

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**KEYNOTE TRIBUTE BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. NANGOLO  
MBUMBA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA  
ON OCCASION OF THE MEMORIAL SERVICE OF THE  
THIRD PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, HIS  
EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB**

**FEBRUARY 24, 2024  
INDEPENDENCE STADIUM  
WINDHOEK**

**"Inclusivity spells harmony, exclusivity spells conflict,"**

**H.E Dr. Hage G. Geingob**

*Check against delivery*

- **Fellow Mourners;**

**Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

- 1. Three weeks ago, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2024, Namibia and the world at large, woke up to a shock that was seismic in scale and in impact. On that fateful day, a towering baobab tree which had become a permanent fixture in the daily lives of Namibians, was uprooted and fell. It was the day that the nation let out a loud cry of loss and anguish, which echoed across the wide open spaces of our landscape and reached out upwards to the heavens.**
- 2. Still reeling from shock and shaken by the cruelty and abruptness of this immeasurable loss, we are faced with the somber reality and responsibility of memorializing the life of an extraordinary human being in President Hage G. Geingob. We therefore celebrate the**

**remarkable life of a beloved father and President whose personality and aura encapsulated the essence of what we can only call, a "larger than life" personage.**

- 3. It is often said that, "true greatness is shown through one's works and actions, the way in which you impact the lives of others." This is true of our departed President Geingob. It is in this sense that we have all gathered here today to celebrate the life of an extraordinary leader and citizen whose lifetime commitment, devotion and sacrifices have left an enduring mark on the lives of millions of people.**
  
- 4. Namibians at home and abroad are profoundly grateful for the presence of Your Excellencies and other dignitaries from all over the world who are here with us today to express deep and sincere friendship and support during this**

**difficult time of sorrow. Your esteemed presence speaks loudly to your solidarity with the people of Namibia and reaffirms the foundation of President Geingob's guiding principle for our foreign policy, namely that "Namibia is a friend to all and an enemy to none". Your Excellencies, distinguished guests and fellow Namibians, once again, I welcome you and thank you for your comforting presence!**

- 5. President Hage G. Geingob was destined for greatness. His birth and subsequent christening as Hage (meaning "he has arrived") was a foreshadowing of the arrival into the world of a man who bravely traversed the perilous odyssey of destiny to etch his name in the annals of history as an intergenerational icon, an intellectual giant and consummate statesman who scaled the**

**walls of excellence to the zenith of his life's purpose.**

- 6. Not only was Comrade Geingob a most distinguished luminary of our time, a peerless personality and a colossus of contemporary leadership, but he was also a man who lived a life of destiny and purpose.**
  
- 7. Iconic in so many aspects, Comrade Geingob was able to represent the spirit, hopes, dreams and aspirations of Namibians. His paternal nature radiated during times of celebration as well as times of tribulation. An eternal optimist, he was always there to celebrate a victory for our national sports teams, athletes, musicians, academics or any other Namibian who made his or her mark on the national, regional and international arena. Similarly, during difficult times such as devastating droughts, floods or the dreadful**

**days of the Covid-19 pandemic, Comrade Geingob reassured the Namibian House and quelled our fears, panic and anger. He showed us how to persevere in the face of adversity, demonstrating grace, courage, faith and resilience.**

- 8. Comrade Geingob was not just a President. To us Namibians, he was a father, a grandfather, a brother and an uncle. He was a comrade and a friend. To his dearest wife, Monica Geingos, our beloved FLON, he was a husband. He was a leader of our people, who at the same time was also a servant of our people. He was a teacher and mentor; stern and strict but also loving and fair. He demanded excellence because his brilliant life embodied excellence and service to others. He was an authentic thinker who had a penchant for conceptualizing new ideas and realizing illustrious feats. He was that helping hand in**

**times of despair; he was that symbol of resilience and strength in times of weakness. He pointed us toward the light at the end of the tunnel. He was our President in deed, when our nation found itself in need.**

**9. A man of great humility and acute discernment, Comrade Geingob could fit in anywhere and talk to anyone. He could relate to the youthful and the elderly. He could share a joke with a junior staff member, a public sector manager, and an average citizen, a captain of industry or with one of his contemporaries.**

**10. His unifying nature was impactful, both in Namibia and across the continent. The quintessential Pan-Africanist, there are many instances in SADC, the African Union and United Nations when Comrade Geingob's ability to unify came to the fore in a most**

**timely manner. One such instance that I particularly recall was in 2018 when Comrade Geingob was invited to speak at the Kenya Heroes Day event. Instead of reading his prepared speech, President Geingob noticed the restlessness of the crowd. He seized the opportunity to forge friendship and peace. He took President Uhuru Kenyatta and the opposition leader Raila Odinga by their hands and walked with them onto the stage, hands aloft, signifying unity. The crowd cheered as President Geingob turned a tense situation into an extraordinary demonstration of unity. That is who Comrade Geingob was. A man of peace and a man for the moment. A man who lived by his favorite dictum, "one does not make peace with ones' friends, one makes peace with ones' enemies."**

**11. President Geingob exuded the nation-building ethos that were underscored by his mantras,**

**“No Namibian Should Feel Left Out”, “One Namibia, One Nation” and “the spirit of Harambee”, the last which connotes pulling in the same direction. He made it clear that a nationalist should abhor the `isms of tribalism, racism and regionalism. He postulated that a true revolutionary cannot be a tribalist or a racist.**

**12. At the core of Comrade Geingob’s leadership success, was his strength of character and integrity. He lived with honesty, staying true to his values and upholding his moral principles, even when faced with challenges. One of his many doctrines was to never compromise on principles, because according to him, “A principle half compromised, is a principle compromised”.**

**13. President Geingob stood firm in his beliefs and was unafraid to do the right thing, regardless**

**of the consequences. His actions reflected his words, earning him the trust and respect of those around him and the Namibian people. He would always tell us that "Transparency plus Accountability equals Trust". Certainly, in a world characterized by secrecy, fake news and mistrust, Comrade Geingob was a beacon of hope and a true representative of the universally recognized ideals of democracy.**

**14. In order to fully understand the reasons that made Comrade Hage G. Geingob the man he was, one must trace his foundations back to his roots. For the essence of his greatness lies not only in his achievements, but the qualities that underpin them. These qualities were forged during Comrade Geingob's childhood by his grandfather and mentor, Hans Geingob, about whom he always reminisced with fondness.**

**Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

**15. As I stated, the icon Comrade Hage Geingob rose from humble beginnings. He was born on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1941 in the district of Grootfontein. He grew up on the farms of that area and commenced his schooling in Otavi in the year 1948. He was brought up in a multi-ethnic environment, which consisted of people from various ethnic groups such as Damara, San, Ovaherero, Aawambo, vaKavango and Ovimbundu. This environment provided the proper setting in molding Comrade Geingob's beliefs and stance against racism and tribalism.**

**16. In 1958, Comrade Geingob left the Grootfontein area to attend Augustineum College in Okahandja. It was at Augustineum that the first political seeds were planted in Comrade Geingob. Following the successful**

**completion of his studies, Comrade Geingob was posted to Tsumeb as a teacher, where he officially joined SWAPO in 1962, and received his membership card from SWAPO branch Secretary Comrade Kanana Hishoono.**

**17. It was also in 1962 that Comrade Geingob learnt that Comrades Hifikepunye Pohamba and Eliander Mwatale were jailed in Windhoek and due to be deported to the North. As they were on their way to the North, Comrade Geingob and Comrade Lineekela Kalenga went to meet them at the Tsumeb bus station. President Pohamba would later described the young Geingob as a "tall and slender young man with thin and long legs." Implying that, Hage was the type of person he could not easily forget, from the moment they met.**

**18. Later on, that same year, Comrade Geingob and his fellow comrades travelled to Gobabis**

**with the intention of crossing the border into Botswana for exile. Before they could proceed, they were informed that Chief Hosea Kutako was also in the area. Upon hearing this, they went to visit the Chief and received his blessing for the journey. To Comrade Geingob, it was an extreme honour to have met with the exceptional revolutionary and nationalist, Chief Kutako, after whom Hosea Kutako International Airport is named.**

**19. It is for this reason that President Geingob, resolved at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Land Conference held in October 2018, to honour our national heroes and heroines through the establishment of monuments and shrines. In this regard, he ensured completion of the Chief Hosea Kutako Shrine at Toasis, Aminius Constituency in the Omaheke Region.**

**Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

**20. Throughout his time in exile, the experiences of Comrade Geingob helped shape his view and understanding of the world during the Cold War Era. Like many of his fellow Namibians, Comrade Geingob left his home country to go into exile to obtain an education and to galvanize diplomatic and military support for our liberation struggle. Indeed, he was shaped by the liberation struggle.**

**21. In 1964, the President of SWAPO, Comrade Sam Nujoma appointed the young Comrade Geingob as Chief Representative of SWAPO in the United States and the Americas. Comrade Geingob was later assigned as the political affairs officer at the United Nations Council for Namibia. A few years later, the United Nations Institute for Namibia (UNIN) was conceptualized and instituted under the United Nations. Comrade Geingob on the**

**insistence of President Sam Nujoma was assigned by SWAPO to be the Director of the Institute, a task he successfully performed for 12 years. The Institute prepared Namibians for Independence and produced some of the country's talented crop present in the Namibian Executive, Legislature, Judiciary, business and civic spheres today.**

**22. Again, he was chosen by President Nujoma and the SWAPO leadership to lead the exiled Namibians home under the UN Resolution 435. It was an unforgettable moment in our nation's history when he kneeled to kiss the ground after touching down at Hosea Kutako Airport on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 1989. Comrade Geingob had come full circle. He had made his journey back home victoriously, ushering in the epoch of self-determination.**

**Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

**23. Following the successful United Nations supervised elections in Namibia in 1989, Comrade Geingob was nominated by SWAPO and elected as the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly that was responsible for drafting the Namibian Constitution.**

**24. The drafting of our constitution was a great feat and a testament to the negotiating prowess of Comrade Geingob who was able to ensure that all those involved in the process were able to accomplish the task. In that way, they planted the seeds of national reconciliation.**

**25. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1990, Comrade Geingob was appointed by the Founding President, Dr. Sam Nujoma and sworn in as the first Prime Minister, a position he held for 12 years. During that period, he set up a unified, modern**

**and well-functioning public service in Namibia.**

**26. One of the best ways we can honour Comrade Geingob, is for all of us to continue executing our mandates on the basis of accountability, transparency, honesty and commitment. We should understand that as our dearly departed President used to say, "Without Effective Governance and without crucial governance fundamentals, development cannot take place".**

**Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

**27. Following a historic victory in the November 2014 Presidential Elections, Comrade Geingob was sworn in on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2015 as the 3<sup>rd</sup> President of the Republic of Namibia. Who can forget that momentous day? Who can forget those poignant words? "This is the day**

**the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.” With that recitation of Psalm 118:24, Comrade Geingob, prophetically summed up not only his presidency, but the entire journey of his life.**

**28. Comrade Geingob did not waste any time and immediately outlined his vision of shared prosperity for Namibia. He made it clear to his new Cabinet, that they had entered into a Social Contract with the people of Namibia. He stated the following;**

***29. The second-phase of the struggle is well and truly underway. We need to make haste and fire the first salvo, in unison, in the spirit of Harambee. This is why I have declared all-out war on poverty, making it a priority to remove our most vulnerable citizens from the cruel grip of hunger, homelessness and squalor. The focus of this administration is therefore to***

*address the prevailing inequalities in the socio-economic architecture. This will involve looking at a range of choices of how to go about redressing a myriad of imbalances which exist due to the policies of past systems which promoted racial exclusion.*

**30. The legacy of Comrade Geingob is premised on this inclusive vision which we must continue to pursue with the same determination and unrelenting work-ethic that he displayed throughout his life.**

**Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

**31. Like with many scenarios in Comrade Geingob's life, things did not come easy and neither was the Geingob Presidency. From the moment he walked through the halls of State House, he had to deal with a myriad of economic challenges, unprecedented**

**droughts and also had to deal with the devastating impacts of Covid-19. Coupled with that, he faced an unrelenting barrage of political attacks from many quarters.**

**32. However, like the indomitable lion he was, he withstood all challenges and remained steadfast and resolute in his quest to promote economic recovery and growth, employment creation and the provision of basics such as housing. He championed with exceptional skill the cause of the poor and vulnerable. He championed the cause of the elderly, the children, the youth, the women and the Veterans of our Liberation Struggle.**

**33. Throughout his Presidency, Comrade Geingob prioritized key economic interventions through the Harambee Prosperity Plan I and II, with the objective to give momentum to Namibia's economic growth, creating**

**productive employment for our people, particularly for the unemployed youth.**

**34. At this juncture, let me reemphasize that we will ensure that the policies of Comrade Geingob will be pursued until they achieve their intended purpose; that of achieving shared prosperity for all Namibians as part of the Second Struggle for Economic Emancipation.**

**Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

**35. On the international front, as the Chief Diplomat of our country, President Geingob worked tirelessly to pursue regional and international peace. As Chairman of SADC and later as Chair of the SADC Troika, he mediated the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Lesotho, Eswatini, Madagascar and provided wise counsel. At the**

**AU, he was a champion of Africa's cause for the reform of the United Nations Security Council and representation as equal partners in the Security Council. He firmly believed in solidarity and the brotherhood of nations as members of the United Nations to whom he ascribed Namibia's independence, under the motto, "Namibia is a child of international solidarity, midwifed by the United Nations".**

**36. He always advocated for justice, self-determination and independence which he viewed as sacrosanct for all human beings. This was the driving force behind his championing the cause of the people of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, the people of Palestine, as well as Cuba, Venezuela and Zimbabwe who continue to suffer from unjust sanctions. President Geingob was adamant to the very end that these nations have the right to enjoy their economic freedom and**

**sovereignty without interference from others. Let me state that Namibia's voice will not be silent in championing these causes. In fact, galvanized by the fervent spirit of President Geingob, we will continue to amplify these sentiments on the international stage.**

**37. President Geingob was a living testament of international and Pan African solidarity. Undoubtedly, given his many talents and gifts, he will go down in history as a peacemaker and diplomat.**

**Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

**38. The President of the People's Republic of China, His Excellency Xi Jinping once said, "The family is the basic unit of society and the first school that we attend in life." Certainly, throughout his life, Comrade Geingob placed an emphasis on family. The first school he**

**attended was that of family, under the tutelage of his beloved grandfather Hans Geingob. Truly, the Geingob family will continue to be strong because it is built on a foundation of respect, loyalty and love.**

**39. I therefore pay tribute to Madame Monica Geingos, a graceful wife and mother who is the epitome of a loving and loyal spouse, staying by the side of her beloved husband, giving him her devoted care and support to the very end. I also want to commend the children for their constant display of love and affection for a father who also loved them dearly. Lastly, to the entire extended Geingob family, we thank you profoundly for having produced such an admirable freedom fighter and brave Son of the Soil who climbed to the highest heights to become the 3<sup>rd</sup> President of the Republic Namibia.**

**40. On behalf of the people and the Government of the Republic of Namibia, I extend our deepest condolences to the family for the loss of a husband, a father, a brother, an uncle and a mentor - Comrade Hage G. Geingob.**

**41. As I move to the conclusion, I wish to address our cherished departed President, our friend, our brother, and our comrade.**

**Dear Comrade Geingob,**

**42. From the beginning of your presidency, to the very end, you - the patriotic first citizen, the staunch Pan-Africanist, the peacemaker and unifier - led with your heart, your intellect and your conscience. You led with courage and conviction and left us a template for success.**

**By reminding us that “inclusivity spells harmony and exclusivity spells conflict”, you have left us the foundations for continued peace and unity. You have left us with processes, systems and institutions for an Effective Governance Architecture. You have left us with an economic roadmap towards prosperity.**

**43. I remember that you always gave me the letter of acting powers on the day you would leave the country but before your medical trip to America, I received the letter a day in advance. I remember our final conversation on the tarmac and onboard the plane when you told me twice, “Take care, and again, take care.”**

**44. Those words have entrenched themselves in my mind since that day. I understand that as the father-figure you were, you were trying to**

**tell the rest of us, to take care of your beloved Namibia; the country in which you were born, the country for which you risked your life, the country you loved and served, the only country that you could call home. I will never forget when you used to say, "It is easier to destroy, but difficult to rebuild." You always cared for Namibia, like a devoted father, you loved this country and her people from the bottom of your heart.**

**45. I believe that you can see us here today and you can hear us speak. I believe that throughout these three weeks since the fateful day of your passing you have seen and heard what was said at the various memorials both in Namibia and abroad. So, let me take this moment my dear brother and leader to tell you that we will definitely, take care.**

- 46. We will take care of Namibia's democracy, unity and rule of law.**
- 47. We will take care of our peace and stability.**
- 48. We will take care of our sovereignty and independence.**
- 49. We will take care of our children, our youth, our women, our men, our elderly and our veterans.**
- 50. We will take care of our processes, systems and institutions.**
- 51. We will take care of one another and most importantly, we will take care of your enduring legacy, the Namibian House of shared prosperity, where no one feels left out!**

**52. Dear Comrade Geingob, although you are gone from our midst, you will never truly die. Your impact on us has been profound, your footprint on this nation is immense and will stand the test of time. You leave our country in better shape.**

**53. Like a fallen Baobab tree, your branches, your leaves and your seeds will ensure that your legacy lives on.**

**54. You once told us, "You will miss me, once I am gone." How right you were. You fought your battles and you won. Now you have answered the call of our Creator. As you ride off into the sunset, victorious but magnanimous, we say to you, go well Your Excellency, go well Comrade President. As your name Hage reminds us, you were the one who arrived, you were the one who did big things and now you are the one who has gone ahead of us,**

**preparing the way and leaving behind a legacy that will last through the ages.**

**55. Your great name, HAGE G. GEINGOB, will not die. It will remain forever etched in our hearts, and on granite stones of Namibia.**

- **According to 1 Corinthians 15:43, "Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they are raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength."**
- **Therefore, rest now softly, and may God Almighty raise you in glory and strength.**
- **FAREWELL MY DEAR FRIEND, FAREWELL MY DEAR BROTHER. FAREWELL OUR BELOVED PRESIDENT.**
- **LONG LIVE THE MEMORY OF DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB!**
- **LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA!**

**I thank you.**