

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**Keynote Address by His Excellency Nangolo
Mbumba, President of the Republic of Namibia, on
the occasion of the Omagongo Festival 2024**

**Onambango Palace, Uukwiyuwushona Constituency
Oshana Region
May 25, 2024**

Check against delivery

- **Director of Ceremonies;**
- **Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers present;**
- **Honourable Members of Parliament present;**
- **Honourable Elia Kaulifewangali Irimari, Governor of the Oshana Region and all other Regional Governors present;**
- **Madam Mbumba, First Lady;**
- **Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**
- **Distinguished Service Chiefs;**
- **Tatekulu Fillemon Shuumbwa Nangolo, Omukwaniilwa Ondonga Traditional Authority;**
- **Other Esteemed Traditional and Revered Religious leaders present;**
- **Distinguished invited guests;**
- **Members of the Media;**
- **Ladies and gentlemen**

Good morning.

- 1. It is with great honour that I join today this huge gathering of Namibians from many corners of our beautiful country, here in the magnificent setting of the Onambango Palace, in the company of our host Tatekulu Fillemon Shuumbwa Nangolo and other esteemed Traditional leaders, in order to celebrate the Omagongo Festival of 2024.**
- 2. Human beings are inherently social. We are all born with an innate capacity for building social connections and it is through these connections that we are able to form families, communities, societies and nations. Through our social interactions, we develop a cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes,**

hierarchies etc. This is what we refer to as culture.

- 3. There are many meanings to culture and different types of cultures. We have a culture of unity, that is what makes us live together in peace and harmony despite our differences or beliefs; a culture of working together and building together and not destroying; a culture of good neighborliness, illustrating that we are kind and good to each other; a culture of self-sufficiency, working hard, saving up, and providing and taking care of each other's needs; a culture of sharing, not to accumulate and refusing to share, or demand things while refusing to share the responsibility of labouring together. These are the characteristics that define us as members of the human species**

type or class). It is therefore important, that we gather on occasion, during times of peace, to socialize and celebrate our cultures.

4. The Omagongo Festival is one of the annually anticipated events which allows us, as Namibians and Africans at large, to showcase and celebrate our unique heritage. Cultural Festivals offer us a platform that enables us to gather around the celebration of our shared history, traditions and practices.

5. As Namibians, we should ensure that the celebration of our respective cultures and traditions should lead to the fostering of a greater understanding and unity amongst our people. A nation whose citizens celebrate and enjoy together their diverse

traditions in peacetime can withstand pressure together in times of adversity.

- 6. Therefore, if we promote culture as a way of developing greater understanding and unity, then it will enable us to forge a stronger and more resilient nation anchored in the spirit of nationhood and patriotism. As Namibians, we should strive to understand that at the end, we are all alike and share the same problems, aspirations and dreams.**

- 7. I therefore commend the organisers of the Omagongo Festival for using the event as an opportunity to bring Namibians and visitors together, not only in the interest of celebrating tradition and culture, but most importantly, in the interest of promoting solidarity, camaraderie and fraternity**

amongst all people, irrespective of tribe, race, region, class or religion.

8. The Omagongo Festival belongs to all of us. That is why it is hosted on a round robin basis. It is an event that can be attended and celebrated by all, whether you are from Oshana, Erongo, Zambezi, Hardap, Omaheke, and Limpopo in South Africa or Ghanzi in Botswana. It is a unifying event where we celebrate in style by eating traditional food and drinking traditional brews especially the famous marula / Omagongo of course in moderation, while we communicate and celebrate in peace with each other. That is how culture should be celebrated. Indeed, that is how African culture should be celebrated, maintained and preserved.

Ladies and gentlemen,

9. By celebrating cultural festivals, all Namibians can gradually through greater understanding eliminate potential barriers, conflicts, and stereotypes that may exist in our society due to ignorance, and embrace each others cultural diversity, traditions and values as important unifying nation building blocks.

10. In this regard, let us continue to promote and celebrate our cultural festivals as a means of fostering a spirit of unity so that we all pull in one direction as a nation. Let us use culture as a means of ensuring that our Namibian House stands on the solid foundations of unity and solidarity- a strong One Namibia One Nation. It is only by

sharing the unique aspects of our cultural identities that we can create an inclusive, open-minded, and compassionate society.

11. I am confident that the Omagongo Festival and all other cultural festivals we celebrate in Namibia, can, through the sharing of our stories, customs, music, dance, food and beverages, pave the way to a more harmonious and peaceful society.

12. To our esteemed Traditional Leaders in attendance. You, our respected elders, are the custodians of our culture. We all look to you to guide us and ensure that our heritage is maintained, promoted and safeguarded. I therefore commend you for your efforts to promote culture and encourage you to continue the advancement of Namibia's rich

cultural heritage. Continue to encourage us to pursue a culture of peace, togetherness and good-neighbourliness. Continue to encourage us to always seek to build rather than destroy. Continue to encourage us how to save, how to share and how to cultivate self-sufficiency and self-confidence.

Ladies and gentlemen,

13. Today, as we celebrate the Omagongo Festival, we also commemorate the 61st anniversary of Africa Day. In this vein, let me share a quote from the icon and proponent of Pan-Africanism, Dr. Marcus Mosiah Garvey who said that, "A people without knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots."

14. Let us take heed of these powerful words from this distinguished luminary and endeavour to preserve our heritage, which identifies us as Namibians, through generational transfer using traditional storytelling, modern technology, and academic research. The cultural freedom we enjoy today, our own identities we celebrate today, were all bought with the ultimate price of thousands of precious Namibian lives who died during our Liberation Struggle. Therefore, let us be mindful as we celebrate our history, origin, and culture to focus on aspects of our cultural identity that can inspire positive change, prosperity, stability and unity, in the interests of Nation Building.

15. With these many words, I wish Tate Omukwaniilwa gwAandonga, all our esteemed Traditional leaders and their Counsellors, and all of us gathered here and those listening and watching through the media, a memorable and joyful Omagongo Festival 2024.

Waketu waketu

Nda pandula

Metja ndondoo

Mpandu

Kealeboga

Gai Aios

Ni itumezi

Dankie

Danke

I thank you