

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



WELCOMING STATEMENT

BY HON. NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH, DEPUTY PRIME
MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND
COOPERATION ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE
FOREIGN POLICY REVIEW CONFERENCE,
25 JULY 2016,
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

**Director of Ceremonies,
Your Excellency, Dr Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic
of Namibia and Madame Monica Geingos, First Lady;
Your Excellency Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba – Former President;
Your Excellency Nickey Iyambo, - Vice President of the
Republic of Namibia;
Hon. Dr Peter Katjavivi – Speaker of the National Assembly;
Hon. Theo-Ben Gurirab - Former Speaker of the National
Assembly;
Rt. Hon. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila – Prime Minister;
Hon. Nahas Angula – Former Prime Minister;
Hon. Dr. Libertina Amadhila – Former Deputy Prime Minister;
Hon. Marco Hausiku – Former Deputy Prime Minister;
Hon. Ministers and Deputy Ministers;
Hon. Former Ministers of Foreign Affairs;
Hon. Former Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs;
Hon. Members of Parliaments;
Members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign
Affairs, Defence & Security
Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Representatives of various Academic Institutions;
Senior Officials of the Ministry of International Relations and
Cooperation;
Captain of Industries;
Members of the civil society;
Distinguished invited guests,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and gentlemen**

I welcome you all to this important Conference, for the review of Namibian Foreign Policy. As articulated in the White Paper on Namibia's Foreign Policy and Diplomacy Management, in every country, Heads of State are the principal individuals who formulate the Foreign Policy of their countries. However, I will not take your presence among us for granted, Comrade President. Your presence means a lot to us at Ministry of International Relations and Corporation (MIRCO). Let me therefore, thank you for finding time to officiate at this conference despite your busy schedule.

Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, Former President your presence is highly appreciated, and your contributions to the implementation of Namibia's Foreign Policy continue to guide us.

The same goes to our Vice-President, Prime Minister, Former Prime Ministers and Former Ministers of Foreign Affairs, for the latter what we will be doing here in the next five days is based on the strong foundation and structures you left at (MIRCO) and we are forever grateful.

Hon. Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Members of Parliament, Civil Servants, Academia, business people, women, youth, civil society organisations, of course members of the Diplomatic Corps and international presenters, you are all most welcome, and we are looking forward to your invaluable inputs in our discussions.

Foreign Policy is defined among others, as "self-interest strategies chosen by States, to safeguard its national interest and achieve goals within its International Relations". Based on that definition, to formulate a Foreign Policy or the self-interest strategy is not an easy exercise and to maintain its characteristics nature of national strategy, consultation is a must. In developing the "WHITE PAPER ON NAMIBIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND DIPLOMACY MANAGEMENT" in 2004, the then, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had sent out questions to different institutions both in the public, the private sector, civil societies and individual personalities.

As we review the WHITE PAPER that has served us well for the past twelve years, the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation has decided to have face to face consultations, hence the holding of this review Conference. In the next five days we will listen to presentations dealing with different topics by Namibians and international experts and practitioners. As we engage, time will be given for discussions to allow free flow of information. I therefore would like to thank all those who had agreed to make presentations, some of whom had to travel from outside our borders. We, in the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation are looking forward to tap from your rich expertise and knowledge as we review our Foreign Policy.

The Foreign Policy Review is an acceptable mechanism to enable a country to assess its achievements and address emerging issues. As indicated earlier, the Namibian Foreign Policy or WHITE PAPER was adopted 12 years ago. I may say that those who have studied the WHITE PAPER would agree with me that it is a well-researched and well-presented Policy document, and some of the elements in it remain valid as they were in 2004.

It is equally true that some noticeable progress has been achieved in realising the goals articulated in the Policy while some situations have developed and may require new strategies. Among others, the White Paper clearly states that “as a country that has set itself the goal of becoming an upper-middle-income or at best a high-income economy by the year 2030”. Today Namibia is classified by the World Bank as an upper-middle-income country, therefore this goal is achieved, though the classification has brought some serious challenges in accessing soft loan that are essential for our development. The White Paper also stress “poverty reduction as a top priority among government policy priorities”. While that was true in 2004, today under the Harambee Prosperity Plan, the call is to eradicate poverty, hence a need of a new strategy.

By way of recalling history, let me mention that the adoption of our Constitution necessitated the establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This Ministry was charged with the responsibility

to manage Namibia's international relations. We had to start from scratch to articulate and formulate the Foreign Policy of Namibia. Thanks to those countries that during our struggle for national liberation accorded SWAPO diplomatic status, many of the SWAPO cadres were already at the time of Independence had wide experience in diplomacy. Among them, our first Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab who led the process with commitment and determination. Comrade Theo-Ben Gurirab, you continue to inspire us. It is on these cadres that we relied heavily in formulating and managing our foreign policy. And I shall be remiss in my duty if I do not take a moment to recognise and applaud the contributions of former SWAPO representatives to the initial development of Namibia's Foreign Policy. Many friendly countries have also assisted us in setting up our Ministry and I wish to single out Ambassador E. M. Debra of Ghana and Amb. Rana of India for their contribution and assistance in setting up the Foreign Service of Excellence.

As it is well known, Foreign Policy is an extension of every country's domestic policy. It is within this context that Foreign Policy is crafted and implemented. It would therefore, correct for me to state that the Namibia's Foreign Policy is a reflection of who we are and where we want to be as a country and people. It is the means to promote our values and pursue our national interests abroad. It further describes the relationships between and among countries and international organisations. Through the Foreign Policy, we strive to promote economic prosperity, peace, stability and security, and the welfare of the Namibian citizens abroad, as guided by Article 96 of the Namibian constitution.

Director of ceremonies,

Distinguished invited guests,

This Conference brings together key stakeholders to review the Namibia Foreign Policy, in realignment with current national priorities and programmes which are aimed at eradicating poverty in our country. Our Foreign Policy was crafted against the backdrop of the Cold War and our struggle for national liberation. At that

time, Namibia and the world looked very much different from what it is today. Simply put the world has drastically changed.

When we adopted our Foreign Policy, issues of environment, human trafficking, terrorism, piracy and cybercrime, just to mention a few, did not feature very prominently on the international agenda. Today, these issues have become global priorities as they transcend national borders and thus require collective international efforts to address them. This is partly why we are gathered here this morning and for the rest of the week to brainstorm on new developments on the national and international arena that may have impact on our Foreign Policy.

International relations and cooperation are based on mutual benefits and understanding. Namibia is a member of various multilateral organisations and as a signatory to the numerous international treaties and conventions. The review of our policy is therefore to be guided by both domestic needs and national obligations to international legal instruments that we have signed and acceded to. While reviewing our Foreign Policy, we are to be mindful of the fact that we are living in a global environment that requires flexibility, hence we take cognizance of contemporary issues and developments.

In conclusion, I urge participants to this conference to ensure that the review of Namibia Foreign Policy should serve as an opportunity to reflect on how best we can continue to serve the interests of the Namibian people with honour and dignity, while maintaining peaceful co-existence and mutual respect with the rest of world.

Once again let me welcome you all and thank you most sincerely for responding positively to our invitation.