

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND  
FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION, ON THE OCCASION OF THE ANNUAL  
OMAGONGO CULTURAL FESTIVAL

27 MARCH 2010

OMHEDI-OUKWANYAMA TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY  
OHANGWENA REGION

Director of Ceremonies;  
His Excellency Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia;  
Meekulu Martha Mwadinomho Kristian Nelumbu, Queen of Oukwanyama;  
Honourable Ministers;  
Honourable Members of Parliament;  
Tatekulu Immanuel Kauluma Elifas, Chairperson of the Council of Traditional Authorities;  
Honourable Governor of Ohangwena Region and other Governors present;  
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;  
Aasimanekwa Aakwaniilwa nOmalenga;  
Honourable Regional and Local Councillors;  
Distinguished Invited Guests;  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Over the years, the Omagongo Cultural Festival has become a customary event that features prominently on our national calendar. This auspicious occasion does not only play an important role in uniting our people but also promotes our cultural heritage and identity.

I am therefore delighted to join you here this morning to celebrate the 2010 Annual Omagongo Cultural Festival here at Omhedi hosted by Ohamba, Meekulu Martha Mwadinomho Kristian Nelumbu. According to Oshiwambo culture, our ancestors use to celebrate their exploits, such as good harvest, including their achievements in the form of social gatherings. One of such events

was the Omagongo Festival. Such events served a useful purpose of forging unity and cultural identity which have been bequeathed from generations to generations.

However, the advent of colonialism and apartheid oppression eroded our cultures and traditional values. I am delighted that we are now reviving our cultural identity with a clear purpose of uniting our people and build a strong nation anchored on our rich cultural diversity.

Director of Ceremonies;

The hosting of this important national event nurtures the development of cultural expression within the context of the Namibian society, in line with the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia that stipulates that every person shall be entitled to enjoy, practice, profess, maintain and promote any culture, language or tradition.

Indeed, it has been proven that culture is a product of human development. Culture gives people a sense of belonging and promotes the people's identity. Culture is therefore a strong tool to enhance nation building and unity in any nation.

It is therefore not surprising those colonialists, upon the conquest of our countries they embarked upon the Policy of Divide and Rule and segregated our people on basis of tribalism. Tribalism therefore is not part of our cultural heritage but a tool of colonial oppression in order to perpetuate division, ignorance and underdevelopment in our country and the wider African continent. Here in our country we have seen how our beloved motherland was torn apart into the so-called homelands.

It was for that reason that the SWAPO Party Government initiated the Policy of National Reconciliation so that we can build a strong and united nation under the motto "*One Namibia, One Nation*". We must continue striving to promote unity in diversity and thereby promote unity, peace and tranquility among all Namibians, irrespective of their colour, race or places of origin.

Director of Ceremonies,

As I have stated on numerous occasions, as an African country, our cultural values and traditional norms must always shape our policies and guide our decisions in the affairs of governance and socio-economic development.

In this connection, I would like to urge our youth to participate in cultural activities. Our youth today shy away from cultural events with the pretext that they are outdated. I would like to emphasize that a nation without cultural identity is like a tree without roots. The youth of our country should also emulate the exemplary deeds of our forbearers. Indeed, our country has a rich and proud history. Our forbearers, including our Heroes and Heroines such as King Mandume ja Ndemufajo fought heroically against colonial invaders to restore our pride and determine our future destiny.

As future leaders of our country, the youth should promote our cultural heritage in order to forge a strong national cultural identity. The promotion of cultural activities will lay a strong foundation upon which the future generations would build on. The promotion of cultural values and norms will complement our efforts to promote national unity and build a strong prosperous nation.

At this juncture, I would like to congratulate the Oukwanyama Traditional Authority under the leadership of Ohamba Meekulu Martha Mwadinomho Kristian Nelumbu for hosting the Omagongo Festival this year. I wish to see the Annual Omagongo Cultural Festival to continue to be celebrated every year where our people can continue to organize such events in turn and come together to celebrate as one big family, hence we invite all other traditional authorities in Namibia to enjoy the festivities.

Long Live the Annual Omagongo Cultural Festival!

I thank you.