



9 February 2023

**MESSAGE FROM HON. PROF. PETER H. KATJAVIVI, MP, SPEAKER OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

NAMIBIA CONSTITUTION DAY, 9 FEBRUARY

Fellow Namibians, on the 9th February 1990, the Constituent Assembly which consisted of 72 elected representatives from various political parties adopted the Namibian Constitution. Under the able Chairmanship of H.E. Dr Hage G. Geingob, the Constituent Assembly agreed to make all decisions by consensus and not by majority vote. This was a remarkable achievement, given that the Members of the Constituent Assembly were from different political parties that were adversaries during the liberation struggle. It created a political culture of respect and a common commitment to national development that served Namibia well, and should be preserved.

It is now exactly 33 years since the Members of the Constituent Assembly agreed to put their signatures on the most powerful document in the Namibian history, the law of the land, a living document we all proudly call *Our Constitution*. Since then, the 9th of February is annually observed on our calendar as one of the significant days in the annals of our history. Every year on the 9th February, we pause for a moment and reflect on this important document, which serve as the blue print of our existence and which also guarantees our basic fundamental freedoms and rights.

We celebrate this day because, the Namibian Constitution allows our citizens to be part of the decision making processes on how and who should govern

them. We do this through democratically electing our representatives whom we entrust with the responsibilities of leading our country.

We will forever remain indebted to Namibia's Founding Fathers and Mothers for crafting our Constitution within a remarkable period of time and unanimously agreeing to it. Namibia's living Constitution is hailed by the world as one of the most progressive Constitutions. To keep the spirit and aspirations of our Constitution, each and every Namibian should strive and endeavour for equality and inclusivity for all, across all genders and age groups, especially, the previously deprived and disadvantaged.

Today, gender parity has become a key issue in the National Assembly as we have 49% female MPs and 51% male MPs in the House; this is often referred to as zebra style of political governance. The number of young parliamentarians has also improved significantly. Our Constitution has allowed our Parliament to enact progressive laws since independence and repeal apartheid-era discriminatory legal instruments, ensuring that all people are treated equally before the law. The Constitution protects fundamental human rights and liberties. These are absolute rights that are enjoyed by every citizen of the country. In order to inculcate a culture of democracy and leadership in young people, the National Assembly proudly hosts the Children's Parliament every year while the National Council hosts the Junior National Council. These initiatives serve as platforms for Namibian children to address challenges they face, to recommend to the government what needs to be done, and to gain experience of democratic parliamentary processes.

It is also worth mentioning that the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), one of our development partners, helped the Parliament to ensure that our Constitution is available on various software platforms. It can be downloaded on mobile devices and one can walk around with it. We are delighted to benchmark our

Constitution across the world because of the provisions of there-in that purposefully ensure freedom, equality and justice.

Let us continue to respect and guard the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, so as to galvanize peace, stability and harmony of our country.

LONG LIVE THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA!

LONG LIVE NAMIBIA!