



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

PRIME MINISTER, DR TJITUNGA ELIJAH NGURARE

ON

VOLUNTARY SUPPORT TO VULNERABLE

ELDERS AND THE VETERANS OF THE

LIBERATION STRUGGLE

7 OCTOBER 2025

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CHAMBER

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

I rise to provide a Ministerial Statement on the voluntary initiative of ensuring welfare of vulnerable elders and veterans of the liberation struggle especially those in rural areas.

It is a human trait that runs through all of us to look after the elderly. It is a time immemorial gesture of kindness expected especially from the young in society. Recently, as announced by our Minister of Information Communication and Technology, we have discussed and approved a submission to expand this kindness through TVET trainees in villages and in informal settlements to assist in rehabilitation, construction and maintenance of households for vulnerable elderly and veterans of the liberation struggle. What would be required is the sourcing of materials from local entrepreneurs in the respective regional capitals etc. The latter, Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs has undertaken to incorporate within the ministerial scope of its responsibilities. Her Excellency, President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah advised further that we ensure this matter is clarified so that an expectation is not created that families must now abandon their elderly because government wishes to take over.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members

I wish to recognise that many elderly are cared for by their respective families. And many are doing so. Those who can afford, some are kept in elderly homes in urban areas. But for rural areas, many vulnerable elders are not cared for in the same way. The government is assisting through social grants and old age pension. However we are also alive to the fact that in our society, there are some households where the elderly need our support. Where the traditional authorities equally know that this and that household need care, need assistance in terms of basic tenets of amenities such as a decent place to sleep with access to water, sanitation and food. We have also recently announced that every village will have a community garden whereon unemployed young people and others will work to produce food. This model has begun in Otjombinde in Omaheke Region where 13,000 ha was allocated by the traditional authority. We have begun the process of requesting other traditional authorities to emulate same.

To complement these basic needs, we therefore intend on using unemployed TVET trainees and other unemployed young people in villages and informal settlements, to carry out on a regular basis, the aforementioned interventions. It is a voluntary initiative for which government will compensate those involved through the food for work and cash for work programmes. We therefore appeal to the humanity of our country to join this train, this route, this village path to every household and ensure that no elderly suffers from avoidable inconveniences of life. Those in the private sector willing to join, we are ready to collaborate.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members

On the welfare of veterans of the liberation struggle, whose supreme sacrifices have helped bring about Namibia's independence on 21st March 1990, the MoDVA has rightly indicated that this has always taken center-stage in development programmes designed to ease the war veterans' plight since independence.

When Founding President, Dr Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma, returned home on 14 September 1989, that day ushered in an era of hope, especially for the young people of our country. Namibians were relieved and deeply excited that independence was indeed finally around the corner. The dramatic sight of seeing Dr Nujoma in person back home that day was just enough to rekindle the spark of freedom. And sure enough, SWAPO won the 1989 UN-supervised elections and formed the first government of independent Namibia on 21st March 1990. Our independence, for which many brave sons and daughters of Namibia paid with their blood and lives, must, therefore, be treasured forever. Those veterans returned home soaked in blood and sweat.

The armed struggle that brought about our independence lasted for 23 solid years. War is war. It is never a walk in the park. Our armed struggle for independence must, therefore, be understood in that context. In wars, many dreadful things happen on both sides. But when wars end, painful wounds remain unhealed for years. War memories become nightmares that give us sleepless nights. We came out of that war very bitter and angry, a war, as Her Excellency President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah always says was imposed on us by the brutal apartheid regime of South Africa.

Honourable Members,

It was indeed with that painful chapter in mind that SWAPO, under the outstanding leadership of Dr Nujoma, framed the policy of National Reconciliation that conceived and nurtured the peace and stability we enjoy today, the very peace and stability some people now take for granted. Ceaseless and seamless efforts were weaved together to set in motion confidence-building measures to convince former enemies who carried guns to hold hands and embrace one another for the sake of the peace and freedom that we enjoy today. It was not easy to bring about that peaceful environment. An awful lot went into that process. We can only thank our founding fathers and mothers including those who waged the war of resistance against the colonial and imperialist German occupation.

Founding President Nujoma presided over that peaceful transition, which to some, seemed well-nigh impossible, with a majestic sense of purpose. With the Policy of National Reconciliation firmly in place, Namibians buried their brutal past and embraced their future with both hands. We are where we are today because of that un-paralleled sense of understanding -- letting go of that painful chapter in our history without revenge.

A lesson learned is this. The past, however bloody and violent it was, we had already lived. The future, we must still live. We couldn't build-in seeds of violence in that future. It was our magic wand solution to a deadly challenge we faced. Today, we are the envy of many a nation in the world precisely because of that. And it is precisely because of that background that we must continue to take care of our revered war veterans, especially those who find themselves in traumatic and unbearable conditions.

There is also a heartless culture evolving amongst us where some war veterans are being mocked and vilified because of the conditions in which they unfortunately find themselves. We can't, as a nation, stoop so low. This is sheer wickedness. It is our duty to honour our war veterans. Every effort is being made to ensure that no war veteran lives in deplorable condition. We owe it to history to do just that and their basic needs must be met while they are waiting for their cash payouts from MoDVA.

Once again, through this voluntary act of kindness, we intend to work with all stakeholders to rehabilitate vulnerable elderly and war veterans' households by installing basic facilities such decent ablution facilities, water and electricity where possible. Our overarching objective is to ensure that they live decently especially those in rural areas. I so submit, Honourable Speaker.