

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. NANGOLO MBUMBA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE 34TH INDEPENDENCE DAY
ANNIVERSARY**

A PEOPLE UNITED FOR PROSPERITY

KATIMA MULILO STADIUM

ZAMBEZI REGION

MARCH 21, 2024

Check against delivery

- **Director of Proceedings, Mrs. Regina Ndopu-Lubinda, Chief Regional Officer, Zambezi Region;**
- **Comrade Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Vice President and Lt. General (Rtd) Ndaitwah;**
- **Right Hon. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister;**
- **Hon. Lukas Sinimbo Muha, Chairperson of the National Council;**
- **Your Lordship Peter Shivute, Chief Justice;**
- **Hon. Loide Kasingo, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly;**
- **Honourable John Mutorwa, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Works and Transport;**
- **Madam Mbumba, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia;**
- **Hon. Ministers and Deputy Ministers;**
- **Hon. Comrade Sophia Shaningwa, Secretary General of the SWAPO Party;**
- **Hon. Members of Parliament;**
- **Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic**

Corps;

- **Hon. Lawrence Alufea Sampofu, Governor of the Zambezi Region and all other regional governors present;**
- **Hon. Matengu Simushi, Chairperson of Zambezi Regional Council and other Chairpersons present;**
- **Your Worship, Cllr. Hon. John Ntema, Mayor of Katima Mulilo and other mayors present;**
- **Dr George Simataa, Secretary to Cabinet;**
- **Executive Directors;**
- **Distinguished Service Chiefs;**
- **Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle;**
- **Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councillors;**
- **Gaob Immanuel !Gaseb, Chairperson of the Council of Traditional Leaders and all Leaders of Traditional Authorities present;**
- **Father Jince George Vattavayalil, OFM Capuchin, Holy Family Catholic Mission and all Religious Leaders present;**

- **Senior Government Officials**
- **Captains of Industry present;**
- **Distinguished Invited Guests;**
- **Members of the Media;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Fellow Namibians,

- 1. True independence is fundamental to the success and credibility of any nation. It is only through independence that people can obtain their dignity and full humanity.**
- 2. That being said, it gives me great honour to join you today in Katima Mulilo, the Zambezi Region on this momentous occasion, as we celebrate the 34th Independence Day Anniversary of the Republic of Namibia, in the Year of Expectations and Elections, and also a year of new beginnings.**

- 3. Namibia's independence on March 21, 1990, was made possible through the brave exploits of the sons and daughters of our soil, including many from the Zambezi region such as the late Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, SWAPO Vice President and the late Greenwell Simasiku Matongo, PLAN Commissar, who traversed the perilous passage to freedom, crossing many rivers of blood along the way.**

- 4. Their unwavering determination and laudable gallantry, culminated in the attainment of the freedom, peace, stability and unity that all citizens of the Namibian House enjoy today.**

- 5. However, this year's celebrations are bittersweet due to the fact that though we celebrate, we are still sad having recently emerged from a period of mourning following the passing of our 3rd President, His Excellency**

Dr. Hage Gottfried Geingob, on February 4, and subsequent burial on February 25, 2024.

- 6. In him, our country lost a wise nation builder and a Peoples President who greatly loved the people of Namibia. For this reason, on our independence anniversary, we also celebrate the legacy of President Geingob, an extraordinary revolutionary icon, whose remarkable lifelong service and devotion to Namibia has left an enduring imprint in the hearts and minds of our citizens as well as friends and acquaintances all over the world.**

Fellow Namibians,

- 7. The celebration of Namibia's independence this year here in the Zambezi region provides us an opportunity, as citizens, to contemplate the meaning of freedom and the value of peace, stability and unity, and how we**

acquired it. It gives us an opportunity to recall the important role played by ordinary people in the Zambezi region who have contributed to the independence and freedom of Namibia.

8. It was here that many of our citizens escaped on foot and through canoes either to Zambia and or Botswana across the Zambezi River and its tributaries.

9. When the South African apartheid regime realized the strategic value of the Zambezi region for Namibia's Liberation Struggle, they militarized the area, declared a decade long curfew, and killed, imprisoned and tortured many citizens here.

10. It was here in the Zambezi region that the SWAPO Party's SWALA operatives, the forerunner of PLAN started political mobilization from Singalamwe, Masida,

Makanga, Kikiya and Sibbinda, in the late sixties. Indeed, the First Commander of SWALA, Comrade Tobias Hainyeko was killed in combat action in the Zambezi region.

11. Truly, the brave people of the great Zambezi region, at the time when it mattered the most, did not waver but joined their fellow Namibians to overthrow the apartheid colonial regime, thereby opening the door to independence, for all Namibians.

Fellow Namibians,

12. Despite hardships caused by droughts, economic downturns and COVID-19, together, we have done well to weather these storms. We have done so by upholding the rule of law, transparency, effective governance and accountability on which our democracy is anchored.

13. Let us therefore continue to work together, drawing on the inspiration of the legacy left by President Geingob, to guard the peace, unity and stability we have. Remember, as President Geingob used to say, "It is easy to destroy what has taken a long time to build but it is not easy to rebuild".

14. We emphasize peace, unity and harmony. Those who are planning to disturb peace, unity and economic development in Namibia are enemies of all our people. True citizens of Namibia should not support or follow these individuals or groups who have chosen the path of division instead of the path of unity.

15. In this regard, I call upon our security cluster to redouble their efforts to ensure that Namibia remains safe from external and internal criminal threats, not only for its

citizens but also for our visitors and tourists from abroad.

16. Let us not become destroyers of our future and that of coming generations by practicing tribalism, racism, regionalism, corruption, crime and all similar destructive habits. Rather, let us become wise nation builders, pulling together in one direction, to decisively win the second phase of the struggle for economic freedom and shared prosperity of our people.

17. Since this is an election year, let us all play our roles in ensuring that law and order prevails, and that we hold peaceful, credible and fair elections, as we have done in the past. We all have a collective responsibility to ensure that Namibia maintains its reputation as a peaceful and stable country.

18. Today, Namibians can look forward to a bright future. Massive oil and gas discoveries have been made in our ocean, the green hydrogen investments are about to materialize, and our latest budget of NAD 100 billion will create more jobs, and give our citizens much needed disposable income. As a result, we all, including the private sector, SME sector and citizens need to hold hands with Government and with each other to galvanize the economic revival of Namibia for increased job opportunities and development.

19. In this regard, in the Zambezi region as in all other regions, Government has taken concrete steps to promote economic advancement through the construction of critical infrastructure. For example, the construction of the 60 kilometers long electrical line, starting at Ivilivinzi to Impalila Island, connecting the localities of Mbalasinte and

Kasika, has ensured that significant economic growth will take place in these communities. The electrification of Impalila and surrounding areas will benefit businesses and boost the tourism industry, amongst other things.

20. Government has additionally extended the rural electrification grid to most Government infrastructures region wide. Therefore, 90% of the Zambezi Government Infrastructures are connected to the main grid.

21. Moreover, the upgrading to bitumen standard of the Roads MR 125 (Kongola, Sangwali, Linyanyi, Liselo and Kongola-Kamenga) and MR 3508 (Namalubi-Isizi-Luhonono) will increase the movement of goods and services as well as new business opportunities in the Zambezi region.

22. Furthermore, I am pleased to inform you that Government has availed N\$8 million to revive the Kalimbeza National Rice project, and approved that a sugar plantation be established on part of Kalimbeza, as well as a sugar processing plant in Katima Mulilo.

23. These are but few of the projects going on to bring much needed development and jobs to the Zambezi region, beside others in housing, school infrastructure and provision of water which are in the process.

Fellow Namibians,

24. In 34 years, we have built ourselves a nation of which we can all be proud of. A nation rooted in democracy, peace and stability and unity in diversity. This is the legacy that our heroes and heroines of the Republic of Namibia have bequeathed to us.

25. Now, we must summon the resolve to forge ahead, and together, take care of this Namibian House so that it becomes a true home of hope, joy and prosperity for all its citizens and generations to come.

26. With these words, I wish all Namibians a Happy 34th Independence Day.

May God bless the Republic of Namibia.

LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA.