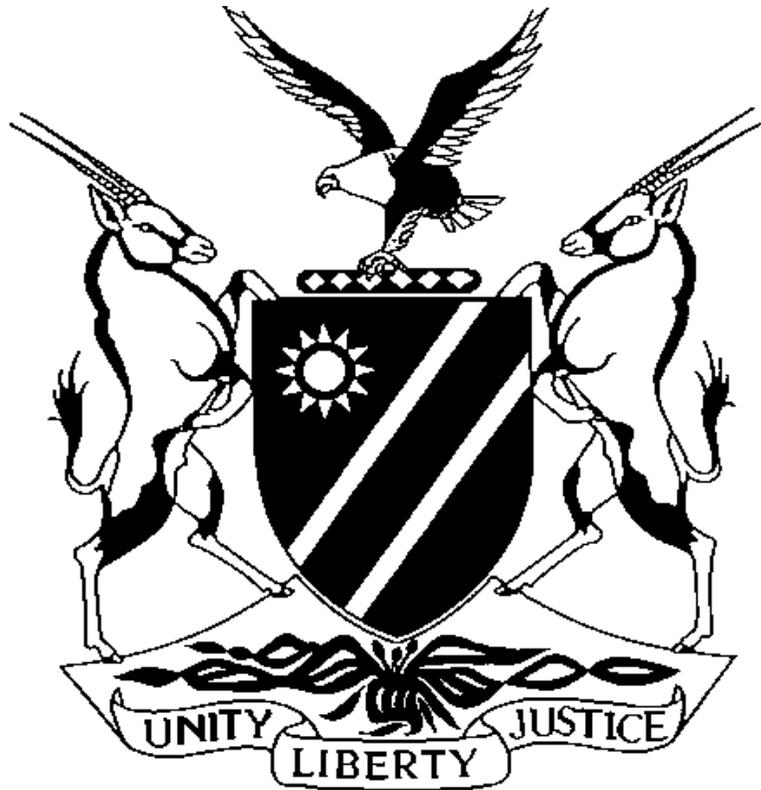


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE OFFICIAL
OPENING OF THE BOTSWANA-NAMIBIA
BUSINESS SEMINAR BY H.E DR. HAGE G.
GEINGOB, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
NAMIBIA, DURING THE STATE VISIT TO THE
REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA, 11-13 JULY 2016**

Director of Ceremonies,

**Your Excellency Lieutenant General Seretse
Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic
of Botswana,**

**Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers
present,**

**Members of the Diplomatic Community
present,**

**Representatives of the Botswana business
fraternity,**

**Representatives of the Namibian business
fraternity,**

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset I would like to, once again, thank His Excellency Lieutenant General Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana and the Chairperson of SADC and the people of Botswana for the warm hospitality, extended to my team and I since our arrival in Gaborone yesterday. Your Excellency, we are feeling at home here in Botswana.

Yesterday, I had the rare opportunity of becoming only the second foreign President, in your rich history of 50 years of Parliamentary Democracy, to address the

people of Botswana through their representatives in the Parliament of Botswana. This rare and special event symbolizes the special relationship between the people of Botswana and the people of Namibia that transcends beyond a cordial neighbourly relationship, to a relationship that is tied by blood, thereby making us brothers and sisters in this beautiful house of ours called Africa.

Like so many Namibians, I regard myself as a Francis Towner, because Francis Town was the place of solace for me and so many Namibian

freedom fighters when we fled the then apartheid controlled South West Africa to fight for the freedom of our country. It is in Francis Town, where I met fellow freedom fighters such as JB Max and Joe Slovo of South Africa and Samora Marcel of Mozambique just to mention a few.

Director of Ceremonies

My experience growing up under an oppressive, dehumanizing apartheid regime and later as a refugee in many countries, including here in Botswana, taught me the

valuable lesson that without peace and stability, any form of development is just not possible. My experience as head of the United Nations Institute for Namibia that was established to prepare Namibians in exile to run their own affairs once Namibia became independent, as well as my experience as first Prime Minister of Namibia entrenched into me the believe that Effective Governance, just like peace and stability are “condions sine qua non” for economic development.

Nowhere on the African continent is the notion of effective governance better

exemplified then here in Botswana. With 11 free, fair and transparent elections since attainment of independence in 1966, and the smooth transition of power between four presidents, Botswana represents the epitome of what I refer to as the New Africa where former president retire in dignity. Botswana has a sound Governance architecture, which is a necessary pre-condition for sustained economic development to take place.

Similar to Botswana, Namibia also has robust and effective governance architecture in place. In just 26 years, and six free and transparent

elections, I am already the third democratically elected Leader in Namibia. Just as the case is in Botswana, my predecessors and I are in talking terms. To further cement this aspect of the New Africa we, in Namibia, have instituted the concept of Presidential Advisory Council, where the incumbent President consults with former Presidents on key issues that affects the Nation. This is our small contribution to the New Africa that is characterized by:

- 1. An Africa where coup d'états are something of the past, although there are few reversals recently;**

- 2. An Africa where we ostracize leaders that come to power in questionable manner;**
- 3. An Africa, where our former leaders are revered and allowed to retire in dignity;**
- 4. An Africa that is on the move, on track towards becoming the fastest growing continent on the planet; and**
- 5. An Africa with the fastest growing middle class on the planet.**

Botswana and Namibia are setting the tone when it comes to the New Africa that I am

dreaming about. In Namibia we have undertaken to become the most accountable Nation on the African continent by 2020. We intent to do this by promoting transparency and by so doing to become the most transparent Nation on the Continent by 2020 as measured by Transparency International. To this, we have already passed a new procurement act, which will significantly enhance transparency in public procurement.

We also aim to retain our position as the country on the continent with the freest press, because the free press is the fourth estate in

our Governance architecture. We promote Accountability and Transparency because $A + T = Tr$, that is to say Accountability plus Transparency translates into Trust. Trust in political leaders and systems is waning, therefore, we would like to improve trust levels across all stakeholders in development and political governance.

To strengthen our governance architecture, we must constantly review our processes, systems and institutions. Our processes must be absolutely above board and transparent. Our systems must be able to function as if

nothing has happened when irregularities pertaining to processes are questioned. Ultimately, we must abide to the ruling of our institutions as we have committed to live by the rule of law.

Not only does Botswana and Namibia have sound democratic governance architectures in place, but also our economies are well managed by all standards. Both our countries have low levels of debt exposure, in particular foreign debt, and both Botswana and Namibia form part of a handful of African economies that can boast investment grade ratings by

international rating agencies such as Fitch and Moody. In the case of Namibia, we are rated as BBB positive. However, in Botswana, Moody set your credit rating at A2 with a stable outlook, in part because you have the highest import coverage on the continent and one of the highest in the world. Moreover, your growth trajectory over the past four decades has been phenomenal. Luckily enough you are our neighbor otherwise, based on your growth trajectory alone, one could easily have mistaken you for one of the South East Asian Tigers. The prudent and disciplined way in which you have managed your economy has paid off. Fix capital formation has been

remarkable and one can safely say that the Botswana today and the Botswana at independence are miles apart. Forever gone are the days that Gaborone was referred to as a cattle post. I commend and salute you on this excellent progress.

Director of Ceremonies

I consider my visit as an opportunity to renew and to strengthen the existing good bilateral relations between our two Nations. I am here to tell you that Namibia is open for business and would like to see more trade and

investment between Botswana and Namibia. In addition to a peaceful political environment, a stable macroeconomic climate, and a world-class financial system, Namibia offers a plethora of investment opportunities for international investors. It is my desire that in the spirit of regional economic integration, investors from Botswana will fully participate in the opportunities that Namibia offers.

Investors from Botswana have a head start, because our two Nations are already cooperating in numerous areas for economic

and social development. Botswana, after South Africa, is the most important African trading partner of Namibia. Last year alone we exported diamonds worth more than USD1 billion to Botswana. We are looking forward to new and intensified cooperation in years to come. Some projects that we have jointly undertaken over the past few years include the Trans-Kalahari highway, and the establishment of dry port facilities for Botswana at the Port of Walvis Bay, thereby affording you the opportunity to be no longer viewed as a landlocked country, but a sea-linked country.

It is gratifying to see that increasingly more Motswana's have started to use the Trans-Kalahari highway to come and spend their December holidays at the coast in Namibia. This shows that it was not only trade and investment that was stimulated by this important corridor, but also movement of people.

Director of Ceremonies

Going forward, we must act with a sense of greater urgency to stimulate development and achieve our common developmental

objectives. Some specific cross border projects that I would like to challenge captains of industry from both countries present here today to get involved in include:

- The construction of a railway line to export Botswana coal to the world markets via Namibia;**
- The desalination of seawater for human consumption and to sustain the needs of our businesses. Through our own resources, as well as tapping into our regional developmental finance institutions and global initiatives such as**

the Green Climate Fund we must find solutions for our common challenges;

- **The development of electricity generating capacity for own consumption, as well as for exports; and**
- **The development of regional value chains in manufacturing.**

Director of Ceremonies

The future of Africa is bright. Africa is rising, and by all projections will soon be the fastest growing region on the planet. Although, Botswana and Namibia may be small in terms

of population size, we have fairly robust and diversified economies, and can indeed play a crucial leadership role in the New Africa. It is my wish that the event here today will create a conducive platform for captains of industries of our two Nations, where in the spirit of Harambee we embark on joint national initiatives such as water and energy security to put both Nations on a higher sustainable shared growth trajectory.

Thank you very much!