



**WELCOME REMARKS BY HER EXCELLENCY DR
NETUMBO NANDI NDAITWAH
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
ON THE OCCASION OF WELCOMING THE BRAVE
GLADIATORS
02 MARCH 2026**

Welcome home, champions.

Today, we gather not merely to receive a football team, but to celebrate a defining national moment. You return to Namibia as champions. You return having written a new and proud chapter in our sporting history. You return having reminded this nation of its strength, its resilience and its limitless potential.

I must confess something.

Last night, I went to bed with the biggest smile on my face. I felt like a proud parent watching her children make history. In fact, I woke up earlier than usual this morning because I could not wait to welcome you home. I was almost like a child waiting for a special celebration. Such was my excitement and pride in what you have achieved for our country.

Your historic victory over South Africa's Banyana Banyana in the COSAFA Women's Championship is more than a triumph on the football field. It is a powerful statement about the rise of Namibian sport and the determination of our people.

At this same tournament, you achieved yet another historic milestone by defeating Zambia, a result that has never before been recorded in senior level encounters between Namibia and Zambia, whether in the men's or women's game. That achievement signals a turning point in our football history.

For many years, Namibia entered competitions with hope. We participated with pride. We showed promise. But today, we stand in a new era.

We are no longer merely participants.

We are competitors.

We are contenders.

We are a force to be reckoned with.

These victories did not come by chance. They are the result of years of commitment, sacrifice and

perseverance. They reflect players who trained even when conditions were not ideal. They reflect coaches and administrators who believed in the potential of Namibian athletes. Above all, they reflect young women who refused to accept limits placed before them.

Beyond the results, I was equally impressed by your conduct on the pitch. The professionalism you exhibited throughout the tournament was exemplary. You played with discipline. You respected your opponents. You upheld the spirit of the game.

You were not only footballers competing for a trophy. You were ambassadors of Namibia.

In every pass, every tackle, every celebration and every handshake, you carried and flew the Namibian flag high. You represented our country with dignity, composure and pride.

That example must be emulated in our daily lives. Whether in sport, in business, in public service or in our communities, professionalism, discipline and integrity are values that define strong nations.

I therefore encourage you to maintain that same level of professionalism both on and off the field. True champions are measured not only by trophies, but by character.

Fellow Namibians,

This victory once again confirms that sustained investment in sport yields results. When talent is supported and opportunities are created, excellence follows.

Under our Sixth National Development Plan, NDP6, we have identified youth empowerment, human capital development and inclusive growth as central pillars of our national agenda. Sport is not separate from that vision. Sport is an integral part of it.

As we implement NDP6, we must take deliberate steps to strengthen sports development across our country. One of those important steps is the development of modern and accessible stadiums and sporting facilities in our regions.

The building of new stadiums is not merely about hosting matches. It is about expanding access. It is about ensuring that every young person in this country, regardless of where they live, has the opportunity to train, to compete and to develop their talent in safe and professional environments.

It is about allowing communities to host competitions. It is about stimulating local economies. It is about creating jobs. It is about building platforms where excellence can be nurtured.

If we are serious about sustaining victories like this one, we must match talent with infrastructure. We must create conditions where sport can grow systematically and where our athletes can prepare at standards that meet continental and global expectations.

When we build stadiums, we build opportunity.

When we invest in sport, we invest in our youth.

When we expand access to facilities, we strengthen national unity and social cohesion.

Brave Gladiators, your victory has strengthened the case for moving forward with confidence. You have shown what is possible. You have given us proof that Namibia can compete and win.

You have united this nation. You have lifted the Namibian flag high. You have reminded us that preparation and belief can overcome even the most established opponents.

Namibia does not enter competitions to make up numbers. Namibia enters to compete. Namibia enters to challenge. Namibia enters to win.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Namibia, I extend my deepest congratulations to each one of you, your technical team, your families and all who supported you.

Be proud of what you have achieved. But let this victory be the beginning of an even greater journey.

**Continue to raise the standards. Continue to inspire.
Continue to lead by example.**

You have made history.

You have inspired a nation.

You have proven that Namibia is rising.

Welcome home, champions.