

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



STATEMENT BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR HAGE G. GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 7th SESSION OF THE 7TH PARLIAMENT

FEBRUARY 14, 2023
PARLIAMENT GARDENS
WINDHOEK

Check against delivery

- Speaker of the National Assembly, Honourable Professor Peter Katjavivi;
- Chairperson of the National Council, Honourable Lukas Sinimbo Muha;
- Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia and Leader of Government Business in the House, Right Honourable Saara Kuugongelwa–Amadhila;
- Leader of the official opposition, Honourable McHenry Venaani;
- Honourable Members of Parliament;
- Vice President of the Republic of Namibia, Comrade Nangolo Mbumba;
- Your Lordship Peter Shivute, Chief Justice;
- Your Lordship Petrus Damaseb, Deputy Chief Justice, Hon. Judges and other Members of the Judiciary;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

On February 7, I opened the first Cabinet Meeting of the year, commencing the work of the Executive and the following day (February 8), I opened the Legal Year, commencing the work of the Judiciary.

Today, I am here to officially open the 7th Session of the 7th Parliament to commence the Legislative year 2023 and I thank you, Honourable Speaker, for having invited me to carry out this important task.

In several weeks' time, I will return to Parliament to deliver the State of the Nation address where I will expound on a multitude of issues relevant to our national development agenda. However, today, my task is to merely open Parliament so that you may commence with the crucial work of the legislative calendar.

In many democracies around the world, parliament is viewed as the embodiment of democratic politics. In Namibia, our parliament symbolizes our representative democracy and the multiplicity of our political organisations, interests and ideas.

As Members of Parliament, you are elected by the people, and as such play an integral role in ensuring that the needs and wishes of the people of Namibia are catered for. Therefore, the legislative mandate of Parliament must be fulfilled to its fullest degree if we are to become a prosperous nation.

There is a pertinent need for you to enact laws that are effective at buttressing the safety and security of our citizens, protecting the most vulnerable members of our society, enabling the growth of industry, as well as promoting investment and economic trade.

Furthermore, our laws should instill the confidence in our people, investors and visitors that Namibia is a country where the rights and human dignity of all is respected and protected.

To this extent, I am pleased to note that the following Bills are likely to be tabled during the course of the year. These are:

1. High Court Amendment Bill
2. Magistrates Court Amendment Bill
3. Divorce Bill
4. Child Justice Bill
5. Ombudsman Bill
6. Marriage Bill
7. Uniform Matrimonial Property Regime Bill
8. Civil Registration and Identification Bill
9. Roads Bill
10. Vehicle Mass Bill
11. Land Bill
12. Research, Science, Technology and Innovation Bill

Let me now expound on a few of these bills:

High Court Amendment Bill

This Bill is intended to impose judicial oversight on the sale in execution of immovable property of debtors by creditors to ensure that the rights of both parties are adequately protected throughout the process.

The Bill further provides the Judge-President with powers to make procedural rules for the cession of rights to institute proceedings, adjudicate commercial disputes and administrative matters relating to the appointment and related terms.

Magistrates Court Amendment Bill

Similar to the High Court Amendment Bill, the Magistrates Court Amendment Bill is intended to impose judicial oversight on the sale in execution of immovable property of debtors by creditors to ensure that the rights of both parties are adequately protected throughout the process. The objective is to protect the rights of debtors in the sale of primary homes in execution by judgment creditors, thereby enhancing the protection of the right to human dignity and the right to housing.

Honourable Speaker,

The two bills I have just highlighted speak to a troubling situation we have been witnessing in the country regarding the repossession of houses. The process of home foreclosures can be a humiliating and traumatic experience, especially for the most vulnerable members of society. I am therefore pleased to note that we are moving towards ensuring that the dignity of our citizens is protected and that there will be judicial oversight on the sale in execution of immovable properties.

Let me now touch on the Civil Registration and Identification Bill:

This Bill provides for the registration of births, stillbirths, adoptions, deaths, marriages and divorces in the Civil Register. The Bill further facilitates the development of an efficient system for the compilation and maintenance of a Civil Register for Namibia.

When I officiated at the inauguration of the new building of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security in November last year, I highlighted the importance of ensuring that data of Namibian citizens is not only kept safe but also digitized to ensure that the country remains on par with the modern world. This bill is a first step in the right direction of modernizing our civil records.

In this regard, we must ensure that Namibia is able to adapt, compete and prosper in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). I therefore welcome the tabling of the Research, Science, Technology and Innovation Bill, which will provide for the promotion, co-ordination and development of research, science, technology and innovation in Namibia.

Honourable Speaker,

I take note that some of the bills listed for tabling during this year such as the High Court Amendment Bill, Magistrates Court Amendment Bill, Divorce Bill, Child Justice Bill, Ombudsman Bill and Marriage Bill are carried over from the previous session of Parliament. I wish to encourage you to redouble your efforts to ensure that there is a regular quorum in Parliament so that you are able to speed up the legislative process.

We have promised to deliver Unity, Liberty and Justice to the people of Namibia. Our laws play a crucial factor in ensuring that we are able to protect the rights of our citizens, ensuring inclusivity in all aspects of our modern society, as well as promoting shared prosperity for all Namibians.

Through the drafting of relevant and adequate legislation, you, as Parliamentarians are the main drivers of change in terms of our national developmental agenda. You are catalysts for societal transformation. You have the power to push through the necessary reforms, as identified in our respective development plans.

Honourable Speaker,

The path to prosperity consists of hard work. It is a struggle. It comes with successes and setbacks. It requires persistence. But it is a path we must walk hand in hand. A journey we must travel in unison. A mission we must carry out shoulder-to-shoulder. The people have entrusted us with this responsibility and I call on all of us to work together to uphold the promise to deliver a better life for all Namibians.

With these words, it is now my honour to declare the 7th Session of the 7th Parliament officially open. May God bless you all and may God bless the Republic of Namibia.

I thank you.