

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY

HIS EXCELLENCY DR HAGE G. GEINGOB,

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MAIN ROAD

129 OMAFO – ONGENGA – OKALONGO - OUTAPI

FEBRUARY 26, 2016

OMUSATI REGION

Check against delivery

Director of Ceremonies;

**Hon. Alpheus !Naruseb, Minister of
Works and Transport;**

**Hon. Sophia Shaningwa, Minister of
Urban and Rural Development;**

**Hon. Erginus Endjala, Governor of the
Omusati Region;**

All Councillors and Mayors Present;

**The Roads Authority Board of Directors
and Management;**

Distinguished Invited Guests;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and gentlemen;

I am delighted to be here today in Outapi for a very important event in the lives of the people of this area and for the Northern Region and Namibia as a whole – the opening of the Main Road 129 from Omafo to Outapi.

This project, which involves the upgrading of a road stretching 98 kilometers from gravel to bitumen standards, is a sign of our Government's commitment to the welfare of our citizens across the entire country. It is also a continuation of 25 years of efficient management of the national road network through sound management principles and strategies.

We have made a commitment to the people of Namibia to build 1,480 kilometers of bitumen standard roads during the next five years, and we intend to see that through. This project is a component of that commitment.

I have a fundamental belief that every Namibian, no matter where they live, deserves equal access to good roads, electricity, water, education, health and telecommunications. It is the right of every Namibian and it ties into my core principle of inclusivity – No Namibian Must Feel Left Out.

As I have said in the past, the development of our country will take place in stages, but if we all cultivate a culture of unity and inclusivity, pulling together as one unbreakable chain, then we will attain the promise of prosperity. As always, I must commend the sterling efforts of my predecessors, first Comrade Sam Nujoma, for bringing us peace and stability and Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba - who officiated at the ground breaking of the commencement of this project - for consolidating and paving the way for Namibia to pursue economic growth. Now, as the president tasked with bringing you prosperity, I am here

to tell you that I have begun to deliver on this promise.

It is my intent to continue our policy of renovation, upgrading, maintenance and expansion of critical sections of the transport network with a view to ensure safe and convenient travelling, stimulating economic activities, and facilitating the movement of goods and services within Namibia and across the borders. By providing modern road infrastructure to areas that were formerly isolated and cut off from the economic heartbeat of the country, we will be able to unlock the full economic potential of Namibia.

Before I mention some of the specifics of this particular road, I would like to illustrate the importance of roads and road networks by means of an analogy. Road networks play the same role for a country as the cardiovascular system plays in your body. Your heart pumps blood through blood vessels within your circulatory system. Blood has the specific task of carrying oxygen to your body's vital organs, providing vitality and energy. When your vital organs and circulatory system work in unison, you have an adequate blood flow.

Similarly, the road network connects the nation's capital, which is the heart of the

country, to other urban as well as rural centers, which are the vital organs of a country. The road networks are similar to the blood vessels, ensuring that people, goods and services are moving freely to and from the various centers of the country, bringing vitality and energy to the whole country, and in so doing, forming a system which pulls in the same direction - Harambee - and providing adequate supply of economic and other goods to each and every Namibian, no matter which region or town they reside in.

This stretch of road, which is an addition to our life line, the national road

network, signifies an important milestone in the development of the transport infrastructure in the SADC region and in particular between Namibia and Angola. It will serve as a backbone of the regional development corridor, since it forms part of the east-west SADC regional route between Katima Mulilo in the Zambezi Region and Angola via Katwitwi and Oshikango in the Kavango and Ohangwena regions respectively.

Furthermore, this road project will provide an improved link which will serve as a viable road network between rural communities and the main service

centers in the Omusati and Oshana regions, unlocking the business and tourism potential of the two regions.

I commend the Roads Authority, Namibia Project Managers and Consultants as well as the contractor, China Gezhouba Group for the successful completion of this project valued at close to N\$ 576 million.

Let me conclude by quoting Robert Zoellick who said, "There are many roads to prosperity, but one must be taken. Inaction leads nowhere." For the inhabitants of the Omusati and Oshana Regions the Omafo – Outapi

road is a road towards prosperity. Take it, look after it and cherish it. Government has taken action, now go ahead and make the most of the opportunities that this road will bring.

I thank you.