEs. Government has thus agreed to allow contractors who are awarded public tenders to cede their contract income as a security for the loans advanced by DBN and other financial institutions. A special bridging facility, at concessional rates, targeted for this category, has been set up and an additional 100 million Namibia Dollars is allocated. This funding will further be augmented in the future MTEFs in order to build up a strong balance to enable the DBN to assist in a meaningful way.

Our membership in the IMF and compliance to fiscal standards and codes secures Namibia a continued positive rating and credit worthiness among global lenders. Namibia is rated on par with other Middle Income Countries such as Morocco, Croatia and India.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

I would now like to address in some detail, issues related to the implementation of policies in specific sectors, during the period under review.

There is no doubt that ensuring the provision of high quality health care is vital to the social economic development of our nation. It is for this reason that our commitment to the improvement and strengthening of our health care system has remained unflinching over the years. During the period under review, we continued with this same commitment to provide for and address the health needs of all our people.

One of the major concerns of public health in Namibia during the period under review was the emergence of the H1N1 influenza. In Namibia, 72 cases were confirmed, with one fatality. In order to limit the spread of infections, Government implemented a response plan, based on the recommendations of WHO. I wish to thank our partners and the technical support received from WHO in the containment of the infections.

Our SWAPO Party Government is on course in achieving targets for the containment of HIV/Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria. We have intensified measures to deal with resistant forms of Tuberculosis, scale up the provision of ARVs, and fight stigma and discrimination against those infected and affected.

The Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Namibia was launched. This is an initiative for creating awareness in the communities on maternal and child health and also forms part of the African Union and is supported by the UN and other partners. We will apply a strong public health approach that is anchored on values of equity and social justice.

Furthermore, with the assistance of the Government of the People's Republic of China, a state of the art hospital is being constructed at Omuthiya, completion is envisaged for February next year. Our Government will continue with its focus on improving the health care system and completing infrastructural renovations and overhaul many of our aging health centres and hospitals.

Accessibility to specialised care has been enhanced with the operationalisation of the Cardiac Unit at the Windhoek Central Hospital. I wish to also report that a Medical School has been established at the University of Namibia. The first intake of 57 students were enrolled in February this year. We now have our own medical school to train medical doctors locally. However, our co-operation with friendly countries in this field will continue.

The regulations on hospital fees as provided for by the Hospitals and Health Facilities Act of 1994 have been revised. As of 1<sup>st</sup> April this year, vulnerable groups such as senior citizens, persons with disabilities, orphans and vulnerable children and war veterans are exempted from paying user fees at public health facilities.

I am happy to note that the proposal by Country Coordinating Mechanism has been approved by Global Fund. This makes significant resources available to fund our health programmes. The disaggregated allocation for the next 6 years are as follows: HIV/Aids and strengthening of health systems 1.6 billion Namibia Dollars; TB 14.2 million Namibia Dollars and malaria 138.9 million Namibia Dollars. We will also continue to focus on strengthening our health system in order to ensure sustainability of our achievements.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

The education sector will continue to be at the centre of our development strategies as a nation. It is the foundation upon which the future prosperity of our nation can be built. It is for this reason that we continued to allocate the largest portion of the national budget towards the education of our children.

Of utmost importance is the fact that the implementation of the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme has started in earnest. Its aim is to address the aspects of access, equity and quality in our education system.

It seeks to ensure that the resources allocated to this important sector translate into quantifiable outcomes in terms of improved performance, availability of text books and other teaching aids, the construction of school libraries and laboratories as well improved physical conditions of school buildings and teacher's accommodation. Funds have been made available to purchase text books for primary and secondary schools. Our target is to ensure a 1:1 ratio of the availability of text books in the critical subjects of Mathematics, Science, English and Geography.

Programmes are also underway to provide in-service training for teachers in order to improve their competencies in the teaching of subjects such as English, Mathematics and Science. This initiative is vital to ensure better pass rates especially in Grades 10 and 12.

In addition, our SWAPO Party Government will continue to provide study loans to our youth so that we can mould an educated nation that is capable of addressing challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We will continue to support our institutions of higher learning such as the University of Namibia and the Polytechnic of Namibia. I wish to emphasise the need to promote academic excellence at all levels of our education system, starting from the pre-primary phase to tertiary institutions. This goal must be the pre-occupation of all stakeholders, especially our teachers and school administrators, without exception.

Let us hold hands and work together to turn around the performance of our education system and make it one of the best in Africa. This goal, fellow Namibians, is achievable!

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

The provision of clean drinking water is an essential element of ensuring a better quality of life for our people. During the period under review, the development budget allocation for rural water supply amounted to more than 40 million Namibia Dollars. We aim to provide sustainable, accessible and safe water supply to all rural communities.

Several water pipe lines were constructed, covering hundreds of kilometers. This included Onambutu project, with a pipe line network of 197 km and 94 water points. Phase 5 of this project has commenced and is expected to be completed in the coming financial year. Four million Namibia Dollars was used for Phase 3 of the Tsandi South Project. It comprises a 6 km power line, pump station, a 172 cubic meters reservoir and 102 km rural pipelines. This too, was completed.

The Feasibility Study to supply water to displaced communities in Kavango was completed at a cost of 2.1 million Namibia Dollars. A similar study for water supply from Katima Mulilo to Kongola and from Katima Mulilo to Ngoma was also completed. An amount of more than 31 million Namibia Dollars was allocated for Research and Feasibility Studies to facilitate formulation of policies for the sustainable utilisation and management thereof.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

Agricultural production is critical to economic growth, job creation, income generation and to ensuring food security at both household and national level. It can also contribute significantly to our national efforts to combat poverty. Hence, this sector continues to enjoy priority of our Government. Specific attention is directed at the Green Scheme for which an amount of 92.5 million Namibia Dollars was allocated.

The project aims at improving food security and nutrition at household level, to develop all potential irrigation land by 2030 and to increase employment. Out of the amount allocated, 49 million Namibia Dollars was used for Ndonga Linena irrigation infrastructure.

An amount of 9 million Namibia Dollars was allocated to the construction of silos around the country, with the aim of developing national strategic grain reserve facilities to ensure food security, promote increased grain production and avail marketing opportunities to subsistence farmers. Silos with a capacity of 500 tons each were constructed at Omuthiya and Okongo in Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions respectively.

In the livestock sector, I am happy to report that during 2009, two outbreaks of Foot and Mouth disease, which occurred in the Regions of Kavango and Caprivi were successfully overcome. This made it possible for the export of beef from the northern and north eastern Communal Areas to South Africa and Angola under new agreements negotiated with veterinary officials of the respective countries. However, it is most unfortunate that there is a reported outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease to the far most eastern tip of the Caprivi Region. We will do everything possible to contain the spread of the disease and ultimately overcome the outbreak.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

One of the major challenges Namibia faced in 2009 was the floods, which I declared as an emergency. In response, the estimated funding mobilized from both GRN and Development Partners amounted to about 360 million Namibia Dollars. Our Government has taken steps to adopt longterm and sustainable solutions in dealing with the seasonal floods that affect some parts of our country. The aim is to put in place proper monitoring infrastructure and to find a long-lasting solution to the problem.

Another important strategy for dealing with flood waters is the excavation of earth dams to harvest flood waters and use it productively in rural communities. So far, fourteen (14) earth dams have been excavated, while work is underway at 23 other sites.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

The implementation of our medium and long term development strategy is in full steam. The Third National Development Plan (NDP3), which was launched two years ago is a demonstration of our commitment to better planning with a view to improving the livelihoods of our citizens, through the provision of health, education, potable water, electricity, roads and other communication infrastructure as well as a safe and secure environment.

We are committed to addressing the challenges caused by poverty, especially among marginalised communities.

Specific projects have been undertaken under the San Development Programme. These include income generating projects, scholarships for San learners at our tertiary institutions of learning and the resettlement of San communities on farms.

The provision of social grants to senior citizens, people with disabilities, orphans and vulnerable children, as well as war veterans is continuing as part of the national anti-poverty strategy. Efforts are also being made to ensure that all those who qualify are registered.

Close to 8,000 Old Age Grant applications were approved and more than 3,000 Disability Grant applications were approved. The old age pension grant was increased from 450 Namibia Dollars to 500 Namibia Dollars as of April this year. Poverty is also being tackled through the implementation of Rural Poverty Reduction Programme and other initiatives.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

The challenge of unemployment is being addressed in a coordinated manner from various fronts.

In this regard, a strategy has been adopted to support historically disadvantaged citizens especially, rural inhabitants and SMEs to establish viable and self-sustaining businesses in order to create employment and improve livelihoods.

It also seeks to change the structure, content and character of the domestic economy, away from high dependency on the primary sector and exports of commodities, towards more value addition, as well as securing of new export markets.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry is tasked to implement this strategy by assisting SMEs to access finance and to acquire production equipment under the Group Purchasing Scheme; training and mentorship services for SME managers, and the provision of consultancy services to SMEs in the compilation of Feasibility Studies and Business Plans.

During the period under review, more than 60 qualifying SME building contractors received training on tender procedures and project management. Another group of 150 is currently receiving similar capacity building training.

A system was also designed to issue SMEs with certificates that enable them to receive preferential tender rating by Public Tender Boards. Over 700 SME certificates have been issued to date. During the 2009/2010 financial year, a total of 59 emerging entrepreneurs benefited from the Equipment Aid Scheme. Budgetary provision has been made to expand the programme in the coming years.

Through the Common Facility Centers initiative, Government has provided fully-equipped business premises at places such as Ondangwa, Ongwediva, Rundu, Outapi, Opuwo, Eenhana, Okakarara, Oshikuku, Onandjaba and Ovitoto.

Two gemstone processing facilities, fully equipped with machinery for cutting and polishing, have also been constructed at Karibib and Keetmanshoop. These facilities are being used for training small miners and traders in the gemstone trade. Dozens of people have been trained at the Karibib Center alone, most of whom have secured employment with jewelry making companies.

We trust that these interventions will have the required impact of improving the success of SMEs, as well as their capacity to create employment and generate income, thereby combating poverty and unemployment. Our SWAPO PARTY Government is also addressing the shortage and the high cost of acquiring land and business premises by SMEs.

The initiative involves the identification and acquisition or leasing of industrial land from local authorities for the construction of trading and market outlets and manufacturing space for lease by SMEs. The industrial infrastructure has been developed across the country at places such as Onandjaba, Oshikuku, Okongo, Oshakati, Walvis Bay, Otjiwarongo and Mariental.

In addition, our Government has built a number of Industrial Parks across the country. Over 57 percent of the entrepreneurs operating from these industrial premises are women. Other forms of support to SMEs include the expansion of existing support programmes, the envisaged establishment of an SME Bank, and the acquisition and servicing of more land for the construction of industrial infrastructure.

In addition, Cabinet has approved restrictions on the involvement of foreign nationals in the sub-sectors of retailing, hair dressing and intra-Namibia transport in order to open up more opportunities for our people.

A Concept Paper on the National Export Strategy was developed and plans are underway to establish an Export Promotion Agency. Plans are also at an advanced stage for the establishment of the Namibia Board of Trade (NTB) in keeping with a standing SACU obligation. The Board will be responsible for tariff setting and investigating cases of dumping of goods into the Namibian market.

The NDC will be recapitalized and restructured so that it can serve as an effective industrial and agricultural development agency, supporting the implementation of development initiatives by SMEs.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

Namibia has adopted an investment friendly legal framework. As a result, the country has consecutively been ranked among the top 5 most competitive economies on the African Continent.

We have also recorded notable successes with investments from both local and foreign investors during the period under review. These include the 2.5 billion Namibia Dollars Ohorongo Cement, the 2 billion Namibia Dollars Namundjebo Plaza Hotel development and the establishment of the Super Dairy Farm at Mariental. There has also been a noteworthy investment in uranium mining such as Langer Heinrich Mine and Tjrekopje.

These investments have created hundreds of direct and indirect jobs for Namibians and brought about new business opportunities through the procurement of goods and services from local suppliers.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

In order to ensure that the laws on investment are effective and responsive to the needs of both the country as well as to foreign investors, Government has initiated the review of the Foreign Investment Act, with a view to enacting a new law on investment that is expected to adequately cater for the needs of both domestic and foreign investors.

Given the limited domestic market, the Government has proactively negotiated market access for Namibian products at bilateral, regional, continental and multilateral trading levels.

These trade arrangements provide preferential market access for Namibian products as well as alternative sources of imports for the Namibian market. They also provide a wider economic and trading space for Namibian industries. Our entrepreneurs must, therefore, take advantage of these arrangements to trade more and earn vital foreign exchange for our country.

Namibia and other SADC countries are currently engaged in negotiations for an Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union. There have been some disagreements along the way. However, we hope for a positive outcome.

We have identified lack of warehousing and distribution facilities in neighbouring export markets as an impediment for Namibian traders. Thus, Government plans to facilitate the construction of such facilities in Angola, DRC and the Republic of Congo. Once completed, they will be leased to Namibian exporters. This is in keeping with Namibia's commitment towards deeper regional economic integration and enhanced intra-Africa trade.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

Namibia's uranium mining industry has grown in leaps and bounds in recent years, as new mines have been opened and others will soon come on stream.

In order to cope with the complexities of this growing sector, cooperation was initiated with strategic development partners to draft a Uranium Policy, Legislation and Regulations in order to ensure the safety and security of this very strategic resource and the compliance with the requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency. This is particularly important in view of the fact that Namibia could become the 3rd largest producer of uranium in the world within the next two years.

Options for the development of nuclear energy as a source of electricity are also being considered. I am pleased to report that Government has granted mining licenses to three investors for cement production.

These are Ohorongo Cement at Otavi; Cheetah Cement at Otjiwarongo and Karibib Portland Cement in the Karibib/Usakos area. Construction work at the Ohorongo Cement Factory has started and the plant is expected to be completed by December 2010. The project will have an annual production capacity of about 700,000 metric tonnes of cement and will create about 300 direct jobs with 2,000 indirect jobs. It has an estimated resource to last 300 years.

Epangelo Mining Company was registered to enable State participation in the mining sector. It offers direct opportunity to the State to acquire mineral rights and participate in the exploration, mining and beneficiation of minerals of strategic importance.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

Namibia has been recognised internationally for the sustainable management of our fisheries. During the period under review, tremendous recovery was observed in most fish stocks and this gives us great confidence that our fish stocks will continue to improve.

An amount of 350 million Namibia Dollars has been approved for the acquisition of a new modern and larger research vessel to facilitate multi-disciplinary surveys.

The fisheries sector is also contributing to poverty alleviation through community aquaculture projects, which boost employment creation efforts, poverty reduction and food security. During the year under review, some 1.7 million fingerlings were produced, while 241 fish farmers received training.

The Ongwediva Aquaculture project is being built at a total cost of 15 million Namibia Dollars. It will produce fingerlings for fish farmers throughout the country. A Fish Farming project will also be built in phases at Leonardville at a total cost of 32 million Namibia Dollars.

Phase III of the Kamutjonga Inland Fisheries Institute is underway and includes construction of an aquarium, a hatchery, a nursery, production ponds and additional staff accommodation. The total Project is estimated to cost 68 million Namibia Dollars.

The Namibianisation of the fishing sector has been a success. All the current 155 fishing right holders in Namibia, except one, are controlled by Namibians. This has provided tangible benefits for many previously disadvantaged Namibians, who have been economically empowered through this strategy.

The Namibian Fish Consumption Promotion Trust has been expanded. Refrigerated trucks were purchased during the period under review. They will be used to distribute fish to different parts of the country.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

The provision of reliable and affordable electricity remains a challenge for our country. We must, therefore, consider all options available in order to ensure a reliable supply in the long term. In this context, the Permanent Joint Technical Commission, comprising Namibia and Angola has appointed the Cunene Consortium to conduct an updated Techno-Economic Study of the Baynes Hydropower Option.

The Government has also tasked NamPower to investigate the possibility of developing a small scale hydropower plant along the Orange River. These investigations are at an advanced stage. The expansion of our national power grid is also progressing well with major projects being completed. The construction of the Katima Mulilo-Otjiwarongo interconnector is 95 percent complete. It will connect the Caprivi Region to the national grid and interconnect Namibia to our Northern neighbours such as Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Government remains committed to the development of the Kudu Gas Field. Gazprom International has been added as a new partner to the Production Licence, joining other investors such as Namcor, Tullow Oil and Itochu to exploit the gas resource. The construction of an 800 mega watt power station near Oranjemund is envisaged.

Our Government also supports the acquisition of solar systems for domestic use through the Solar Revolving Fund as part of rural electrification and the promotion of renewable energy. So far, 892 solar systems were financed at a value of 21 million Namibia Dollars. Under the Off-Grid Energization Master Plan, the Government will also electrify public institutions with solar energy in off-grid areas.

Oil and gas exploration is continuing at a steady pace. Several exploration wells have been drilled in many concession blocks.

The reliability of downstream supply of petroleum products is important for our economy. As part of improving security of supply, NAMCOR will construct a commercial bulk storage facility in Walvis Bay. NAMCOR has also acquired a depot in Otjiwarongo, as part of its strategy to expand into the fuel downstream industry.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

The tourism industry is vital to our economy. In order to achieve effective regulation of the industry, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism launched the Tourism Policy and has commenced with drafting the Tourism Bill. Once enacted, the law will, among other things, facilitate the entry of previously disadvantaged Namibians into the tourism sector, in addition to the conservancies where they are currently benefiting.

The Government will continue to support NWR with a view to increase employment opportunities of our citizens. We will also continue with our strategy of entering into smart partnerships with our neighboring countries in order to maximize the potential and the economic benefits from the tourism sector.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

Our workers are the force behind economic performance. It has, therefore, been one of our standing principles to protect the rights of Namibian workers against exploitation. During the period under review, a computerized and integrated inspection system was introduced. It enables Labour Inspectors to target workplaces for inspections and provide accurate data on all inspections conducted as well as labour relations profiles of each inspected workplace.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

Our Government is serious about improving the performance of our Public Service at all levels. This is being done through focused Public Service Reforms. These include the launching of the Performance Management System, encompassing the development of Strategic Plans by all Offices, Ministries and Agencies. The Strategic Plans will guide these institutions towards attaining higher levels of service delivery standards. Moreover, in the near future, public servants will be required to sign Performance Agreements with their respective institutions.

Another public service reform tool is the Namibia Institute of Public Management (NIPAM). Progress has been made in the construction of NIPAM premises as well as the development of its curriculum. This institution will transform our Public Service through training, strengthening management capacities, competencies and providing organizational development support.

Other aspects of public service reforms are also being addressed. This includes an efficient issuance of national identification documents, issuance of passports and visas, as well as border control systems. We want to ensure that the registration of births of all babies born in Namibia are done as soon as possible within the spirit of the law.

Registration of births can now be conducted at most of our main hospitals as well as the Regional Offices of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration. New Offices will be opened at Omungwelume, Okahao, Kamanjab, Khorixas, Omaruru, Aminius and Okakarara in the near future.

I can also report that the new border control management system, which was installed by the Ministry during the period under review is operating well at all the main points of entry. The rest of the entry points will be connected once the communication infrastructure is in place.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

The availability of reliable infrastructure for information and communication technology is the way of the future. It will not only improve current economic performance, learning in our schools and efficiency in the public service, it will also take us towards the attainment of Vision 2030. It is for this reason that Namibia, through MTC and Telecom Namibia, has invested more than 115 million Namibia Dollars in the West African Cable System.

It will have a landing point at Swakopmund. It will also provide Namibia with direct international connectivity to the rest of the world. Very soon, the country will experience faster mobile broadband Internet access speeds, thanks to work currently being done by MTC to switch over from 3G to 4G Cellular Technology. This will make Namibia the first country to introduce 4G technology in Africa. Namibia is also living up to her obligations in terms of the SADC Protocol on Transport, Communication and Meteorology that calls for the enhancement of interconnectivity in the region and globally. Already, fibre optic connections have been established with Botswana, South Africa and Zambia, thereby enhancing internet connectivity with these countries.

In the same vein, our Government is committed to improving the safety of the national airspace system. In this regard, the Directorate of Civil Aviation, with the assistance of Telecom Namibia, is deploying new Radar and Surveillance Equipment to increase the safety of the national airspace.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairman,  
Fellow Namibians,

The maintenance, modernization and expansion of our physical and communication infrastructure remains at the centre of our development strategies. Hence, there are ongoing activities to improve our roads, harbors, airports, railways and other infrastructures that form the backbone of our national economy.

In addition to the construction of new roads, maintenance activities were also carried out.

An amount of about 1.2 billion Namibia Dollars was spent on the maintenance of roads during the review period. Some of the major road construction projects that are currently underway include, the Tsumeb-Katwitwi Road, the Rundu to Elundu Road, Iitananga to Omakange Road, Okahandja to Karibib Road and the Gobabis to Otjinene Road, via Drimiopsis, Katima Mulilo to Kongola via Linyanti and Oshikuku to Onandjaba Road. The road between Rosh Pinah and the Sendellingsdrift junction was completed in September last year.

In total, the bitumen road network has grown by 17.5 percent since 2004. Much of this growth occurred from 2008 to date. According to NDP3, the target for upgrading roads to bitumen standards is 1,875 kilometers.

Several Feasibility Studies are currently underway to facilitate the planning for the construction of more roads around the country in the coming years. In the same vein, Regional Road Master Plans were revised for regions such as Kavango, Ohangwena, Oshana, Omusati and Oshikoto. The revision of Road Master Plans for Otjozondjupa, Omaheke, Erongo, Kunene and Caprivi Regions are nearing completion.

The growth of our ports to serve our region and our country are encouraging. The period under review has been the best year on record for Namport, both in terms of revenue and in terms of the cargo volumes that moved through the Ports of Walvis Bay and Lüderitz. Namport handled over 250,000 containers and more than 5.4 million tonnes of cargo.

Namibia's excellent road infrastructure, efficiencies in the handling of cargo, and an accessible port, which is free of congestion, has enabled Namport to provide a more efficient channel for importers and exporters from neighbouring countries. For example, it now takes as little as 4 days for copper mined in Zambia to reach Walvis Bay.

During the year under review, Namport signed long-term agreements with Zambia, Botswana and Zimbabwe, to establish dry dock facilities. Plans are at an advanced stage for the extension of the new container terminal at Walvis Bay at a cost of 2 billion Namibia Dollars. The Port of Walvis Bay is also rapidly gaining a good reputation for repairs of ships and oil rigs.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

Our system of Government is based on the doctrine of the separation of powers, which is at the centre of our democracy. It is based on an independent and impartial judiciary, the legislature and the executive arm of Government. We are proud of the good work that our legal system is doing in protecting the rights of our people through constitutionally based administration of justice.

The strides that our courts are making in dealing with backlogs on the court rolls are commendable. This good work must continue to ensure speedy justice in all matters that come before our courts. After all, justice delayed, is justice denied.

You will recall that a High Court building was recently opened at Oshakati, while magistrates courts were opened at Khorixas and Tsumkwe respectively. This is part of our drive to expand access to justice.

I would like to underscore our commitment to the strengthening of our criminal justice system in order to ensure the maintenance of law and order in our country. The Namibian Police Force, the Anti-Corruption Commission and other institutions in our criminal justice system have been instrumental in making Namibia a better and safer place.

In order to improve the efficiency and operational effectiveness of the police force, resources were made available to procure new equipment. Training was also provided to both junior and senior officers on different aspects of policing. A number of Police Stations were renovated while new ones were opened.

I am also pleased to report that the prison service is doing a commendable job by ensuring that prisoners produce their own food at places such as Divundu Rehabilitation Centre and Farm Scott.

The Namibia Defence Force continues to serve our nation with distinction. It provided equipment such as motorized boats, and trucks to help civilian authorities with the evacuation of the citizens affected by the floods. Members of the NDF and Nampol have also been deployed to peacekeeping missions in Sudan and other countries.

We will continue to pursue a foreign policy, which is based on mutual respect and resolution of international disputes by peaceful means. We will continue to pursue our relations with the free nations of the world at both bilateral and multilateral levels. We will continue to put economic diplomacy at the centre of our foreign policy.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

I am indeed honoured and proud to stand here and share with the nation, the progress that our SWAPO PARTY Government has made in improving the living conditions of our people, as well as the challenges that we faced during the review period. I am proud because our nation continues to be on the right course, despite the turbulences caused by the global economic crisis.

Over the last 20 years, Namibia has become one of the shining examples of democracy, peace, stability and good governance on the African continent.

Our institutions of governance are growing stronger with each passing year, our capacity to deliver is improving and we are learning from our experiences and past shortcomings to do things better.

With each passing fiscal year, we are sharpening our capacity to plan better, to analyse and frame the challenges facing us so that we can provide appropriate solutions. This has enabled us to address the needs of our people in a more effective manner.

On this special occasion, which also coincides with the official opening of the First Session of the 5<sup>th</sup> Parliament of the Republic of Namibia, I wish to make a clarion call to our nation. I wish to call upon all our people to maintain unity, peace, stability, and to exercise tolerance, mutual respect and national reconciliation.

I wish to make a clarion call to our nation to choose the ethic of hard work, honesty, transparency and patriotic zeal to contribute to the ongoing nation building efforts. Our country will not be developed and built by anyone else, but ourselves.

I call upon you, fellow Namibians, to join us in taking our country forward on the road towards prosperity and greater peace, social justice and greater freedom and liberty, towards the achievement of Vision 2030.

Fellow compatriots, as we celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our nation's freedom and independence, let us harness this youthful energy and make Namibia the best that she can be. Let us embrace each other, irrespective of our status in society, race and ethnic origin, religious persuasion or gender. Let us live up to the noble ideals for which so many of our brave compatriots sacrificed their lives.

Let us honour their memory by rededicating ourselves to the achievement of a shared dream and a common vision to make Namibia a prosperous nation with ample opportunities for all our children and our young people to reach their fullest potential.

We will do our utmost best to realize the aspirations of all our people. We will utilise public resources to improve the living conditions of all our people. I call upon all Namibians to join me and our Government in this noble quest. Let us reject tribalism, regionalism, nepotism and corruption.

Honourable Speaker,  
Honourable Chairperson,  
Fellow Namibians,

It is now my honour to declare the 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the 5<sup>th</sup> Parliament of the Republic of Namibia officially open. This is also the conclusion of the State of the Nation Address for the 2009/2010 Financial Year.

Long Live the Republic of Namibia!

I thank you.