

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



STATEMENT BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,**

**AT THE OPENING OF THE 1st CABINET
MEETING**

FEBRUARY 4, 2020

WINDHOEK

Checked against delivery

Comrade Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President of the Republic of Namibia

Comrade Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia

Comrade Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation

Comrade Ministers

Comrade Sophia Shaningwa, Secretary General of the SWAPO Party

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentleman,

1.I often say that a leader is a dreamer, who paints a vision for the future of a country. It is up to you the Cabinet Ministers that I appoint to actualize that vision that dream and turn it into a reality through implementation. My dream since the start of

my 1st term of office and still now is of the vision of an “inclusive, united and prosperous Namibian House”, in which all citizens and patriots of this great Nation, join hands, in the spirit of “Harambee” and construct a social compact where “No One Should Feel Left Out” and where citizens live in harmony as “One Namibia, One Nation”.

2.As leaders we visualize visions of the desired destination of the journey and implement it. Key implementers are you Cde Prime Minister, Ministers and technocrats. You are the people who are responsible for helping me to provide a practical outlet of my dreams and guiding the nation to internalize these dreams and visions of a Namibian House. Therefore, it is very important for you as my Executive Team collectively and as

individual members to understand the rational of my dreams and visions, to become effective transmission belts, interpreters, promoters and implementers thereof.

**Honourable Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

3.It is within this spirit of visioning the future, that I have annually being declaring various themes to set the tone for the Government and country at large. Consequently, I declared 2015 “The Year of Planning”; 2016, “The Year of Implementation”; 2017, “The Year of Rededication”; 2018, “The Year of Reckoning” and 2019, as “The Year of Accountability”.

4.Last year we accounted to the Namibian

people on what we have done with the mandate that they have given us in 2014. We crisscrossed this country to visit all the 14 regions, and sat on the average seven hours in Town hall meetings to report on government programs we had promised to implement in the 2014 SWAPO Party manifesto. But it was never a one way conversation, the people asked questions, raised concerns and gave their views and comments.

5.This was truly grassroots based participatory democracy in action.

6.The ultimate test of accountability came at the end of November 2019 when Namibians went to the polls to cast their votes for their Presidential and Parliamentary Candidates. The people decided to renew the mandate of

the ruling SWAPO Party and myself as the President, to continue to implement this dream of a One Namibia One Nation, through the programs of the 2019 SWAPO Party Election manifesto.

7. Therefore, to give effect to the mandate of the people, and in line with the custom which I have established to provide general guidance on the agenda, tone and direction of the work of Government Ministries, Offices and Agencies, as well as the Namibian population, I have befittingly themed the Year 2020, as "The Year of INTROSPECTION".

8. The essence of introspection and self-examination for individual and collective growth and development has been underscored by various authors of whom I

will quote some as follows: Management Consultant Margaret J. Wheatley stated that, "Without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences and failing to achieve anything useful". Philosopher Baltasar Gracian wrote, "Self-reflection is the school of wisdom" and Socrates asserted that, "The unexamined life is not worth living".

9. In this context, reflection through self-introspection provides clarity of our purpose and help us check whether we are still following our initially set objectives or not. After we have planned, implemented, rededicated ourselves, being reckoned with, and accounted to the population, our bosses, for the work over the last five years, it should follow logically that we as a

Government and as individuals need to reflect through critical enquiries on the quality and efficacy of our work. For example, to what extent have we done what the people required from us to meet their basic needs? Have we delivered sufficient houses, toilets, boreholes, school classrooms, hospitals and the likes?

10.As Cabinet Ministers, occupying public offices, what have we contributed to realize the key objectives of Government? We should reflect on how we have been governing the country for the past five years within the context of the realization of the set vision of an inclusive, united and prosperous Namibian House. We must ask ourselves whether or not we have discharged our Cabinet duties to the best of

our abilities and whether or not our contributions have lifted the burdens of poverty from our people and created new opportunities for their growth.

11. Yes, nobody can doubt that Namibia's governance architecture is in place, nobody can doubt that we maintained peace and unity under very difficult circumstances. Yes at political level we have done well, we are respected international and Namibia's voice count. However, we acknowledge that the work of the last three years of this Administration was greatly curtailed by the sustained depressed economic and financial conditions as well as consecutive periods of drought. But with the little resources we had, have we done our best, have we been creative enough, what could we have done

differently under the same circumstances and still deliver good results? After the process of introspection we must come up with a program of action to address the shortcomings which are identified.

12. We have all seen the outcomes of the November 2019 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections. These outcomes have obliged us the SWAPO Party, to commence with the process of introspection following last December's Central Committee meeting where I motivated the need for a Post-mortem of the SWAPO Party and its Presidential Candidate's performance in the November 2019 Elections. The purpose of such a Post-mortem is to better prepare, position and equip the ruling Party for the changing

times and challenges in our society and the world. I am happy to note that the first Politburo meeting of 2020 has formally endorsed this proposal.

13. However, it is important how we understand and frame the results of the 2019 Elections to arrive at an introspection which is reality based. Contrary to the claims of some analysts that the loss of SWAPO's two-thirds majority in Parliament by one seat is a big failure, SWAPO indeed got a massive mandate of 66% and 63 seat against its nearest rival with 16% and 16 seats. I understand this result as the voice of the electorate, which is saying, we still trust you and have confidence in you as our ruling Party. But wake up.

14. We need you to prioritize and improve in the areas which will uplift us the people who voted you to Parliament. In essence, the people said, they want SWAPO MPs to dutifully attend Parliament, present issues of concern to them and engage in quality and constructive development and prosperity centered debates. And to pass laws which will help the people to escape poverty through access to more economic opportunities and ownership of their own resources.

15. Also, for Yours Truly, the reduced vote tally of 56% which by far outstripped the 29% of the nearest losing candidate, is a direct message from the electorate that yes we give you the mandate as the person that we

most trust among all the Presidential Candidates in Namibia, but we don't want to have business as usual. Appoint Ministers who are serious, focused, hardworking and honest about uplifting the people from poverty and are not insensitive to the needs of the people.

- 16. And tell those Ministers to promote, explain and defend the government's work so that the people can understand and support it. Tell them to answer questions when the media is asking them about their operations and not to hide away. {After the elections, I see the deputy minister of Education and her executive director doing a great job by touring the regions and explaining to the people and so is the minister of health responding to questions on TV, this is excellent}**

17. Tell them to respond to the letters of the people and not ignore them. Tell them not to sit on investment projects for five years that could have brought employment and prosperity for the people if implemented. Tell the business people yes or no so they can move as time is money. Finally, also tell them to come out of their offices regularly and see how their decisions are affecting the people. This is how I understand and interpret the 2019 Elections results. {by the way during the town hall visits at four places people sarcastically said I would like to see my councilor visiting us frequently and not only when he is accompanying the President]

18. It is against this background that Cabinet too as the highest decision making body of

the country will have to engage in the process of introspection.

Honorable Ministers,

19. In my New Years' Message I have categorically stated the following and I quote, "As Government, we have listened to the cries and calls of the sovereigns. We have heard you. You pointed out areas of improvement to us. On unemployment, we heard you. On the economic situation, we heard you. On the lack of decent shelter, we heard you. On the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF), where scores of students are left in dire straits due to poor implementation and execution of duties, we heard you. In the fishing sector, where fishermen lost their jobs as a consequence of mismanagement, we have

heard.... [And have immediately started remedial action]. Investors and business people will be provided with Yes or No answers in the shortest period of time following their applications for business endeavors. I made it clear during the final Cabinet Meeting of 2019 that we can no longer conduct business as usual. The size of Cabinet shall be reduced and an attempt at 50/50 representation shall be made. Persistent lack of implementation of Government policies and programs cannot continue any longer," unquote

Finally, I have reiterated that we will intensify the fight against poverty and specifically the fight against corruption and Gender based Violence emanating from what the psychologists call frustration aggression.

This means men are frustrated when women are doing well, and the action is kill them and beat them up. Shame on the men. We go to church 80% are women, men are absent, when we go to graduation ceremonies more women graduate but fewer men. Let me call on my fellow men to wake up you, are being left behind.

Corruption shall never be tolerated by this Administration, the due process of the law will take its course on any wrong doing, as you have witnessed last year. You are all aware of the so-called fishrot case, and that as we speak, two implicated former Ministers have been arrested and are in jail awaiting their trial dates where they have the opportunity to state their case and be declared guilty or not guilty by competent

courts. Let us be mindful that in Namibia, every accused person is innocent until proven guilty by the court of law.

20. While we recognized the need for improvements in the areas outlined by the people, we also take cognizance of so called analysts and academics who exaggerate by cashing in on the plight of our people to advocate for a regime change, as if this Government is the one which brought inequality, tribalism and racism, and as if our people were better off 30 years ago. Some even go to the extent of claiming that the SWAPO government has not done anything good within its 30 years in governance. Shame on them. We all know that structural inequality which was a deliberate policy of apartheid and colonialism against the majority of Namibian people is responsible

for the continuing poverty, and economic exclusion in our society. And that the SWAPO Government is the one which has started policies and programs to tackle and remove these abnormalities.

21.As I have been saying, I am happy that people are complaining because they see light at the end of the tunnel. Meaning they have hope. Should they not have complained openly, I would have been worried that they may be busy plotting underground. I am proud of our people because they complain peacefully in a mature manner as democrats without engaging in armed conflicts and the sort.

22.I have witnessed a strange new trend, which I have never seen before in my entire life as a political leader in Government.

People are sending to me applications with CV's and qualifications attached for Ministerial positions. This is totally new. How do you apply to be appointed a Minister? Maybe it is part of the new change people are looking for! For those who will be fortunate to serve in the next Cabinet, I will expect from them to declare their assets publically as I have done. Only one Minister, Hon. Calle Schlettwein has emulated me and my wife's example and have declared his assets in the past. Others have declared in Parliament and to the President. It will be good if they make it public only, as required presently. Also, for those who will be coming back, please take note that there will be zero tolerance for corrupt practices, laziness, not following news and being ignorant of the things which our people are

complaining about, and only going to your villages and not attending to the needs of all Namibians in other regions and so forth. Also, we have to cease from fruitless international travels, except where the travel is essential and beneficial to Namibia's national interests. In this regard, I have decided not to travel until June 2020, and to do so only afterwards if really necessary. These changes are only the start of things to come in the next Government.

Honorable Ministers

23. Government has started the process of introspection, but for this to be effective, I call upon the Youth, the Media, the private sector and the rest of society to also introspect and reflect on their attitudes,

actions, intents and behaviors for the past five years. Were their beliefs, attitudes and actions promoting the building of an inclusive, united and prosperous Namibian House in which all of us are pulling together and no one is feeling left out?

24. We should understand that poverty in Namibia cannot be solved until we have addressed structural inequality, and the private sector has a very important role to play in this regard. Also, as youths, we should ask ourselves whether we are going to continue to be Government employment seekers or employment creators. Recently, I saw on television at a DAVOS meeting some Youths who were presenting innovative ideas on employment creation. It will assist Namibia greatly should its youth's become

innovators to help address unemployment.

25. I am proud of the accomplishments we have achieved in the midst of a depressed economic environment and consecutive drought seasons. However, as manifestly indicated by the electorate we will have to transform our thinking, attitudes and actions to win against poverty, unemployment, income and wealth inequality, economic exclusion, corruption, crime, the evils of Gender Based Violence and the retrogressive tendencies of tribalism and racism.

26. Cabinet Ministers stand firm. Stand Strong. Stand Proud. Defend your Government against those who seek to weaken it. We have prevailed through various internal crises and we will prevail again.

27.Long live the Republic of Namibia

I thank You
