

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**STATEMENT BY**

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

**AT THE OPENING OF  
THE FIRST CABINET MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 08, 2018**

**WINDHOEK**

*Checked against delivery*

**Comrade Nickey Iyambo, 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**

**Good morning and welcome to the official opening of Cabinet for the year 2018.**

**I trust you have rested sufficiently and all Cabinet Ministers have by now returned to their respective Offices, with renewed zeal and dedication. Every New Year brings with it the hope and prospects for a brighter tomorrow. It is this hope that should inspire**

**us to effectively execute all our goals and objectives, in the months that lie ahead.**

**At the outset it is appropriate to record that it is now almost three years after all enfranchised citizens of Namibia, as a political collective, expressed their will in good numbers, through a democratic election, to elect me as the President of the Republic of Namibia and the SWAPO Party, as the ruling party. By electing us, the People of Namibia delegated their sovereign power as stated under Article 1 of our Constitution, which provides that all power shall vest in the people of Namibia, who shall then exercise their sovereignty, through the democratic institutions of the State. We are thus first and foremost accountable to the People – and it is them, beside our personal interests, that we must serve in the most responsible and effective manner.**

**I am fully aware that it is not a small and easy duty to have been overwhelmingly given the mandate to steer the Executive machinery of the Republic of**

**Namibia. Expectations from our People are understandably high. They expect us to continue strengthening our democratic character and to effectively maintain the complimentary values of dignity, freedom, justice and peace; including the pursuit of happiness provided for in our Constitution.**

**The opening of the first Cabinet meeting of the year should therefore not be a mere ceremonial occasion. It must be an occasion where we should all be reminded of the fundamental and Constitutional commitment required of us, as members of the Executive, particularly in relation to the requirements of Transparency, Good Governance, Accountability, Responsiveness and Ethical Leadership.**

**It is against the afore-mentioned Constitutional context, that the first meeting of Cabinet of this year should remind us of the need to be true to the concept of 'democratic government' - of the People, by the People, for the People, in the most meaningful manner.**

**For the purposes of setting the right tone and to inspire enhanced and effective public service delivery, since assuming office in 2015, at my instance, every year has been characterized by a theme or slogan. As a person that believes in doing things in a methodical and systematic manner, these themes have been carefully selected and build on each other. This year's theme of reckoning, is therefore not just incidental, but fits into the bigger Vision of this administration's tenure.**

**To put into context, in 2015 we opted for the consultative 'bottom-up' approach, to inform planning priorities, and declared the year 2015 "The Year of Planning". Planning, is non-negotiable because as philosopher Franklin wisely put it "failing to prepare, is preparing to fail".**

**These consultations resulted in the launching of the world-acclaimed Harambee Prosperity Plan, in 2016, which we subsequently declared "The Year of**

**Implementation". During this period we implemented the Performance Management System. Ministers and all Government Offices, Ministries and Agencies aligned their key performance indicators to the Harambee Prosperity Plan and other National Development Plans. While valuable lessons were learned during this period, we must, however acknowledge that we also experienced growing pains, especially due to a lack of urgency in implementing set activities.**

**Recognizing the need to speed up implementation, we declared 2017 "The Year of Re-dedication". We implored all Namibians, particularly Political Office Bearers and Civil Servants, to rededicate themselves to the full implementation of the Harambee Prosperity Plan and National Development Plans, so as to deliver on our mandate.**

**We will all agree that the year 2017 was a difficult year in the economic realm. Like other countries in the region – and indeed globally- we were confronted**

**by turbulent economic headwinds that undermined our ability to fully implement our Plans. It is however pleasing, as reported in December 2017, that we have made good progress in stabilizing the fiscal situation of our country, which is a pre-condition for sustained economic development.**

**We took difficult decisions to effect some of the deepest expenditure cuts since Independence. To some extent, the expenditure control hurt our economy and hurt businesses, especially those who were largely dependent on Government contracts. To alleviate the plight of the construction and SME sectors, we resolved and paid all outstanding invoices for the fiscal year 2016/17 by the end of July last year.**

**As Government reflects on how to ensure a diverse and inclusive growth model, based on fiscal prudence and sustainability to weather turbulent economic storms, I am of the view that there is need for entrepreneurs in our country to diversify their**

**business models. Stronger economic fundamentals, and visible “greenshoots” should not lead to complacency and return to unsustainable spending habits. One thing that is certain is that economic crises are cyclical and recurring.**

**We therefore need to ensure our economic fundamentals are resilient, so as to successfully weather future independent intervening variables. Key to this would be, to safeguard fiscal sovereignty through eliminating or at least reducing wasteful expenditure, avoiding expensive debt uptake and building a sufficient fiscal and reserve buffer, to be able to intervene in the event of the unforeseen.**

**I hope it is not true, today I read the Ministry of Defense bought a farm for 45 million Dollars, while they are sending the troops home. I do not know if it was done last year. Minister we need to talk, because I do not see the urgency, while we are sending people back (home).**



**In our resolve and determination to see immediate results, we should not forget that development requires sustained efforts over a period of time. We are therefore confident that it is only a matter of time before we reap the full benefit of our intensive investments made, into critical sectors. These sectors include:**

- Investment into our governance architecture, including the performance management system;**
- Investment promotion activities;**
- Strengthening the fiscal framework;**
- Expediting the rollout of quality vocational education and training, to curb youth unemployment;**
- Additional poverty reduction initiatives;**
- Strengthened measures to curb violence against women and children;**
- Investment into public health, including measures to reduce maternal and infant**

**mortality; and**

- **The upgrading of critical growth enabling physical infrastructure.**

**At this juncture, I wish to extend my sincere thanks to all members of Cabinet, in consultation with whom we caused decisive actions to be taken, to cut and contain public expenditure. I must however, recognize that despite the good efforts being made, we have noted with concern that the desired paradigm shift towards austerity has not yet been fully embedded. In some instances, indifferent attitudes persist, while urgent matters that affect the lives of citizens remain under-prioritized, by some public functionaries.**

**It should, therefore, come as no surprise, that this year 2018 would naturally be “The Year of Reckoning”. I have noted with interest, public views of what this “reckoning” could mean. “Reckoning” according to the Oxford dictionary is defined as:**

- 1. Accounting for things received or done;**
- 2. An appraisal or judgment;**
- 3. Avenging or punishing of past mistakes or misdeeds;**

**While the Biblical meaning refers to**

**1.4. The 'Day of Reckoning' where "everyone is called to account for actions committed in life."**

**I have deliberately adopted this theme for 2018 and call on Public Office Bearers to account to the Nation, on the realization of electoral promises and implementation of national development plans. Reckoning includes due recognition for delivery and stark consequences for non-delivery. In this regard, we intend to intensify our focus and efforts towards accountability, transparency and effective governance.**

**Accordingly, all elected representatives, are expected to account, with a sense of urgency, to the Electorate on implementation progress. I, with profound concern, observe uninspired public servants. Civil**

**servants who unfortunately take their professional roles and obligations for granted; occupying a position with a sense of entitlement, or under the false belief that 'nobody can fire me because I am a civil servant'. Some say I fought and died for this country. But they are still alive.**

**Similarly, excuses are often offered by some supervisors, to justify their failure to take action against transgressing civil servants, because of the claimed limitations espoused by the Public Service Act. On the contrary: the Act provides due process to be followed when instituting disciplinary action against civil servants, in order to avoid arbitrary action. The Act should therefore not be considered as an obstacle in taking disciplinary action against offenders.**

**These attitudes of entitlement, 'Silo mentalities' across Ministries and the lack of teamwork between Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Permanent Secretaries, will not be tolerated. I expect Ministers**

**to provide leadership and to create a conducive environment for performance. Dysfunctional relationships between Ministers and their Deputies and with their Permanent Secretaries and their Deputies, would in time compromise our ability to deliver quality goods and services. Incidents such as the delayed ordering of medication amount to inexcusable gross negligence. Schoolbooks not ordered and dispatched on time amount to gross injustice, as such systemic failure denies the Namibian Child the Constitutionally ordained right to education. Government invoices that are properly certified as correct and valid, but not paid on time, is tantamount to economic sabotage. Official correspondence that warrants a response but not responded to, is also inexcusable. We must all realize that all these public service inefficiencies are a heavy burden on our People, considering the fact that they are also facing other socio-economic challenges, such as persistent drought, unemployment, especially among the youth, hunger and diseases.**

**Right Honourable Prime Minister, you are therefore called upon, as per your Constitutional Mandate, to see to it that Permanent Secretaries and Senior Government Officials, who permit such bottlenecks and inefficiencies to persist, are held accountable and called to reckon.**

**I am aware that to some reckoning would mean “the heads of big fish must roll”. I wish to highlight that in our efforts to hold public officials accountable, we are at the same time enjoined to follow due and fair processes. Those who may be found to have breached their public duties, will, therefore, be given a fair opportunity to defend themselves, in accordance with the requirements of our Constitutional Democracy. In our modern approach to governance, notwithstanding somewhat intense pressure from the public, in certain cases, we must nevertheless maintain sound processes, systems and institutions that will buttress our democracy, rather than weakening it.**

**I was pleasantly surprised to note that our theme for the Year of Reckoning is perfectly aligned to the recently adopted African Union theme for 2018, which is dedicated to “Winning the fight against corruption”. The continental roadmap for this theme will be factored into our approach. During the recent launch of this AU theme, my contribution focused on the need to strengthen processes, systems and institutions at national level first, if we are to prevail and succeed at the continental level. Furthermore, as part of the efforts to improve institutional efficiencies, the AU Summit resolved to conduct ‘Bureaucratic Bottleneck Audits’, which I wholeheartedly welcomed and committed myself to extending at our national level and urged others to also extend to their national level.**

**The fight against corruption will require the political will by all Political Office Bearers. Despite my demonstrated action to lead by example - through public declaration of my and the First Lady’s income and assets, and followed only by the Minister of**

**Finance and tackling big cases of alleged corruption head-on, allegations and perceptions of corruption regrettably continue to taint our Government. This has led to the public losing faith and confidence in some of our elected Public Office Bearers and in some Government Ministries and Agencies.**

**Contrary to misplaced perceptions that we lack the political will to fight corruption, Cabinet has taken difficult decisions to tackle corruption, such as:**

- The reversal of the Hosea Kutako International Airport tender award;**
- The investigation into the inflated costs of the National Oil Storage Facility and Neckartal Dam projects; and**
- Intervention to thwart the Namibia-Angola Crude Oil Import scheme.**

**Further bold actions have also been taken, as demonstrated through ongoing cases or investigations, such as the cases of Avid Social**



**Security, the Offshore Development Company, the GIPF Development Capital Portfolio investigation, the Kora Awards and SME Bank. These cases and investigations demonstrate Government's commitment to rooting out corruption in our country.**

**I am aware of numerous claims of corruption being made against some public officials. As I have said before, corruption and complicity to corruption would be when Government closes its eyes or looks the other way. This year we intend to intensify efforts to fight corruption and enhance transparency and accountability.**

**Our determination to fight and address corruption is not only based on the national legislations and guidelines that are in place, but it is also informed by the International Community's resolve to fight corruption. There is general consensus amongst the nations of the world, that corruption is a devastating crime which, if not addressed, erodes and damages**

**any country's gains, in all spheres of human endeavour.**

**To this end, the African Union "Convention on the Prevention and Combatting of Corruption", to which Namibia is a Party, makes it clear that AU Member States are deeply concerned about the negative effects of corruption and impunity on the political, economic, social and cultural stability of Member States. The same Convention acknowledges that corruption undermines accountability and transparency, in the management of public affairs, as well as socio-economic development.**

**Furthermore, the United Nations "Convention Against Corruption" – also ratified by Namibia – records the concern of UN Members, about the threats posed by corruption to the stability and security of societies. It further recognizes that corruption undermines institutions and democracy, ethical values and justice, while also jeopardizing sustainable**

**development and the Rule of Law.**

**It is therefore not surprising that Namibia has put effective measures and established independent institutions, to fight corruption. Recently a Whistleblowers Protection Act was promulgated in order to enhance our effectiveness in fighting corruption. All these efforts are driven by a clear political will of zero tolerance towards corruption.**

**Given the local and international legal instruments obliging us to fight corruption, and recognizing the devastating effects of maladministration, I have been deeply concerned about various reports of alleged corrupt practices, in certain Government Ministries and Agencies. Over the last few months, the public has raised complaints of corrupt practices through media reports, as well as through anonymous tip-offs.**

**It is difficult in our democratic and constitutional**

**setting, to hold people accused of corrupt practice accountable, without the acceptable evidential standard of proof. I believe however, that in cases of continuous allegations of malpractice, compounded by incompetence, it would be in the interest of the People of Namibia and good governance, to effect changes at political level, from time to time, to rebuild public confidence in those concerned Ministries.**

**While in certain instances there may be no direct and premeditated case of corruption, I am convinced that sheer-poor-public-service-delivery and incompetence may also result in corruption, because of the lack of controls and poor management.**

**In this regard, I have written to a number of political heads, of some Government Ministries and Offices, requesting them to respond to allegations leveled against them or their Ministries, within a specified period of time. This will enable me to fully**

**understand the cause for the considerable unhappiness of the public, towards the concerned Ministries. This exercise would further provide opportunity for those accused to defend themselves or to rebut, in cases where allegations are unfounded, thus enabling me to take corrective measures, where need be.**

**I have particularly been disturbed by various allegations of corruption, maladministration and/or incompetency, mostly directed at the: Ministry of Works and Transport; the Office of the Attorney-General; the Ministry of Mines and Energy and the Ministry of Health and Social Services. There may be other Ministries and Agencies too, to a lesser extent. While I have not been presented with any credible evidence of corrupt practice per se, I believe that whatever has been the cause of public unhappiness has since done a serious damage to the ability of such Ministries, Offices and Agencies to effectively execute their constitutional and statutory mandates.**

**Moving from corruption to implementation activities for the year, the first of April 2018 will mark the commencement of Year 3 of the HPP. It is therefore an opportune time to account on how far we have come and whether there is a need for adjustment. During the State of the Nation Address I will account in detail on progress of the first two years.**

**We acknowledge that the economic climate remains a challenge. The current financial discipline moulded and adopted in the face of such economic climate must, therefore, become and remain our “New Normal”. Notwithstanding the challenges I identified earlier, there are key deliverables that must happen this year:**

- The National Land Conference, which was postponed from last year, must take place in 2018, under the auspices of the Prime Minister. To ensure inclusivity, a High Level Committee Chaired by the line Minister and comprised of**

**Ministerial and Civil Society, should be established. Extensive consultation, as undertaken last year by the Ministry, must be supplemented with inputs from subject matter experts and other important stakeholders who were not included in the first round of consultation. It is imperative that the format, objectives and outcomes of the Conference be clearly defined from the onset, so as to guide preparations.**

- As previously resolved, the confidential process of lifestyle audits has started and will be broadened. Those found wanting shall be handed over to relevant law enforcement agencies.**
- Namibia continues to lose its standing on global competitiveness rankings. This is partially attributable to inefficiencies, bureaucratic bottlenecks and the slow pace of reform. Consequently, our investment climate has been**

**perceived to be not conducive, due to the lack of implementation of agreed upon reform measures. This has become an impediment to investment and economic growth. I therefore request the Prime Minister to expedite the implementation of agreed upon reform measures and to conduct a Bureaucratic Bottleneck Audit, to decongest our systems and institutions.**

- The enabling legislation for State-Owned Enterprise reform, must be passed without further delay. The line Minister must be given the necessary support and power to execute his mandate, through the enactment of the enabling legislation.**
- The findings and recommendations contained in the 2017 Citizen Satisfaction Survey, conducted by the Office of the Prime Minister, to measure service delivery standards in the public sector should be followed up. I expect that improvement plans will be developed and**



**implemented this year, without delay.**

- **The recently announced Foreign Travel Ban will be extended beyond the month of February 2018. Following this period, all requests for foreign travel will be carefully considered by the approving authority. We recognize that we cannot completely ban all foreign travel. The intention is to exercise control and reduce the size of delegations. In exceptional cases, invitations for statutory travel must be properly motivated, and approval thereof be weighed against potential value gain. Accompanying officials will not be permitted, without adequate motivation. I expect the other Organs of State to join the Executive and exercise due restraint.**
- **As part of our objective to bring Government closer to the People, consultation with stakeholders should become the norm, rather than the exception, in order to inform Meeting preparations. Upon return from each official**

**engagement, Political Office Bearers or Officials are required to report back, either through a press conference, workshop or through submitting a written report to Cabinet, which will in turn be presented to Parliament.**

**As I have acknowledged, the mandate of Prosperity is a tall order. It is therefore necessary to realign and manage our resources, including human resources, appropriately and prudently.**

**Borrowing from football, when a coach leads his team to the World Cup, he has a maximum pool of twenty-three (23) authorized players to select from. Similarly, the President, when appointing Members of the Executive, has to draw them from among the one-hundred-and-four (104) Members of National Assembly, based on the Party list.**

**Therefore, in line with my Constitutional mandate and prerogative and whilst I continue, at the same**

**time, to investigate and consider various reported complaints of maladministration, it is now my honour and pleasure to announce certain changes to my Executive team.**

**I would like to announce the resignation of the Vice President, Comrade Nickey Iyambo, due to health reasons. I would like to thank him, son of the soil, my sober Advisor, for the excellent service rendered to Government throughout his political career. I am aware that some suggest that the position of Vice President remain vacancy. However, the only post that is optional, in the Constitution, is that of the Deputy Prime Minister. The appointment of a Vice President is therefore obligatory, in our current Constitution.**

**I have made the following appointments and changes, with immediate effect:**

- Vice President: Comrade Nangolo Mbumba;**
- Minister of Presidential Affairs: Hon. Immanuel**

**Ngatjizeko;**

- **Minister of Home Affairs and Immigration: Hon. Frans Kapofi;**
- **Minister of Mines and Energy: Hon. Tom Alweendo;**
- **Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry: Hon. Alpheus !Naruseb;**
- **Attorney-General: Hon. Albert Kawana;**
- **Minister of Justice: Hon. Sackeus Shanghala;**
- **Minister of Works and Transport: Hon. John Mutorwa;**
- **Minister of Industrialisation, Trade and SME Development: Hon. Tjekero Tweya;**
- **Director General of the National Planning Commission and Minister of Economic Planning: Hon. Obeth Kandjoze;**
- **Minister of Information and Communication Technology: Hon. Stanley Simataa;**
- **Minister of Urban and Rural Development: Hon. Peya Mushelenga; and**

- **Minister of Sport, Youth and National Service:  
Hon. Erastus Utoni.**

**The last three new appointments are all Deputy Ministers who have been promoted. This is part of our leadership succession-planning, testament that we do mould young people through the system. I congratulate all of you for your new assignments and I will expect nothing, but a total and effective performance of your duties.**

**Finally, I am counting on everyone of us to step up the implementation of Government programmes. We cannot continue at the same pace and mindset and somehow expect a different outcome. We cannot continue to make promises and not reckon. This is the Year of Reckoning, during which we will account to the People. We will hold Ministers accountable and they in turn are expected to hold their officials to account.**

**As Government, we need to work in harmony to deliver on our mandate. We must realize that it is only through effective service delivery that we will silence the critics. Hence the repeated call to hold hands and HARAMBEE in the same direction.**

**Long live the Republic of Namibia.**

**I thank you.**

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