

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR. NANGOLO MBUMBA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
25TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF
TRADITIONAL LEADERS**

09 SEPTEMBER 2024

MERCURE HOTEL

WINDHOEK

- **Director of Ceremonies, Mr. Nghidinua Daniel – Executive Director in the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development;**
- **Hon. Erastus Uutoni, Minister of Urban and Rural Development;**
- **Esteemed Gaob Immanuel #Nu-Axa /Gâseb, Chairperson of the Council of Traditional Leaders;**
- **Distinguished Traditional Leaders;**
- **Hon. Ministers and Deputy Ministers;**
- **Hon. Laura Mcleod-Katjirua, Governor of Khomas Region and other Governors present;**
- **Hon. Shaalukeni John Moonde, Chairperson of the Khomas Regional Council and other Hon. Chairpersons of Regional Councils present;**
- **Your Worship, Councillor Queen Omagano Kamati, Mayor of Windhoek, and any other Mayors and Chairpersons of Local Authorities in attendance;**
- **Hon. Regional and Local Authority Councillors in attendance;**
- **Distinguished invited guests;**
- **Members of the Media;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good morning to you all,

- 1. I am honoured to join our esteemed members of the Council of Traditional Leaders this morning. Let me express my sincere gratitude to you for having invited me to officiate at the opening of your 25th and silver jubilee Annual Meeting.**
- 2. This is indeed a significant milestone for you, our Traditional Leaders and respected elders, who continue to remain committed to serving your communities and contributing to peace, harmony and development at the local, regional and national levels.**
- 3. On this historic occasion, we reflect on those leaders and elders who have sadly passed on and can unfortunately cannot join us today. I am specifically referring to our Third President, His Excellency Dr. Hage Gottfried Geingob. I also note the passing of Chief Petrus Ukongo of the #Aodaman Traditional Authority and other Traditional Councilors who have passed on during the**

course of this year. In their remembrance, I would like us to rise and observe a minute of silence.

Director of proceedings

Ladies and gentlemen

4. Our traditional authorities continue to play a crucial role in our democracy. As the recognized custodians of culture and values, in Africa in particular, traditional authorities command respect and support while performing important functions that uphold the governance architectures of modern states. Thus, as Government, we remain fully cognizant of the role that our traditional authorities play in terms of promoting development and fostering unity, peace and social harmony, particularly in the rural areas. This is why we will continue to acknowledge and accommodate our traditional leaders within the governance framework.

5. I am aware of the important role that our traditional authorities played during the Town Hall meetings conducted by my late brother, President Geingob and I

have followed suit, ensuring that I meet with traditional leaders and their representatives in the regions that I have visited during my tenure as President. This is in line with our vision of national unity and the concept of the Namibian House, where we must all be role-players in advancing our developmental agenda.

6. In societies such as ours, elders have always been a source of stability and the bedrocks of a united and peaceful society, and they commanded society's honour and reverence. Unfortunately, the integrity of our traditional authorities and leadership nowadays has come under threat, due to infighting and instances of leadership succession disputes that continue to threaten the peace and harmony within our regions.

7. Such disputes do not only result in conflicts and lack of unity among members of the traditional community but also often result in the Government being forced to intervene and use public resources, which could have otherwise been used for development and other critical needs such as education, health and uplifting the poor

and needy. Instead, time and resources are used for conducting investigations and towards resolving disputes which can in most instances be easily resolved if parties follow their customary laws.

8. As traditional authorities, your primary interest should be the advancement of the wider community and augmenting traditional values and norms. Let us learn to place our collective interests above our personal interests.

Esteemed traditional leaders

Ladies and gentlemen

9. While Government places a high premium on fighting hunger poverty in Namibia, we are unfortunately faced with a severe drought situation, which has reduced food security and the livelihood of many of our communities, especially thousands of subsistence farmers. Our success in dealing with the drought situation calls for greater unity and for us to pull together at all levels in order to deal with this unprecedented challenge. As you

are aware, the Government in response to the severe drought situation has declared a state of emergency and called for urgent interventions, including the approval of a drought relief budget.

10. It is crucial that we all appreciate the magnitude of this challenge and therefore endeavor at all times to cut costs and do more with less in order to ensure that we are able to help and support those citizens who are most in need. In this regard, I have noted several requests from traditional authorities for vehicles, however, I must state that such request cannot be entertained at this moment. Even ministers and deputy ministers are being called upon to make do with what is available. Let us maintain our focus on advancing national issues instead.

11. I therefore look forward to the continued contribution of the traditional authorities and leaders in support of other national developmental programmes and initiatives such as the maintenance of law and order, especially a zero-tolerance gender-based violence (GBV), violence against children (VAC) and

discrimination of any member of our society especially the weak and marginalized.

12. At this juncture, let me pay homage to our traditional leaders for their continued support in the fight against poverty and crime. Your contribution remains invaluable and an inspiration to the future generations of traditional leaders who will be expected to deal with the challenges that continue to confront our people, especially those living in rural areas.

13. In the same vein, let me call on you to ensure that all members of your communities who will be participating in the Presidential and National Assembly Elections on November 27, do so in a free and peaceful manner, thereby maintaining Namibia's good track record of conducting elections. As I have said, we all have the important task of continuing with our democratic legacy. That in itself imposes responsibilities on all of us.

Director of proceedings

Esteemed Traditional Leaders

Ladies and gentlemen

14. As I conclude, I would like to state that Namibia will only meet its developmental aspirations if our traditional authorities continue to remain stable, reliable and active participants in the local, regional and national sphere of governance. To the current generation of traditional leaders, may you continue to uphold our collective moral virtues, customs and norms, and to put the interest and welfare of your communities first. Let our traditions continue to guide us and keep us on course towards greater peace, stability and shared prosperity.

15. I wish you fruitful deliberations, and I now declare the 25th Annual Meeting of the Council of Traditional Leaders officially opened.

Thank you all for your kind attention.