

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**NEW YEAR GREETINGS TO THE DIPLOMATIC
CORPS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
DR HAGE G. GEINGOB, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

STATE HOUSE

WINDHOEK

FEBRUARY 17, 2017

- Director of Ceremonies;
- Comrade Nickey Iyambo, Vice President of the Republic of Namibia;
- Your Excellency Comrade Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma, Founding President and Father of the Namibian Nation;
- Your Excellency Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba, Second President of the Republic of Namibia;
- The Right Honourable Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia;
- Hon. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation;
- Honourable Professor Peter Katjavivi, Speaker of the National Assembly;
- Honourable Margaret Mensah- Williams, Chairperson of the National Council;
- Madam Monica Geingos, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia;
- Your Worship Peter Shivute, Chief Justice;
- Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament;
- Your Excellency, Mr. Manuel Alexandre Duarte Rodrigues, Ambassador of the Republic of Angola and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps;
- Your Excellencies Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Heads of International Organizations accredited to the Republic of Namibia;
- Distinguished invited Guests;
- Senior Government officials;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

Greetings to you all.

I always say that Namibia is a Child of International Solidarity, midwifed by the United Nations; a friend to all and enemy to none; unless our friendship is misused.

Welcome to the portal of the Namibian House, a house in which we hold hands and pull together in same direction, in the spirit of Harambee. We are always pleased to open our doors to our international friends and partners. We believe that fostering strong international relations and cooperation is intrinsic to global peace, stability and development. Namibia has benefited tremendously from its relations with the international community and we plan to continue our partnership with the rest of the world, in the spirit of Harambee.

We are building a Namibia House that is defined by the harmonious coexistence of all ethnicities, tribes and races, a House where no one shall feel left out. It is a house in which we all hold hands, pulling together in one direction in the spirit of Harambee It is a house reinforced by a strong constitution. It is a house built on the cornerstones of democracy, unity, peace, stability and the rule of law.

Namibia is part of a larger House. A House we call Africa. Our African Home is equally built on a strong foundation, the AU Constitutive Act. It is a Home

in which the African people are aspiring to pull together in the same direction towards prosperity in the spirit of Harambee, guided by the torch of Pan Africanism and the hopes of a better future as encapsulated in Agenda 2063.

We are also part of an even larger House, although ironically we call it the Global Village. It is a village where the people of the world aspire to live harmoniously under the United Nations Charter. It is a village where we must all pull together in one direction in the spirit of Harambee, in order to pursue our dream of a better world; a world devoid of conflicts, a world devoid of pandemic outbreaks, and a world characterized by shared and sustainable development. We are guided towards these aspirations by the United Nations Development Sustainable Goals which is our compass, as we navigate towards a better world.

Director of Ceremonies,

Bill Boyers once said "democracy can only work when people claim it as their own". Therefore, democracy cannot be sold. It must rather be born out of a collective will and desire of the people. In Namibia, we have such democracy. The Namibian democracy was born out of a long and bitter struggle for Independence, which subsequently led to the embracing of reconciliation and national unity. Likewise, in the African House, Africans must define and take ownership of our own democracy, based on our narrative, as well as our divergent themes.

We call on the world to join us in a new democratic dispensation, where all the people of the world truly own and partake in global democracy. We need a world in which no one feels left out. We need a world where there are checks and balances and a world where unilateralism, binarism and trilateralism are shunned in favour of multilateralism. That is the global condition we should aspire towards, because at present Africans are feeling left out. I hope that this year we will ignite the stalled negotiations concerning Africa's rightful pursuit for a seat on the United Nations Security Council. As Africans we do not want to feel excluded any longer.

Director of Ceremonies,

We are aware that there are outstanding issues that as a country we need to address. That is why we have commenced this year with an emphasis on rededication. We are rededicating ourselves to the intrinsic principles of the Namibian people and the core principles of our country. We are rededicating ourselves to dealing with all impediments to our developmental goals, one of these, which is the land issue.

Given the fact that land is an emotive issue and in the interest of maintaining the unity of our Namibian House, I announced this week, at the first Cabinet Meeting and the Opening of Parliament, that the tabling of the Land Bill will be postponed in favour of a National Dialogue, at which land issue will be

discussed with a view to a practical solution. As I said when announcing this decision, the land issue needs a collective approach, considering the sensitivities involved, since if not handled properly, it could lead to instability.

The saying goes that it is difficult to build but easy to break down. It is even more difficult to rebuild something good that has been destroyed. We just need to look at the Middle East, where Governments and countries were destroyed on the premise of ushering in better systems, but the reality is the complete opposite. We must take cognizance of the fact that in the global village, what is happening in a particular house is never merely a domestic issue, since it carries international ramifications.

It is therefore important that we join hands to tackle issues such as income inequality, as coupled with land, is one of the major reasons that cause conflict and the subsequent migration of human beings, as they seek a better life elsewhere. Indeed income inequality is a global phenomenon and it is on the rise in several countries. In Namibia, we are committed to tackling this issue and we ask that all stakeholders; Government, Private Sector and our international partners should join hands in ensuring that the scourge of poverty and income inequality is curtailed and eventually eradicated.

Director of Ceremonies,

As a Child of International Solidarity, we cannot be inconsiderate to the needs of those whose rights to self-determination are still unjustly denied. We therefore call on the full implementation of all relevant UN resolutions

on Western Sahara so that like all of us, the people of Western Sahara can enjoy their inalienable right to independence and self-determination.

Similarly, the people of Palestine have also been yearning for their freedom and independence, but continue to live as refugees. In the interest of a harmonious global village and in the interest of our principled approach to global freedom and justice, we reaffirm our solidarity to the people of Palestine and call for the implementation of the relevant UN Resolutions to realize their inalienable rights to self-determination and independence.

Although we are encouraged by the recent political and diplomatic events which have led to a thawing of Cuba- USA relations, we now urge all parties to take things a step further, and display a genuine intent of goodwill and peace by working towards the lifting of the economic embargo against Cuba. The embargo is contrary to international efforts to reduce poverty and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals targets including the right to development. It is, therefore, contrary to our aspirations of creating a more harmonious world.

Roman historian Sallust once said, "Harmony makes small things grow, lack of it makes great things decay." This year, let us rededicate ourselves to ensuring a more harmonious world in which no region or nation will feel left out. Let us maintain harmony so that even the smallest nations can grow, because without harmony, even the strongest and greatest nations in the world will decay.

May I now invite you all to join me in proposing a toast to the good health and personal wellbeing of Their Majesties, Their Excellencies, Heads of State and Government of your respective countries and Heads of International Organizations that you represent here in the Republic of Namibia. May 2017 be the year of peace, harmony and prosperity. Let us hold hands and march towards a world of opportunity for all.