

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. SAM SHAFIISHUNA NUJOMA, FOUNDING
PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION, ON THE OCCASION OF THE
COMMEMORATION OF HEROES DAY

29 AUGUST 2010

OLUKEKETE CENTRE
OUTAPI CONSTITUENCY

OMUSATI REGION

Director of ceremonies;
Honourable Ministers;
Honourable Members of Parliament;
Comrade Sackey Kayone, Governor of Omusati Region;
Comrade Titus Kanyeke, SWAPO Party Regional Coordinator;
Omusimanekwa Elenga Enene Oswin Mukulu of Ombalantu Traditional Authority;
Comrade Simon Shileka, Regional Councillor of Outapi Constituency;
Honourable Regional and Local Councillors;
Your Worship, The Mayor of Outapi Town;
Comrades;
Ladies and gentlemen:

I feel deeply honoured for the invitation extended to me to come and join you to commemorate the
Heroes Day, 26 August here at Olukekete in Outapi Constituency.

The 26 August 1966 is the day when the Namibian people under the banner of SWAPO decided to rise to arms and launch the armed liberation struggle at Omugulugwombashe to fight for our genuine freedom and independence. It was not easy to embark upon the armed liberation struggle. We have to cross many rivers of blood for us to achieve our genuine freedom and independence. Thousands of Namibian sons and daughters shed their precious blood and sacrificed their lives for the freedom that we enjoy today in Namibia.

On this day, we remember our heroes and heroines who sacrificed their lives for freedom and independence. We remember those who were buried in shallow unmarked graves in the jungles of Angola, Zambia and Namibia who fought to the bitter end and never wavered. We owe our loyalty to their bravery and heroism for their blood waters our freedom.

Indeed, SWAPO followed in the footsteps of our forefathers who resisted colonial invasion of our beloved motherland.

Our forefathers such as Captain Hendrik Witbooi, Chief Samuel Maharero, Jacob Marenga, Chief Kahimemwa Nguvauva, King Nehale Ija Mpingana, Chief Mandume ja Ndemufayo, Chief Iipumbu ja Tshilongo and many others who fought heroically against German and South African colonial invaders. As we commemorate the Heroes Day, we should therefore always remember that the freedom, peace and political stability that we enjoy today were not given to us on a silver platter.

Indeed, the liberation struggle was complimented by thousands of Namibians back home who provided food, shelter and information about the movements of the enemy troops to the Combatants of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), SWAPO's Military Wing. Thousands of our civilian population suffered at the hands of the colonial forces. Some died in prisons, while others disappeared without trace. Thousands others, had their properties destroyed, including their homesteads and Mahangu fields.

Today, we are a free nation. We have joined the community of nations as proud and free peoples determining our own future destiny. We should therefore work hard in unity of purpose and action and maintain peace and stability so that we can accelerate the socio-economic development of our country and eradicate poverty, hunger and diseases.

Director of Ceremonies;

Indeed during the past twenty years, the SWAPO Party Government has implemented milestone development projects in all the thirteen regions of our country. We have deepened the ports of Walvis Bay and Luderitz. Today, the port of Walvis Bay caters for the cargo destined to the various land locked countries in the SADC Region. We have constructed the Trans-Kalahari and Trans-Caprivi Highways and the Northern Railway Extension project from Tsumeb to Oshikango via Ondangwa. We have rehabilitated the railway line from Aus to Luderitz, while the construction of the tarred road from Rosh Pinash to Aus was completed.

This year, 2010, the improvement of the road from Rundu to Elundu will be completed. This important road forms part of the extension of the Caprivi High Way through Okongo-Eenhana-

Onuno-Omafo-Okalongo-Outapi-Tsandi-Omakange-Opuwo to Agra Fria where a new harbor will be built. We have also built gravel roads to connect our rural areas to urban centres.

I am informed that the construction of the Olukekete-Okapalelona gravel road will be started soon. But let me express my disappointment on the manner in which rural development projects are implemented, especially in the regions. I have learned that thousands of our citizens 20 years after independence are still on the receiving end, particularly when it comes to the provision of basic public services such as health, education and transport services including roads.

The problem in the delivery of such basic amenities does not lie with the central Government but with our Regional and Local Authority Councillors who are failing in their duty to deliver on their mandate. They sit idle waiting everything to come from the central Government.

I wish to emphasize that Regional and Local Councillors are the eyes and ears of the Government. They serve as the transmission belt between the central Government and the local communities in all the thirteen Regions of our country. But it has been observed that instead of doing their work, some Regional and Local councilors spend most of their time attending to their personal matters, instead of delivering and implementing on their daily duties.

Comrades;

Since independence, we have prioritized the development of agriculture so that we can enhance food self-sufficiency in our country. We have also established aquaculture projects in various regions of our country. We have also initiated the Green Scheme along the Kavango and Zambezi Rivers in order to improve food security in our country. I should emphasize that aquaculture has the potential to improve our people's standards of living and would like to call upon our communities to embark upon aquaculture and mari-culture projects in their localities.

Other important agricultural projects that have the potential to boost food production are the growing of rice in our oshanas. Our Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry and the University of Namibia at Ogongo Campus has co-initiated rice production in selected areas in Omusati Region. I would like to encourage the community of Olukekete to embark upon rice production in your community to improve food self-sufficiency.

I am reliably informed that during the rainy season, some communities including Oukwandongo, Omufituweelo and Olukekete used to be cut off from the rest of the region which makes them experience difficulties to reach hospitals, while children could not attend school. I therefore urge Omusati Regional Council to start assisting these communities in building roads to enable our communities to have access to urban centres.

I must commend our citizens who rise to the challenge and initiate their own development programmes. I am informed that the Omufituweelo community has decided to build a 14 kilometers gravel road to Outapi town.

This project is a community project which members of the community have initiated themselves. The project must be commended as it compliments our Government's efforts in development. However, I am disappointed that the Omusati Regional Council has chosen to ignore this important community project.

I would like to advice that Omusati Regional Council, as a matter of urgency support this important project. In addition, I am urging Omusati Regional Council to assist community/villagers who

initiate road labour intensive projects because they are in line with our Government's development plans and programmes.

As you are all aware, this had been the war zone during the liberation struggle and people around these areas have experienced hard times and therefore priority should be made to ease their lives. We have no reason why development cannot come this side of the borders.

Comrades;

Education remains the key to meaningful socio-economic development. As a result, our Government has built new primary and secondary schools in all the thirteen regions of our country. We have also expanded academic programmes at the University of Namibia, Polytechnic of Namibia as well as a teacher training and vocational training centres.

Last year, the University of Namibia has opened a Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology at Ongwediva and this year in February, the University of Namibia opened the new School of Medicine in Windhoek. These interventions have been made so that we can train our own engineers and medical doctors. It is now the duty of our parents and teachers to work hard and ensure that every child attends school. It is through education that we will be able to produce our own human resources in all technical fields who will contribute to the implementation of Vision 2030.

Comrades;

We have expanded the provision of electricity and potable water to the majority of our citizens in rural areas and as result, the majority of our citizens in the rural areas have access to these basic services. However, I must emphasize that Regional Councils should ensure that these services are expanded to the needy sections of our population. Equally, we must ensure that our people in rural areas have access to the provision of quality health services.

Comrades;

Our economy will only grow when we encourage the growth of our SME sector, especially in the rural areas of our country. Many of our people believe that they should immigrate to towns to do business. I would like to inform you that you can initiate a development project anywhere you are, including here at Olukekete. We have established the Development Bank of Namibia in order to provide funding to development projects. What is required from you is to plan and initiate business ventures and approach the Development Bank of Namibia for financial assistance.

The SME Bank will be established during the course of next year so that we can extend financial assistance to our small and medium businesses.

Comrades;

As we commemorate the Heroes Day, we should rededicate ourselves to work more harder so that we can accelerate economic development. We should continue to promote national unity and the

spirit of national reconciliation so that we can maintain peace and stability in our country. We should equally resolve to defend the gains of our hard-won freedom and independence.

Remember, a united people striving to achieve common good for all the members of the society will always emerge victorious.

Long live the Heroes and Heroines of Namibia
Long live the Republic of Namibia.

I thank you.