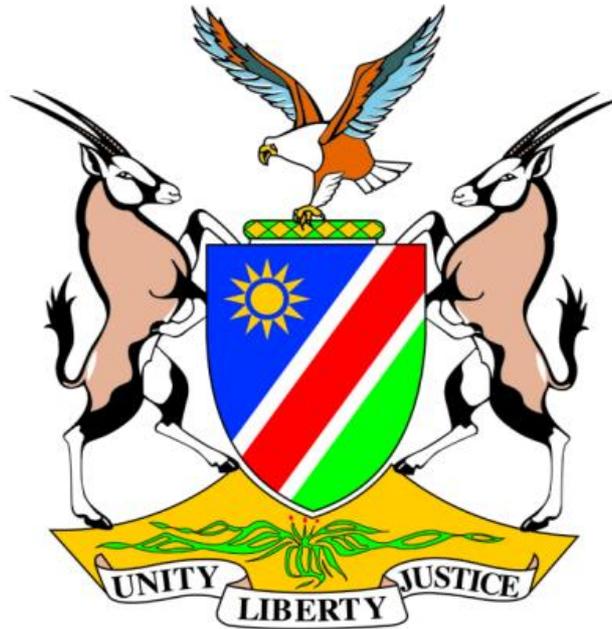


**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY**  
**HIS EXCELLENCY DR HAGE G. GEINGOB,**  
**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**  
**AT THE COMMEMORATION OF HEROES DAY**

**KUISEBMOND STADIUM**

**WALVIS BAY**

**AUGUST 26, 2016**

*Check against delivery*

**Director of Ceremonies, Honourable Deputy Prime Minister and  
Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Netumbo  
Nandi-Ndaitwah;**

**Comrade Dr. Nickey Iyambo, Vice President of the Republic of  
Namibia;**

**Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly, Prof. Peter  
Katjavivi;**

**Honourable Chairperson of the National Council, Margaret  
Mensah-Williams;**

**Your Honour, Chief Justice Peter Shivute;**

**Madam Monica Geingos, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia;**

**Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers;**

**Honourable Members of Parliament;**

**Governor of the Erongo Region, Honourable Cleophas  
Mutjavikua;**

**Honourable Governors present,**

**Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councillors;**

**Your Worship, the Mayor of Walvis Bay;**

**Secretary General of the SWAPO Party, Comrade Nangolo  
Mbumba and fellow distinguished Leaders of other Political  
Parties;**

**Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**

**Distinguished Service Chiefs;**

**Esteemed Religious, Traditional and Community Leaders;**

**Esteemed Veterans of the Liberation struggle;**

**Distinguished Invited Guests;**

**Members of the Media;**

**Fellow Namibians;**

***I know that I am in critical condition, but the struggle and the war of liberation must continue.*** These are the famous words once spoken by the late Peter Eneas 'Ndilimani' Nanyemba, one of Namibia's most outstanding Freedom Fighters and Commander of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and an exemplar of the heroic selflessness of the heroes of our struggle, who also said that we would have to cross many rivers of blood before we could achieve independence.

The words of Comrade Nanyemba illustrate the true essence of heroism. Like him, many other gallant sons and daughters chose to forego their own personal wellbeing in order to attain a greater goal. Showing exceptional courage in the face of

**harm and danger, our men and women exhibited a peerless level of heroic conduct in fulfilling a higher purpose and achieving a noble end. That higher purpose was freedom – That noble end was Independence.**

**They were following in the footsteps of their heroic predecessors, and revolutionaries such as Chief Hosea Kutako, Comrade Sam Nujoma, Honorable Mburumba Kerina, Honorable Fanuel Kozonguizi and many other patriots who never wavered in showing courage in the face of daunting opposition. It is for these brave souls, who crossed many rivers of blood, that we are gathered here today, in order to commemorate their bravery and to celebrate the fruits of their sacrifice. Today is made even more special by the fact that it is the semi centennial celebration of the battle of Ongulumbashe, a watershed moment in the fight for Namibia's Independence, when PLAN combatants under the leadership of Comrade John Ya Otto Nankudhu, fired their bullets for the first time, as they engaged the South African Defence Force, thus marking the beginning of the armed struggle.**

**We are grateful that Namibia has been blessed with these individuals, whose elevated moral stature and superior ability enabled them to pursue the goal of freedom indefatigably in the face of powerful antagonists. Because of their unwavering devotion to the good, no matter the opposition, they managed to attain hero status and have immortalized themselves through their outstanding feats which we commemorate today.**

**In the book *Beyond Courage*, author Chris Benguhe lists 9 principles of heroism, these are:**

- 1. Integrity**
- 2. Duty**
- 3. Self-respect**
- 4. Faith**
- 5. Devotion**
- 6. Altruism**
- 7. Compassion**
- 8. Listening**
- 9. Forgiveness**

**I would like to illustrate how our heroes and heroines applied these principles during the struggle against colonial oppression and Apartheid brutality.**

**Through their strong moral principles to fight for freedom and justice, they displayed their integrity; their moral obligation displayed their duty; by conducting themselves with honour and dignity; they displayed self-respect; their trust and confidence in achieving victory, even when it seemed unattainable, displayed faith; their love and loyalty for their peers and country displayed devotion; their selfless concern for the well-being of their fellow Namibians; further displayed altruism; their pity and concern for the suffering of other Namibians displayed compassion; and finally, having achieved victory, the heroes of the struggle did not choose the path of retribution, but instead listened to the voice of peace and showed forgiveness in adopting the principle of reconciliation.**

**The great revolutionary Ernesto Che Guevara once said, "*We cannot be sure of having something to live for unless we are willing to die for it.*" Today we are living in a free and independent Namibia because many were willing to die for it -**

**Today we have democracy because many were willing to die for it – Today we have unity because many were willing to die for it – Today we have peace, stability and the rule of law because many were willing to die for it.**

**Fellow Namibians,**

**In commemorating the bravery of our heroes and heroines on this Heroes Day, let us take time to reflect on what they fought for. Due to their sacrifices, today we are living in a country founded on the principles of effective governance, respect for the rule of law, respect for human life, dignity, and unity. It is one thing honouring our heroes and heroines with statues, monuments, songs and well-articulated tributes, however, but if we truly want to honour the memory of our valiant sons and daughters, then the best way to do that is to preserve and build upon the principles they fought for.**

**Let us therefore not be bored by peace and stability for which we are the envy of many nations. Many chose to fight for peace because they grew weary of war, hatred, division and mistrust.**

**Let us be grateful for the fact that we do not need to live in such difficult times anymore. Greek Philosopher Epictetus once said, *"He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has."***

**Fellow Namibians,**

**Let us be wise men and women and not spend our time grieving for those things we do not have, but rather let us rejoice for those things we have. We should not ignore the reality that faces so many nations, not only on the African continent, but globally as well. Every day we witness scores of people who are being killed, while others risk death to flee their countries of birth, never to return again.**

**In Namibia, these nightmare scenarios are a distant memory, and many of our younger generations are unable to relate to such scenes. This is all due to the fact that those who came before them laid down their lives so that freedom and peace can prevail today - freedom and peace which we should jealously guard lest we fall back to the dark days of the past.**

**We have too much to be happy for. We enjoy the safety of our nation and the harmony that exists amongst us is precious.**

**In this regard, I would like to pay tribute to the men and women of the Uniformed Services, some who are present here today. You have inherited the torch of freedom and justice, passed on by those whom we honour today. Like our heroes before you, many of you have paid the highest price in order to maintain our safety, security and unity. We are grateful and honoured for your discipline, dedication and devoted service.**

**Fellow Namibians,**

**The enemies of yesterday were identifiable; for they were militarised and therefore easy to engage. Today, Namibia is faced with new enemies. Unfortunately, today's enemies are invisible. They have no soldiers or armies and they have no form or shape. These enemies, such as poverty, corruption, and tribalism, coupled with independent intervening variables such as drought, cannot be defeated with armies. They can only be defeated through the collective effort of each and every Namibian such as the one displayed by our heroes during the**

**struggle. Therefore, we must all become combatants in this modern day warfare.**

**It is with this reality in mind that we have gone about establishing a new narrative for our modern day Namibia. It is a narrative based on the essence of unity as Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba said, *“Namibia is my country. Namibia is your country. Let each and every one of us make a positive contribution to the development of our beautiful country.”* Through rallying calls such as “No Namibian must feel left out”, “One Namibia, One Nation”, “Harambee” as well as the concept of the Namibian House, we have endeavoured to galvanise each and every Namibian to feel a part of the development of our country.**

**As an elected leader, I started a narrative and now a national conversation has begun. People are internalizing this concept which represents the vital constituent of the Harambee Prosperity Plan, a policy which aims to accelerate Namibia’s march towards prosperity.**

**The spirit of Harambee, the ability for all of us to always desire to pull together in one direction, must become an attitude of mind and a way of life. Once we adopt this mindset, then we will be able to bring about concrete change even in the most challenging of circumstances. Let us honour our heroes by adopting heroic traits, not traits of division, corruption and greed, but traits of bravery, self-sacrifice, pride and nobility. Each one of us can make a difference in the transformation of Namibia. Heroism is a practice which we should all employ, whether in our homes, schools, churches, workplaces or communities.**

***Our Founding Father Comrade Sam Nujoma once said, "Today, Namibia is free and independent. This is in itself a fitting tribute to the fallen heroes and heroines. But the struggle was also a fight for the ideals of progress and social justice. This is to say that those who made the sacrifice were visionary men and women. They fought and died for a democratic and just society."***

**Our heroes have left a long lasting legacy behind. Their blood waters our freedom. As free and independent Namibians we must ensure that this legacy of heroism continues. Let us continue the fight for progress and social justice. We too must leave a legacy for Namibia, a legacy built on the foundations of democracy and justice, on which future generations can continue to build this great country called Namibia.**

**Namibia land of the brave**

**Freedom fight we have won**

**Glory to their bravery**

**Whose blood waters our freedom**

**We give our love and loyalty**

**Together in unity**

**Contrasting beautiful Namibia**

**Namibia our country**

**Beloved land of savannahs**

**Hold high the banner of liberty**

**Namibia our Country**

**Namibia Motherland we love thee**

**Long Live the Heroes and Heroines of Namibia!**

**Long Live the Namibian Revolution!**

**Long Live the Republic of Namibia!**

**Happy Heroes Day fellow Namibians!**

**I thank you!**