REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

THE PRESIDENCY

REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY DR. NETUMBO NANDI NDAITWAH
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
ON THE OCCASION OF
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

08 MARCH 2026

HOSEA KUTAKO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Director of Ceremonies;

Honourable Emma Kantema, Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare;

Mr. Mesfin Tasew, Group Chief Executive Officer of Ethiopian Airlines;

Mr. Lemma Yadecha, Group Chief Commercial Officer

Captain Tigist Kibret, Pilot

First Officer Mahlet, Co-Pilot

Mrs. Meaza Taye Director, Integrated Marketing Communication

Mrs. Samrawit Giragn, Passangers Sales Manager

Distinguished Representatives of Ethiopian Airlines,

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

More than a century ago, in 1910, women gathered in Copenhagen to demand recognition, equality and dignity. From that historic gathering emerged what the world now commemorates every year as International Women's Day, first observed in 1911 and later embraced globally as a day to celebrate the

achievements of women and renewal of our commitment to equality.

Today we commemorate this important day under the theme "Rights, Justice, Action, For All Women and Girls."

This theme reminds us that progress does not happen by chance. It requires action, determination and the collective will of societies to ensure that women and girls are given the dignity, opportunity and space to contribute fully to the development of our world.

Director of Ceremonies,

For much of human history, women's contributions were often overlooked or undervalued, even though they played a central role in sustaining families, communities and nations. There was a time when women were denied the right to vote in many parts of the world, when public leadership positions were largely closed to them, and when professions such as aviation and engineering among others were

considered the exclusive domain of men. Yet, women continued to challenge those limitations.

Through determination and courage, women across the world gradually expanded the boundaries of opportunity. Today, women lead nations, advance science, shape industries and inspire the next generation in ways that previous generations could scarcely have imagined.

Namibia is one of those countries that has made strides in the area of women emancipation. Today we do not only have a women President, Vice President, Speaker of the National Assembly, Secretary General of the ruling Party, and Deputy Chair of the National Council, we have women leaders in business, medical professionals, engineers and pilots just to mention a few.

It was on Monday the 2nd March that a first female judge of the Supreme Court in person of Lady justice Esi Malakia Schimming-Chase was sworn in. On behalf

of the Namibian people, I congratulate her. Recently we have celebrated a victory of the Brave Gladiators, the Namibian women's national soccer team won the COSAFA Cup, won by Namibia for the first time by both women and men team.

As a nation we must congratulate ourselves while committing to more coordinated efforts to bring about full equal opportunity for men and women in the social economic development of our country.

It is also important to acknowledge that progress toward equality has often been strengthened by visionary men who chose to challenge the traditions of their time. These leaders recognized that societies flourish when women and men stand as equal partners in shaping the future. The likes of Julius Mwalimu Nyerere first President of the United Republic of Tanzania, who facilitated the holding of the first Congress in 1960; that established the Pan African Women's Organization(PAWO).

Director of Ceremonies,

Today, the 8th of March, not only marks International Women's Day. It is also a day that carries a remarkable moment in aviation history. On this very day in 1910, a French woman named Raymonde de Laroche made history by becoming the first woman in the world to receive a pilot's license.

At a time when aviation itself was still in its infancy and when the skies were widely considered the preserve of men, she chose to rise above those expectations. By earning that license, she did more than fly an aircraft. She opened the skies for generations of women who would follow.

Today, more than a century later, that spirit continues as Ethiopian Airlines flight ET 835 arrives here in Windhoek from Addis Ababa proudly operated by an all-female crew.

These remarkable women represent the many roles that women now play across the aviation industry, from piloting aircraft to technical operations and the many responsibilities that ensure a safe and successful journey.

Their presence here today sends a powerful message to young girls everywhere that professions once thought impossible are now within their reach.

The sky, quite literally, is no longer the limit.

Director of Ceremonies,

Today's occasion is made even more special as Ethiopian Airlines celebrates 80 years of service. Over the past eight decades the airline has grown to become the largest airline on the African continent connecting Africa to the rest of the world and strengthening people to people contact, trade, tourism and cooperation among nations.

This remarkable achievement is not only a source of pride for Ethiopia but for Africa as a whole. Ethiopian Airlines stands as a shining example of African excellence, discipline and innovation.

The 8th administration has promised the Namibian people to bring back our nation airline. We look forward to learn from the Ethiopian Airlines, and we have a strong base as some of the Namibian pilots are trained in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Airlines is part of our history for independence, when it brought our Founding President His Excellency Dr Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma back to Namibia in 1989 after many years in exile.

We thank and congratulate the management and the staff of Ethiopian Airlines for this extraordinary milestone to connect Africa and commend their continued commitment to empowering women within the aviation sector.

Director of Ceremonies,

As we celebrate the achievements of women, today Namibia also reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that women and girls enjoy equal rights and opportunities in all spheres of life.

Our country has enacted laws and policies aimed at protecting the rights and dignity of women and promoting gender equality. These include the Combating of Domestic Violence Act, the Affirmative Action Employment Act and other national policies that seek to create a society where women and girls can thrive without fear, discrimination or limitation.

These efforts reflect our firm belief that the development of our nation cannot be fully realized without the meaningful participation of both women and men.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To the women who operated this aircraft today you represent more than a successful flight. You represent the possibilities. You represent progress, and you represent the future that the generations of women before you fought tirelessly to achieve.

To the young girls who may be watching through any means of technological communication, let this moment inspire you.

Dream boldly, Work diligently, and never allow anyone to define the limits of what you can achieve.

Happy International Women's Day.

I thank you.