

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**ADDRESS BY HONOURABLE FRANS KAPOFI, MINISTER OF DEFENCE  
AND VETERANS AFFAIRS TO THE LEADERSHIP AND STAFF OF THE  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Windhoek**

**Monday, 07 April 2025**

**Director of Ceremonies**

**Hon Dr. Charles Mubita, Deputy Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs,**  
**Comrade Hilma Nicanor, Outgoing Honourable Deputy Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs**

**Ms Annelly Haiphene, Executive Director, Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs,**  
**Dr. Wilhelmine Iyaloo Shivute, Executive Director, Ministry of Urban and Rural Development and outgoing ED of this Ministry,**

**Air Marshal Martin Kambulu Pinehas, Chief of the Namibian Defence Force,**

**Deputy Executive Directors,**

**Service Commanders,**

**Chief of Staff Joint Operations**

**Chiefs of Staff and Directors for our various Directorates,**

**Senior Officials and Officers,**

**Junior Officers and Officials,**

**NDF Sergeant Major and other Warrant Officers Present,**

**Senior and Junior Non-Commissioned Officers,**

**Members of the Media'**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

I am honoured to stand before you this morning and address you collectively. When we gathered here for the first time on 18 October 2021, the purpose was to introduce myself and share my vision for this great institution, as well as my expectations for you to help realise that vision. Gatherings in this basement had then become synonymous with my New Year's greetings, outlining my yearly strategy for the Ministry over the past three years that I spent here during the tenure of our Seventh government. Today we have come back here to do three things, namely: (1) to introduce the new family members who recently joined this ministry, (2) to bid farewell to the family members who have left our ministry, and (3) to outline my strategy and philosophy of how we will deliver on our mandate from the Financial Year 2025/26 going forward.

I must first and foremost inform you that until 18 March 2025, I had no clue that I would be among the eight persons that the President would appoint to Parliament, let alone to be reappointed to the Defence and Veterans Affairs portfolio. If you recall, you were invited to my farewell address on 19 March 2025, which had to be cancelled on 18 March. I hope that we all understand that Political Appointees serve at the behest of the appointing authority, who has a pool of many qualified nationals to choose from, and that Presidents reserve the right to appoint their Cabinet. I must therefore sincerely express my gratitude and appreciation to Her Excellency Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, President of our Republic and Commander-in-Chief of the Namibian Defence Force, for the trust she has bestowed upon me to once more lead the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs.

My reappointment means that my old term has come to an end and a new one has commenced; hence, it would be remiss of me if I do not sincerely thank you all for the cooperation and support you have given me and for what we have managed to achieve as a collective in the past three years. One thing that stands out is the way we have reacted and contributed to handling emergencies. My painful memories take me to the beginning of the past year and this year, when our country suffered successive losses of two of our revered leaders, first **His Excellency President Dr. Hage G. Geingob** on 04 February 2024, and then **His Excellency the Founding President and Father of the Namibian Nation Dr. Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma** on 08 February 2025. The responsibility to ensure that they were accorded befitting burials was placed on our shoulders, the task we carried out beyond expectation and to acclaim from the international community.

We have also weathered the storm of successive disasters starting from the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by two years of drought. Our ministry provided doctors and nurses as well as troops to assist in the mitigation of the pandemic. We also have to date trucks, drivers and other troops participating in the distribution of drought relief aids. We have also recently beefed up the emergency teams with aircraft and other additional resources to respond to the flood that is devastating the Northern Regions.

As you may be aware, a lot is expected from our ministry and in particular the defence force in assisting the nation during times of need. We may not have met the nation's expectations in some respects but remain resolute and dedicated to ensure that we do the best assist where we can.

Similarly, I know a lot was expected from me as Minister by yourselves as employees and the general public, in particular the veterans of the struggle of national liberation due to my history of having shared trenches with them. But as you may know, it is not practical to always meet all expectations. There are those that I met and also some I could not meet. Please be assured, with my renewed mandate, the fire to ensure that I deliver as expected is still burning and we I shall, together with the team here, continue to do what we are expected to do to deliver the much needed services.

### **Ladies and gentlemen**

The Eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) Administration of our beautiful Republic has instituted changes, both structurally and in terms of personnel. Some Offices, Ministries and Agencies (OMAs) have been merged, thus making some positions redundant. New appointments were made whilst some officials were moved horizontally among OMAs. Our Ministry has also been subjected to those changes. It is therefore with that in mind that I have the honour to introduce our new Honourable Deputy Minister, Dr Charles Mubita, whom I have known for many years and worked with in different portfolios. Hon Dr Mubita is a tested cadre and Veteran of the National Liberation Struggle. He brings with him a wealth of experience and competencies in Academics, Communications, Diplomacy and Politics. Allow me also to introduce to you Ms Annely Haiphene, our new Executive Director. Ms Haiphene is equally a Veteran of the National Liberation Struggle and brings with her 30 years of experience in the Public Service, 7 of which she served as Executive Director at the National Planning Commission and the then Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources. Please feel welcome to the Defence and Veterans Family!

### **Hon Deputy Minister and Madam ED**

You have joined a family of the sons and daughters of our motherland who have devoted their lives to the service of the Namibian people and who are ready to sacrifice their lives when necessary. They have demonstrated their commitment over the years and have withstood the multitude of challenges that have befallen our country over the years.

Among the challenges are the pandemics such as HIV/AIDS and COVID-19. The economic difficulties characterised by the world economic meltdown from 2016 and throughout the COVID-19 period were devastating, but we sailed through. This is the reason the Ministry is now on an offensive to roll out developmental initiatives to bolster the capacity of the Namibian Defence Force.

There are many initiatives that the ministry has undertaken to carry out. The rejuvenation of the Force is one and is already in full swing with two intakes of young recruits having completed their basic and specialised military training. The process for the recruitment of another intake is in the final stages.

Individual specialisation training is also taking place in our training institutions and in Friendly Countries where such offers are made. We have maintained cordial relations with all our neighbours and other friendly countries as per our foreign policy. We have also heavily committed ourselves to fulfilling the mandate of addressing the plight of the veterans of the national liberation struggle to the letter, albeit under enormous financial constraints. One thing that I can assure you of in your new positions is that you have joined a reliable team.

### **Ladies and gentlemen**

Whatever this ministry has achieved over the last five years was because we had solid leadership. Our former Deputy Minister, Hon Hilma Ndinelago Nicanor, was a very able Deputy. She was entrusted to assist me in providing leadership to the ministry. She carried out this duty with distinction. Our former Executive Director and Accounting Officer, Dr. Wilhelmine Iyaloo Shivute, spent over twenty-plus years at this institution, rising through the ranks to the position of ED. During your tenure here as ED, our ministry was able to record successive unqualified audits. Your contribution to the prudent expenditure and management of government resources speaks volumes.

Hon. Nicanor and Dr Shivute, we are thus indebted to both of you in equal measure, and it is for this reason that we found it necessary to give accord you this kind of farewell. We are indeed hopeful and convinced that you will excel in your new assignments. We shall still require from you, even when you are physically no longer with us in this building, to remain primary sources of past data.

We are therefore urging you, dear comrades, to render us your service in times of need. Your service to the Namibian people through this institution was very valuable and above board, and we thank you very much for that.

### **Hon Deputy Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen**

The term of the 8<sup>th</sup> Administration started on 21 March 2025 after the inauguration of our President. I believe that we have all followed her directives in the pronouncements she

has so far made, starting from her inaugural speech through to her opening address at the first Cabinet meeting. In the first Cabinet meeting Her Excellency reminded the members of the Executive of the mandate that we were given by the people through their vote in the elections and implored us to act with clarity, integrity, honesty and to serve the Namibian people without fail and to the best of our abilities.

She further emphasised that “There will be no business as usual”, meaning that the mentality of doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results will not be tolerated.

The members of the Executive are charged with the responsibility to lead the institutions placed under them. We have been given terms of reference on which our performance will be assessed and evaluated quarterly. I have been charged with seven key deliverables, which are:

- Protect and defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Namibia and safeguard our national interests to ensure peace and stability in the country;
- Guarantee the Namibian Defence Force's readiness and professionalism;
- Provide training, including specialised training, to enable the law enforcement agencies to cope with the changing world in the era of digitalisation, in the defence of national interests;
- Oversee the administration of operations of the Ministry and the NDF;
- Provide necessary support to Veterans and dependents of deceased Veterans through project funding and grants;
- Enhance investment in the well-being, equipment and infrastructure needed by the NDF, to enable them to fulfil their national duties; and
- Complete institutional reforms of line agencies under our Ministry.

### **Hon Deputy Minister, Madam ED, Chief of Defence Force**

You are my first point of call when it comes to the fulfilment of the mandate given to this Ministry. We are expected to hit the ground running and identify the laws and instruments that inhibit the staff in the execution of their duties. In this regard, I will, as I have done before, assign responsibilities to my Deputy that will enable me to effectively oversee the administration of the Ministry and the NDF. I would further like to direct the CDF to

ensure that his Development Plan is finalised so that the Executive Director can incorporate it into the Ministerial Business Plan.

As my strategy and policy advisor, I expect the ED to identify the gaps in the existing legal instruments which may constrain our performance of our mandate.

I am aware of the financial constraints our country is facing, especially in equipping the Force and the provision of requisite infrastructure. I therefore charge the ED and the CDF to devise ways and means to do more with the little that the government revenue can afford. We have uncompleted projects, chief among them being the new Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs. My wish is that it should be fully operational by the end of 2026/27. The Defence Industry must not just be by name, but it must be further enhanced to contribute to national development and employment creation. I would further like you to ensure that by the end of the term of the 8<sup>th</sup> Administration, there will be no member of the NDF sleeping in a tent in their permanent dwelling places. We must expedite the development of infrastructure in the bases utilising the expertise and resources at our disposal.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The plans of our government towards improving the lives of the Namibian people are sound and implementable. Their successful implementation depends on us, as it is we who must ensure a conducive environment for socio-economic development initiatives to be implemented.

This we can only achieve if we faithfully commit to implementing government directives to the letter, jealously protect, utilise and maintain government resources; remain disciplined and loyal to the leadership and the country; train and enhance professionalism; and work together as a team. From my side, I am committed to providing the necessary leadership as charged,

In conclusion, I would like to once more thank you all for the three years that were, and especially my former Deputy and the Executive Director for their immeasurable contribution to this institution. I wish you all heavenly blessings in your preoccupations for the good of our people. We are blessed with a beautiful and rich country, and it is we who must take care of it, protect it and its people. Finally, feel welcome, Hon. Dr. Mubita

and Madam Haiphene. Thank you, and fare you well, Hon. Nicanor and Dr. Shivute. I wish you all good health and a productive year ahead.

**I thank you!**