

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**NEW YEAR GREETINGS
TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR HAGE G.GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

STATE HOUSE

WINDHOEK

FEBRUARY 18, 2016

Check against delivery

- **Vice President of the Republic of Namibia, Comrade Nickey Iyambo;**
- **Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, Right Honourable Saara Kuugongelwa - Amadhila;**
- **Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah;**
- **Secretary General of the SWAPO Party, Comrade Nangolo Mbumba;**
- **Your Honour Chief Justice, Peter Shivute;**
- **Chairperson of the National Council, Honourable Margaret Mensah – Williams;**
- **His Excellency President Hifikepunye Pohamba;**
- **Members of the Diplomatic corps;**
- **Ladies and gentlemen**

Director of Ceremonies,

I am honoured to welcome you all here at State House and would like to extend to you, on behalf of The First Lady, the Government and indeed the entire Namibian people and I, our warmest and most sincere well wishes for the New Year, to you personally, to your members of staff, families, and through you to the governments and the people of your respective countries and organisations. New Year is a time for us to reflect, having been renewed by the rest provided by the holidays. It is a time for quiet reflection, a time to plan, a time for a fresh beginning, a time not to dwell on what might have been, but to ponder the endless opportunities that lie ahead and the possibilities for future success.

Unfortunately every year comes with a few farewells also. So before I continue, let us take a moment to remember the former Secretary General of the United Nations, His Excellency Boutros Boutros-Ghali who passed away this Tuesday – May we observe a minute of silence in his honour. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year 2015 was a year characterised by excitement, as Namibia witnessed the inauguration of its 3rd democratically elected President. It was a year to dream, a year in which Namibians expressed their patriotic fervour, rallying behind the concept of the Namibian House.

As the President charged with bringing prosperity to the nation, I announced that our Government was declaring all-out war on poverty. The excitement of the elections and inauguration has come and gone and now in 2016, it is time for hard work. Thus, I term this year, the year of implementation for it has been said that, "Character is the ability to carry out a good resolution long after the excitement of the moment has passed". It is now time for us to show our character and carry through the resolution of eradicating poverty.

But to do that, we need some basic fundamentals to be in place.

In this regard, our governance and macro-economic fundamentals are in place and without resting on our laurels; we continue to improve these crucial pillars of our development. Our macroeconomic architecture is underpinned by financial stability evident in a world-class banking system (a sector ranked number 25th in the world by the world economic forum), and well-regulated through a prudent monetary policy for the past 25 years. Both the Fitch ratings and Moody's, which are globally, recognized rating experts for country financial stability has consistently been according Namibia triple BBB positive ratings, to indicate that the country enjoys a stable economic outlook. Our debt stock is between 25 % and 30% of GDP. Clearly at the level of governance Namibia by all local

and international standards is doing well, as a maturing, stable, peaceful and democratic society.

Furthermore, the Namibian Government remains committed to improve transparency as one of the most effective ways to deal with possible conflict of interest in the public sector. I am pleased to note within a relatively short period of less than one year that our drive at enhancing transparency has already started to pay off as we climbed ten places on the Transparency International Index to number 45 globally and number 3 in Africa.

Underpinned by an independent judiciary, as well as an independent Anti-Corruption

Commission, some specific actions that contributed to this improved performance include:

- asset declaration in public by myself and the first Lady, despite not legally obliged to do so;**
- declaration of assets by Members of Parliament and release of Ministerial performance contracts to the public;**
- the revamp our public procurement act to make procurement more transparent; as well as cancelation of tenders that did not comply to due processes.**

We will not relent on our commitment to root out corruption and to be rated among the top performers globally when it comes to transparency. They say it takes two to tango. The same goes with regard to corruption. I would, therefore, like to urge

all stakeholders, be it private sector, non-governmental organizations, international partners and the media to support Government's transparency initiatives and to obey to the rules and regulations of our Republic.

I am also pleased note that the media in Namibia is rated highly. The Reporters without Borders' Press Freedom Index 2015 ranked Namibia as number 17 in the world and number 1 in Africa in terms of freedom of press.

Earlier, I mentioned two pillars of development namely Governance Architecture and Macroeconomic Architecture. There is a third pillar which is

Socio-Economic architecture, and it is this pillar that we need to strengthen and reinforce so that it is able to have the same robustness as the other two.

Due to this situation, we have endeavoured to create an investment and business friendly environment by which we invite investors from around the world to come and invest, not in the old fashioned way of exploiting resources for profit only and leaving, but through the establishment of win-win partnerships where all parties benefit. As diplomats, you have a huge role to play in ensuring that these types of investments actualize.

As you are aware, the era of the past was characterised by traditional diplomacy because we were fighting for political freedom. However, the modern world and its environment require a new kind of diplomacy which can be described as economic diplomacy. This new kind of diplomacy is necessary in today's time, because now we are fighting for economic freedom and against challenges such as poverty, unemployment and international terrorism.

While we call on you to join us in fighting against poverty and fighting for economic freedom and prosperity, I would like to inform you that during my State of the Nation Address, I will be announcing our Government's strategy in tackling these

issues as I launch the targeted impact plan, called "Harambee Prosperity Plan". This plan, which will come into effect on April 1, 2016, is aimed at significantly reducing poverty levels and will span the period 2016/17 through to 2020/21. It is there that I shall also touch on issues confronting our planet. I invite all of you to join us then.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by restating my commitment to the principles of unity and Nation Building. Last year, I took great pleasure in rallying our people behind the concept of the Namibian House through the use of slogans such as "No Namibian Must Feel Left Out" and "Harambee".

Tonight, I want to extend that handshake of unity to you by quoting former Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson who said, "Let our New Year's resolution be this: we will be there for one another as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of the word."

Let no country feel left out. Let us make this year 2016, a year in which we extend the hand of friendship to each other, united in humanity and in so doing, overcome all of the problems facing us whether nationally, regionally or globally.

I thank you.