

# **Republic of Namibia**



**Statement By His Excellency  
Sam Nujoma  
President of the Republic of Namibia,  
On the occasion of the Farewell Dinner**

**20 March 2005**

**Safari Hotel, Windhoek**

Master of Ceremonies  
Your Majesties  
Your Excellencies,  
Heads of State and Government  
Your Excellencies Former Heads of State and Government  
Honourable Members of Parliament  
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps  
Distinguished Invited Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the people and the Government of the Republic of Namibia, my family and indeed on my own behalf, I wish to sincerely and warmly welcome you all to our Capital City, Windhoek. Please, feel at home and enjoy your stay in our country, as you join us in celebrating our 15<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary.

Indeed, we are delighted and honoured to host many Heads of State and Government from the African continent and dignitaries from other parts of the world who have come to celebrate with us a decade-and-a-half of freedom, independence, peace, stability and development.

Your presence here today is testimony to the strong bonds of friendship and solidarity that so happily exist between Namibia and your respective countries and peoples.

Therefore, on this occasion and on behalf of all Namibians, I wish to express our profound gratitude and appreciation for the moral, diplomatic and material support received from your countries, organisations and even from individuals towards the attainment of our Freedom and Independence.

Since joining the family of sovereign nations on 21 March 1990, our country has worked together with the rest of the international community to promote and maintain world peace and security, through collective efforts in pursuit of a safer world characterised by peace and co-operation among nations and peoples.

Your Majesties Your Excellencies,

During the past fifteen years of independence, our country has faced and addressed many social and economic development challenges. We were also confronted by natural disasters, including the drought and floods.

In order to address these challenges, we initiated various proactive policies and programmes with the view to assist our people and to provide them with quality public services and social amenities. We have also introduced a framework for socio-economic development based on National Development Plans, each of which covers a period of five years.

From the Transitional National Development Plan in 1990 up to the current NDP2, we have implemented many development projects, including the building of schools, hospitals and clinics, houses and other facilities. We have also constructed roads and expanded the provision of potable water and electricity, especially in the rural areas where they did not exist before independence.

As part of our contribution towards the economic integration of our region and the African continent at large, our country has embarked upon infrastructure development projects to link our roads, railways and communication systems with our neighbours in the SADC region. The aim is to enhance commercial trade and investments in the region and to strength the competitiveness of our countries in the world economy.

As a young nation, many of our development efforts have benefited from the technical assistance, co-operation programmes and partnerships between Namibia and countries in the SADC Region as well as development co-operation partners from other parts of the world. These enduring bonds of friendship have indeed contributed positively to the process of nation building and socio-economic development in our country.

Your Majesties Your Excellencies,

The world, and the African continent in particular, are still facing daunting challenges in the areas of social and economic development. These challenges need a focused and co-ordinated approach to ensure that available resources are allocated equitably to benefit all our peoples.

Moreover, there is a pressing need to promote greater South-South and North-South Co-operation in all fields, including commercial trade and information technology. In the same vein, more efforts should be made to harmonise trade mechanisms through the World Trade Organisation (WTO) so that globalisation becomes a vehicle for fair global commerce, to create a win-win situation for countries in the Southern and Northern Hemispheres.

Here in Africa, our efforts should be dedicated to the modernisation of our economies in order to eradicate poverty by creating employment opportunities for our peoples. This can be achieved through the provision of high quality and relevant education and training of our youth so that they can become active participants in the socio-economic development of our countries.

Towards this end, we must promote the sharing and transfer of knowledge, skills and information technology among the industrialised countries of the North and the developing countries in the South. At the same time, Africa should mobilise and allocate more resources to build capacities and strengthen the agricultural sector on our continent.

This will enable our continent to improve food security and food selfreliance, so that we can fight hunger and poverty more effectively. Namibia is committed to work with other African countries and the international community to support multilateral efforts in addressing the problems facing our continent and humanity at large.

I am privileged to have led the people of Namibia as President for the past fifteen years. Although the tasks were challenging, our country has made notable strides through the perseverance and hard work of her people. We have united all our people through the Policy of National Reconciliation, and enabled them to enjoy peace and stability, and to focus their energies on the social, economic and political transformation of our society.

Your Majesties Your Excellencies,

I am honoured by your presence at this Farewell Dinner. I am stepping down tomorrow as Head of State with the satisfaction that our country has achieved peace and unity among all our people.

The mantle of leadership will be passed on and our people will continue to march forward in unity towards the attainment of all our social and economic development goals.

Our in-coming President and my successor, Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba is a committed leader who has dedicated his young and adult life to the struggle for freedom, justice and independence of the Namibian people.

In the same vein, I trust that the strong bonds of friendship, co-operation and commercial trade that exist between Namibia and your respective countries and the wider international community will continue to be strengthened further in the years to come.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I now have the honour to propose a toast to the continued good health of Your Majesties and Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government and to the consolidation of friendship and solidarity among our countries and peoples.

I thank you.