

Republic of Namibia



**Statement By His Excellency
Sam Nujoma
President of the Republic of Namibia,
On the occasion of the 15th
Independence Anniversary**

21 March 2005

Windhoek

Master of Ceremonies
Your Majesties
Your Excellencies,
Heads of State and Government
Your Excellencies,
Former Heads of State and Government
Honourable Hifikepunye Pohamba, President-Elect of the Republic of Namibia Honourable
Members of Parliament
Distinguished Invited Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,

For most of my adulthood, my life has been a journey. A journey that was inspired by the heroic deeds of our forefathers and mothers who resisted colonialism and foreign occupation of our Motherland and by other brave and visionary Africans who fought for the liberation and unity of Mother Africa.

On that journey, I was privileged to meet, know and work with fellow Namibians and fellow Africans with whom we shared a common vision and goal to end the colonial occupation and exploitation of our people and to build peaceful, united, and non-racial societies based on the ideals of democracy, equality and justice for all.

Following in the footsteps of our ancestors, the people of Namibia, under the leadership of SWAPO, waged a bitter and protracted liberation struggle for more than forty years in order to restore freedom, dignity and self-respect to all our people. It was a great honour and privilege for me to have been at the helm as Captain of the ship, in our journey across the uncharted and often stormy waters towards self-determination and national liberation.

On 21 March 1990, the long and bitter struggle of the Namibian people was crowned with final victory, when we hoisted our flag of freedom, nationhood and sovereignty and declared that Namibia is forever free and independent. I feel deeply honoured to have served as the Founding President of the Republic of Namibia and to have led our nation during the formative years of establishing a thriving and viable democratic State. The task was not easy, but we have walked a long way since that historic day in 1990. We have established a vibrant democratic dispensation with functioning institutions of the State. We have built a society where our citizens enjoy peace, security as well as fundamental human rights guaranteed by a Constitution that we have written ourselves.

In large measure, we are indebted to the peace-loving countries and peoples of the world who supported the just cause of our Freedom and Independence through political, moral, diplomatic and material assistance. Thousands of cadres of our liberation movement SWAPO, were trained in scientific guerrilla warfare, while others were trained at institutions of higher learning as pilots, doctors, teachers, nurses and technicians across the African continent, in Asia, Europe, the Americas and other parts of the world.

We will remain forever grateful for this international support and solidarity rendered to our just cause until final victory was achieved.

Your Majesties Your Excellencies,

Upon the attainment of our Freedom and Independence, we embarked upon the important and challenging task of nation building, in order to repair the damages caused by the racially discriminatory policies imposed on our country by the apartheid colonial regime of South Africa. It was an important imperative for us to heal the wounds of the past and to unite all our people so that we can move forward in unity on the long journey of nation building.

Towards this end, we implemented the Policy of National Reconciliation, because we believe that without peace there can be no meaningful socioeconomic development. We also designed a multi-sectoral framework for social and economic development based on five year National Development Plans, to bring about a fundamental social and economic transformation of our society.

As a result of these policy interventions, we can look back at many visible signs of development in several socio-economic areas where we have transformed our society. However, other challenges remain and we must work more harder to accelerate our country's economic development by training our own scientists, engineers and other technical personnel who are the critical catalysts for the growth of our economy and its modernisation.

Your Majesties Your Excellencies,

Since the birth of our Republic, Namibia has been an active member of the family of free and sovereign nations. As a product of international solidarity, we have always believed that our modest contributions to the search for and maintenance of world peace and security are part and parcel of our international obligations that we must proudly fulfil. It is against this background that our country has contributed troops and personnel to SADC, AU and UN peacekeeping missions in various countries in Africa and other parts of the world.

On our continent, Namibia is committed to promote regional and continental economic integration. Through SADC and the African Union, our country will continue to advocate Pan Africanism and the historical imperative of uniting the people of Africa, both on the continent and those in the Diaspora.

We will do our part to implement the economic development programmes through the AU and NEPAD so that Africans can achieve victory in the second phase of the struggle for economic independence.

Furthermore, Africans must consolidate mutually-beneficial economic relations, commercial trade and promote investments within the framework of SouthSouth and South-North co-operation. This will add momentum to the social and economic integration of our continent and increase its competitiveness in the global economy.

Your Majesties Your Excellencies,

I am indeed humbled and honoured because I was given the noble task and historic opportunity to lead our nation as we took our first tentative steps as a sovereign nation, a decade- and- a-half ago.

The people of Namibia have worked as a dedicated team to mould a democratic nation where all our people, irrespective of colour, race, place of origin or status in the society, live in peace and harmony. These successes were not achieved by the Government alone. Rather, they are the fruits of the unity of purpose of the Namibian people in a common endeavour to achieve national goals and objectives.

As we enter a new chapter in our history, marked by the inauguration of a new President and a new Government, the onus is on all Namibians to work harder than before in order to ensure a brighter future for all our people. Since 1990, I have been privileged to carry the torch of leadership on our Republic's Journey. Today, I pass this torch of leadership to Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba, with the trust and confidence that as President, he will continue to lead this nation to greater heights of peace, stability and economic prosperity through the implementation of NDP2 and the realisation of Vision 2030.

On this very historic occasion of the handing over of the instruments of state power, I now move to confer The Most Ancient Order of The Welwitschia Mirabilis 1st Class to Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba, who will be inaugurated shortly as the second President of the Republic of Namibia.

Long Live the Republic of Namibia!

I thank you.