

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G.
GEINGOB, THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE NAMIBIAN DEFENCE
FORCE DURING THE DEFENCE PARADE**

DECEMBER 12, 2023

GROOTFONTEIN MILITARY BASE

OTJOZONDJUPA REGION

Check against delivery

Director of Ceremonies;

Comrade NANGOLO MBUMBA, Vice President of the Republic of Namibia;

Honourable Comrade NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation;

Honourable FRANS KAPOFI, Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs;

Honourable Comrade ALBERT KAWANA, Minister of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security;

Honourable IIPUMBU SHIIMI, Minister of Finance and Public Enterprises;

Honourable CHRISTINE //HOEBES, Minister in the Presidency;

Honourable OBETH KANDJOZE, Director-General of the National Planning Commission;

Honourable BENEDICT LIKANDO, Director-General of Namibia Central Intelligence Service;

Air Marshal MARTIN KAMBULU PINEHAS, Chief of the Namibian Defence Force;

Honourable JAMES UERIKUA, Governor of the Otjozondjupa Region;

Her Worship Cllr. TALITHA GARISES, Mayor of the town of Grootfontein;

Dr. WILHEMINE SHIVUTE, Executive Director, Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs;

Distinguished Service Chiefs;

Service Commanders;

General Officers;

Senior and Junior Officers;

Warrant Officers;

Senior and Junior Non-Commissioned Officers;

All invited guests;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is an honour and privilege to be here today, at this auspicious occasion, to address this colourful Parade. Indeed, this Parade is emblematic of a nation on the move, a nation that has weathered the storm of uncertainty, revived its fortunes, and is traversing the path towards further development and prosperity.

I have always looked forward to speak to you, as a Commander-In-Chief, in the setting of a

Parade and I am glad that this wish has been fulfilled today. That is why I am here.

First and foremost, allow me to express my gratitude to the political and military leadership of the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs for organizing such an awe-inspiring Parade. In the same vein, I also wish to recognize the presence of the Vice President, Comrade Nangolo Mbumba; The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Comrade Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah and other political leaders and government officials who have joined me to attend this momentous occasion. Your presence is highly appreciated.

The ancient Chinese military general and philosopher Sun Tzu inferred that “When one treats people with benevolence, justice, and

righteousness, and reposes confidence in them, the army will be united in mind and all will be happy to serve their leaders.” Indeed, events of this nature are not only meant to recognize the efforts of our military men and women in guarding our sovereignty and hard-won freedom but it is also an opportunity, for us as leaders, to repose within the military rank and file, the confidence that will enable the continued unity of the Namibian Defence Force which in turn, will be happy to serve the Namibian people and leaders, whoever they may be.

Therefore, I am here to address our men and women in uniform, and to pay tribute to the important role the Namibian Defence Force continues to play in fulfilling its constitutional mandate.

Many of you who were there at independence, will recall that one of the daunting tasks that faced the newly inaugurated SWAPO Party-led government in 1990, was the establishment of a National Defence Force that would be organized and operated under a unified command and control structure. The pioneers of the Namibian Defence Force, some of whom are here at this Parade, were drawn from the erstwhile opposing combatants of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), the South West Africa Territory Force (SWATF) and KOEVOET.

Names such as PLAN, SWATF and KOEVOET, which remind us of our painful past and history, are no more mentioned among the rank and file of our Defence Force, because that distinction

which divided our nation no longer exists. Instead we have a united and National Defence Force which is not defined by any political allegiances, any racial or tribal barriers but is reflective of the Namibian House in which no Namibian is left out.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

33 years after independence, we can all attest to the fact that the Namibia of 1990 is in no way comparable to the Namibia of 2023. We have taken great strides and made significant inroads in pursuit of our developmental agenda. We stand here, proud to celebrate the accomplishments of the Namibian people and the Namibian Defence Force. We owe this remarkable achievement to the visionary leadership of the SWAPO Party government which introduced the Policy of National

Reconciliation. That policy has served as a glue in uniting our nation across tribal, racial, cultural and ethnic divide. That policy has ensured that, today, we are proudly “One Namibia, One Nation,” which is focused on consolidating the gains of our independence by building, strengthening and governing a sovereign, secular, democratic and unitary State that is founded upon the principles of democracy, the rule of law and justice for all.

As men and women in uniform, you are the shield of the nation; you stand sentinel, guarding our democracy. Therefore, you should remain one in purpose, character and action.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Just 3 years after our independence, in 1993, the Namibian Defence Force was called upon to contribute towards the maintenance of international peace and security, when it deployed a contingent of peacekeepers in the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia. Since then, our gallant soldiers have raised our National Flag high in several United Nations and African Union led peace-keeping and peace support missions in countries such as Angola, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Liberia, Kosovo, and Côte d'Ivoire, to mention a few.

At the regional level, our men and women in uniform have helped restore peace and security in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1998, under the auspices of SADC mission known as OPERATION ATLANTIC. In the same token, the Namibian Defence Force continues

to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security in the SADC Region through participation in joint planning, joint training and joint operations with other militaries, including of recent, our active participation in the ongoing SADC mission in the Republic of Mozambique, to which we contributed military personnel (staff officers) and other resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At home, the Namibian Defence Force has carried out several domestic operations and missions in support of law enforcement agencies and to aid civil authorities. We should therefore commend our men and women in uniform for the sterling job they have done in this regard.

I am aware of the daunting challenges that face the Defence Force in carrying out its day-to-day duties. These challenges are not unique to the Namibian Defence Force; they cut across all government structures and institutions. Challenges of constraints in terms of human capital and financial resources continue to impact negatively on government programmes.

It is a fact of life that resources will never be sufficient, and not even those countries with larger economies have all the resources in the world to deploy as they see fit. The success or failure to accomplish assigned tasks and programmes, depends to a large extent, on the usage of these limited resources. There is therefore, a need to operate within the limits of the allocated budget, by prioritizing activities and programmes. This entails doing more with

less and working smart by operating within your means.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At this juncture, I wish to outline how best the Namibian Defence Force can continue to develop from this point, going forward:

1. Force Modernization

According to the Defence Policy, *"the Namibian Defence Force envisions developing and maintaining a small, highly mobile and professional Force which excels in service through discipline, vigorous*

training, possession of modern armaments, and is ready to guarantee the security of the motherland” (Defence Policy, 2011).

- a. The political and military leadership of the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs should align its structures, strategies, plans and programmes towards realizing the vision of the Namibian Defence Force as articulated in the Defence Policy.**

- b. The lack of adequate financial resources should not lead to the situation where quality is traded for quantity, by procuring large numbers of low-quality military equipment and hardware simply because they are affordable. This move is tantamount to compromising National**

Security. Weapon systems and military hardware that meet our defence needs should be prioritized and procured in order to capacitate our Defence Force to fight and prevail in modern warfare environments.

2. Recruitment

- a. The Namibian Defence Force should continue with the recruitment exercise as and when resources permit. It is through recruitment that the Defence Force would inject new blood in the Force and be assured of constant manpower to fill vacancies and maintain required force levels in the services, formations and units.**

b. Since 1996, 27 years ago, when the Namibian Defence Force embarked upon its first recruitment exercise, I have not witnessed a recruitment that was well-planned, well-managed and highly representative as the one that was conducted this year. I therefore, wish to commend the leadership of the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs for a job well-done. Let the formula that was used in this recruitment serve as a model for future recruitment exercises. I want to see every tribe, every race, every ethnic group and every region identifying itself with the Namibian Defence Force in order to exemplify the government's aspiration of building an inclusive society and a Namibian House where no one should feel left out.

3. Force Mobility

Force modernization does not only entail the acquisition of the state-of-the-art weapon systems and hardware, it also includes force projection capability by land, air and sea, and the ability to deploy troops on short notice during wartime emergencies. The Namibian Defence Force should not overlook the development of this capability.

4. Training

The amount of time spent on training, re-training, monitoring, evaluation and validation of training outcomes,

determines the level of readiness of the troops to fight and win wars.

The Namibian Defence Force should continue to sharpen and hone the skills of the troops through continuous training, both locally and externally. It is incumbent upon the Chief of the Defence Force and his team to make sure that this critical component of the Force readiness for war is fulfilled.

It is also important to note that the world in which we live is highly digitalized. We now live in the era of the 4th Industrial Revolution, characterized by the ascendancy of artificial intelligence (AI). Many armed forces in the world have adapted to work, operate and fight in this digital battle

space. The Namibian Defence Force cannot afford to be left behind in this endeavor. Therefore, there is a need to stay abreast of technological developments and ensure that the Defence Force develops competent soldiers who are able to handle and operate “smart” military technologies.

5. Welfare

The outcomes of wars are not necessarily determined by the quality of weapon systems in the hands of the troops, but more so on the quality of the troops behind these weapon systems. Besides the quality of training and skills of soldiers, battle successes are also influenced by the care that the troops

receive in the form of welfare. Welfare is both a morale booster and morale killer. Soldiers cannot be expected to perform to their maximum potential when their welfare is neglected by the institutions they serve. It is, therefore, important and imperative that the political and military leadership of the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs take this issue to heart and ensure that the welfare of men and women in uniform is advanced and protected.

6. Discipline

- a. Discipline is the catalyst for professionalism. It is the soul of the Defence Force. I am informed that there are several cases of indiscipline being**

reported in the Namibian Defence Force. Some of these cases have appeared in the media. It is imperative that we summarily nip these type of incidences in the bud.

7. Defence Diplomacy

- a. Defence diplomacy plays a critical role in complementing the foreign policy objectives of the Republic of Namibia. Defence diplomacy helps to promote international cooperation, peace and security. It helps enhance relations and confidence building among nations.**
- b. The changing international environment requires that the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs leverage the**

opportunities provided by the deployment of our Defence Attaches and Advisors in Africa and overseas to seek ways and means to promote and sell Namibia to the world through military to military cooperation and military exchange programmes with the Defence Forces of the host nations.

- c. Our Defence Advisors should serve as conduits through which the defence products and services produced and offered by our Defence Industry, namely: the August 26 Holding Company and its subsidiaries, reach international markets.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Namibian Defence Force is an integral component of our Governance Architecture. Peace is one of the pillars upon which we have built our nation but we are all aware that peace and the maintenance thereof is not easy. We just have to look at news clips emanating from various areas of the world for us to realize that what we have in Namibia is not the norm but it is rather the exception to the norm. It is an exception that has been achieved by exceptional patriots and must be guarded by equally exceptional soldiers - you - the men and women of our armed forces.

In a modern world which is characterized by geo-political flux the challenges that nations face are many. Humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and counter terrorism are some of the key challenges for security forces in the 21st century. It is thus pertinent that at all

levels, we adapt to meet current and future threats.

As we reflect on our Year of Revival, I thank you for your contribution to the well-being of Namibia. I thank you for continuously carrying out your duties in a diligent and effective manner. Namibia and its citizens remain eternally grateful for the support and protection of the Namibian Defence Force.

Together, let us continue holding hands to build upon previous successes and bring to fruition the dream of a peaceful, united and prosperous Namibia for now, for tomorrow and for generations to come.

With these words, I wish you and your families a peaceful, safe and joyous festive season.

Long Live the Namibian Defence Force and Long Live the Republic of Namibia.

I thank you.