

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY THE HONOURABLE

MCHENRY VENAANI

**PRESIDENT OF THE PDM
AND LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION**

ON

**THE OCCASSION OF THE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC
MOVEMENT MEGA RALLY**

ON 08 JUNE 2024

IN

OPUWO, KUNENE REGION

**Vice President, Hon. Jennifer Van Den Heever,
National Chairperson, Hon. Diederik Vries,
Secretary-General, Mr. Manuel Ngaringombe,
Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Linus Tobias
Treasurer-General, Mr. Nico Smit,
Secretary-Generals of the Youth League, Women's League and Elder Council
All Secretaries
Members and Sympathizers of the PDM
Members of the Fourth Estate**

Fellow Namibians, today, in the heart of Opuwo, in the vibrant Kunene Region, we stand on the precipice of history. With just a few short months until the polls open, our nation finds itself at a crossroads, a pivotal moment in our democratic journey. This upcoming election has been heralded as one of the most significant in our nation's history, echoing the sentiments of change and progress that reverberate across our borders.

Look to our neighbors in South Africa, where the recent election has shown us a beacon of hope. The ANC's dwindling support, coupled with the rise of opposition voices, demonstrates a clear desire for change among the electorate, with the governing ANC recording only 40.18% of the vote and the next three biggest opposition parties namely the DA, MK, EFF recording a collective 45.91% and therefore we can see that there are more voters who want to usher in a change in leadership and governance than there are those who still believe in the rhetoric of the ANC. Fellow Namibians, the same thing can be accomplished here. Our sister country

South Africa has done it and now, it is up to us to do the same, the only difference is, we must bring the ruling SWAPO Party to even less than 40% and it is possible! We, too, can achieve such a feat here in Namibia. The path has been paved, the momentum is building, and it is now our duty to seize this opportunity for a brighter future.

However, dislodging the SWAPO party is only possible if we all, go and register to receive our new voters cards. I urge each and every one of you to heed the call to action. As the Electoral Commission of Namibia embarks on its voter registration drive, let us not falter in our responsibility to participate in shaping our nation's future. For it is only through the power of our votes that we can usher in the change we so desperately seek. Registering to vote is not merely a civic duty; it is a declaration of our collective will to shape the course of our nation. By casting our ballots on the 27th of November, we have the power to elevate the Popular Democratic Movement (PDM) to the forefront of governance, where it rightfully belongs.

For thirty-four years, the PDM has stood as a steadfast guardian against the tide of corruption, malfeasance, and neglect that has plagued our beloved Namibia. We have been the voice of the voiceless, the champion of the marginalized, and the beacon of hope for all who seek a better tomorrow. The PDM has been the biggest proponent against corruption,

malfeasance, graft, rising rates of unemployment, escalating cost of living, the lack of housing, a failing education system, an overwhelmed healthcare system, rising rates of gender based violence where 32% of women have experienced GBV and 6% of that while they were pregnant, where teenage pregnancy sits at 19%. We seek to do away with all the isms that have become the status quo under SWAPO's administration. The PDM is the only real vehicle that can usher in a better, more promising future, as we are witnessing before us the disintegration and implosion of some parties, while others are marked by a lack of transparency and questionable financial dealings, meanwhile the ruling party is being vehemently rejected by the masses. Thus, the PDM is the only stable political formation that can actually handle the highest office in the land.

Our manifesto, soon to be unveiled, embodies our unwavering commitment to the people of Namibia. From tackling unemployment and housing shortages to revitalizing our healthcare and education systems, the PDM's vision for a brighter future is bold, comprehensive, and achievable.

Under a PDM government, agriculture will flourish, housing will become a fundamental right, and healthcare will be accessible to all. Our economy will thrive, driven by strategic initiatives aimed at creating

sustainable job opportunities and fostering economic growth in every corner of our nation.

But our vision extends beyond mere promises; it is rooted in a deep understanding of the challenges we face and a clear, evidence-based plan for overcoming them. Through prudent fiscal management, streamlined governance, and targeted investments, we will build a Namibia that works for all its citizens.

As we stand on the cusp of this historic moment, let us remember the words of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who once said, "*The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.*" Indeed, the power to shape our nation's destiny lies in our hands, and it is incumbent upon us to wield it wisely.

As such, my fellow Namibians, I implore you: seize this moment, embrace this opportunity, and join us in ushering in a new era of progress, development, and promise for our beloved nation, knowing that the future of Namibia rests in our hands.

Thank you.