

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY H. E. DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, AT THE STATE BANQUET
TO MARK THE OCCASION OF THE STATE VISIT TO THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA BY H. E. LT. GENERAL DR.
SERETSE KHAMA IAN KHAMA, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

FEBRUARY 5, 2018

STATE HOUSE

WINDHOEK

Your Excellency Lieutenant General Dr. Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana;

Your Excellency Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, Former President of the Republic of Namibia;

The Right Honourable Dr. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia;

His Lordship Peter Shivute, Chief Justice;

Honourable Dr. Pelonomi Venson-Motoi, Minister of International Affairs and Cooperation;

Honourable McHenry Venaani, Leader of the Official Opposition Party;

Honourable Ministers of the Governments of Namibia and Botswana;

Members of Parliament;

**Honourable Laura Mcleod-Katjirua, Governor
of the Khomas Region;**

**Your Worship Muesee Kazapua, Mayor of the
City of Windhoek;**

**The High Commissioners of Namibia and
Botswana;**

**Captains of Industry from Namibia and
Botswana;**

Ladies and Gentlemen

**I am pleased to welcome you to this State
Banquet hosted in honour of H. E. Lieutenant
General Dr. Seretse Khama Ian Khama,
President of the Republic of Botswana.**

Your Excellency, during our talks earlier today, I referred to the saying, “We make our friends; we make our enemies; but God makes our next-door neighbor.” The people of Namibia thank God that he made such good neighbours in the people of Botswana. We are bound together by fate, geography and destiny. Our people will continue to coexist for decades and centuries to come. Therefore, the responsibility lies with us to maintain and strengthen our relations in order to lay down a platform built on peace, friendship, common purpose and understanding.

You may recall Your Excellency, that during my State Visit to Botswana in July 2016, I mentioned the fact that it is impossible for some of us to talk about Botswana without

becoming nostalgic. For many of us, Botswana represents the beginning of our arduous journey towards achieving the liberation of our people. The fraternal bonds that exists between our two countries were demonstrated through the generosity of many Batswana that allowed Namibians safe passage into exile during and following the commencement of our struggle for liberation.

I have vivid memories of my stay in Botswana, in the early 60s. I recall that once we had crossed into Botswana, we met up with Daniel Manumava before proceeding on a difficult, one-week journey to Francistown from Maun, sharing only one blanket amongst ourselves while swatting away mosquitoes during the night.

Upon arrival in Francistown, we met Maxton Joseph as well as Peter Nanyemba, his deputy. There was a house that was called the “*White House*” where SWAPO was renting one room. I ended up staying at this house for one and a half years, sleeping outside with only one blanket. During our time there, we met with peers from the African National Congress (ANC), as well as the Pan African Congress (PAC), and we would sing South African liberation songs and listen to introductory lectures in Marxism from the likes of J.B. Max and Joe Slovo.

Your Excellency, given my short trip down memory lane, I hope that the next time some

of us *Children of Botswana* go back home, we will not only end up in Gaborone, but will be taken to visit Francistown as well.

Your Excellency, our gathering this evening is a clear demonstration of the historical social and cultural ties between our people as well as the deep political relations between our two countries. As I have just referred to, Namibia is grateful for the assistance which Batswana rendered to Namibians before independence and during this post-independent era.

This visit is taking place at a time when our countries have broadened the areas in which we are cooperating. It is also pleasing to note that we continue to explore new avenues for

cooperation. There is no doubt the bilateral mechanisms for cooperation, such as the Joint Commission of Cooperation and the Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security, have produced good results. However, as we further foster bilateral cooperation, I urge all Ministries to ensure that all bilateral agreements are implemented timeously. The significance of our bilateral cooperation is not in the number of instruments signed but the timely implementation to create favourable development and bring about prosperity to our people.

Your Excellency,

While the Government of Botswana introduced and rolled out the Economic Stimulus Package in 2015 in order to stimulate the economy, create jobs, promote sustainable development as well as inclusivity, Namibia launched the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP) on April 3, 2016 to embark upon sustainable development and economic growth. In implementing our programmes, our two countries are guided by our visions, Namibia is guided by Vision 2030 and Botswana is guided by Vision 2036. Together, we are guided by the common vision of delivering on the promise of prosperity to our people.

Allow me at this juncture to congratulate You, Your Excellency President Khama as having been appointed by your cabinet to Champion Botswana's Vision 2036. The programmes our two governments are implementing are a demonstration of our relentless commitment to improving the socio-economic conditions of Namibians and Batswana - particularly women and the youth. I therefore urge our two Governments to continue sharing experience and best practices in this regard.

I will be remiss if I do not mention the six (6) Namibian business women who participated in the Global Expo held in Botswana in October 2017. I am glad to inform you that the participation of these women was not in vain as they scooped the "Best International

Exhibitor” award. Namibia is not only happy about their achievement at the Global Expo, but also that their participation shows the excellent social and business relations among our people.

Your Excellency,

The SWAPO Party held its Elective Congress in November 2017 while the Botswana Democratic Party held its Congress in July 2017. As the President of our mighty SWAPO Party, I thank you for the participation of the BDP in the deliberation of our congress. These congresses continue to provide us with platforms to further entrench democracy at the political party levels. Notwithstanding the

above, we have a bigger exercise in 2019 as our two countries, among other SADC Member States, prepare to hold elections. I wish to assure you that Namibia will continue to hold its elections in accordance with the SADC principles governing democratic elections.

Since I was honoured by Namibians by giving me the mandate to lead this country, I have been placing emphasis on the importance of electoral democracy, buttressed by sound processes, systems and institutions in Africa. Our two countries, amongst others, continue to champion the New Africa which is characterized by clear, fair and transparent processes; systems and institutions that are above reproach. I place emphasis on the above because in the emerging New Africa,

sustainable development, inclusive growth, economic trade and investment are rigorously being pursued for social and economic wellbeing of the African people.

Your Excellency, throughout our history Batswana and Namibians have been allies, sharing unbreakable links of family and kinship. Fate has brought us together as brothers, sisters, friends and family. Long may this spirit of neighbourliness continue between the children of Botswana and Namibia.

May I now ask you to rise and join me in proposing a toast to:

- His Excellency, Lieutenant General Dr. Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana**

- **The continued friendship, solidarity and cooperation between Botswana and Namibia; and**
- **To peace and security for the people of Africa.**

PULA!! *Kea leboga*